Length: 50 minutes

Materials: copies of “The Adventures of Mark Twain” biography (attached); copies of the timeline worksheet, “Twain’s Times” (attached); chalkboard or large wall space for creating timeline (you will want to keep this on display if doing the 2nd part of the timeline); “Sam I Am” cards (enclosed), cut and separated; tape & copies of the “What’s in a Name?” matching game (attached)

Objectives:
- Introduce students to the life and experiences of Sam Clemens/Mark Twain.
- Create a timeline through reading comprehension and completion of word problems using basic math skills.
- Gain an understanding of how an author’s experiences inform his/her writings.

Procedure:

Distribute to students copies of “The Adventures of Mark Twain” biography and the “Twain’s Times” timeline worksheet. Read the biography while students follow along.

1. Explain that they will be making a timeline but that they first need to figure out the dates. Introduce the “Twain’s Times” worksheet and explain that they will either find the answers in the biography or will have to perform simple math equations to find the answers.

2. Review students’ answers. Create the timeline on the chalkboard or wall using the dates (not ages) listed on the worksheet. (If you’re planning to do Part 2 of the timeline, leave some space before 1835).

3. Next, use the “Sam I Am” cards. First, make sure the cards are not in date order. Then, select students to show a card to the class and read its rhyme on the back (but not the answer). Have the class guess what date the photograph corresponds to on the timeline. When they answer correctly, have the student tape the card to the appropriate place on the timeline.

4. After the cards are in place, discuss what the timeline illustrates. What can we learn about Mark Twain’s life? How do you think Twain’s different jobs, travels and experiences influenced his writing? What or who do you think he saw on the river, in the west, in the mines, in Hawaii, etc. that could serve as the setting or a character in a story? [Optional: Have students work in groups and examine the “Sam I Am” photos. See what they can discover about clothing, material culture and photography in this time period. In particular, look at the family photograph. What can you tell about this family? What kind of a father do you think Mark Twain was? How do you think Sam’s family influenced his writing or distracted him from it?]

6. Conclusion: Reinforce the idea that an author’s environment influences his/her writing. Review how Twain’s jobs, travels and everyday life experiences became stories, books and characters. When visiting the Twain house, have students try to find evidence of things that may have influenced his writing.

**Homework Assignment:**

Ask students to think about an event, experience or person they’ve met that they could write a story about. Have them write a short narrative essay where they include the who, what, where, when, why and how information to relay the story.

**Shorter Version:**

If time is an issue, the lesson can be simplified to reading the biography and then completing the matching game. Discussion can focus on how successful writers write about what they know. Ask students what experience or event they could write about and do they know of anyone who would be a good or funny character to include.

**Answers to “Twain’s Times” Worksheet:**

1. 1835
2. 1847
3. 1858
4. 1861
5. 1863
6. 1870
7. 35 years old
8. 1874
9. 1891 (Note: photo used for this date is actually from 1885, the girls were 6 years older when they moved)
10. 1895
11. 60 years old
12. 1900
13. 1910
14. 75

*Answers to 15, 16, 17 will depend on ages of the students and year activity is being done.*
LESSON, PART II: 
Twain’s Times Continued

**Length:** 20 minutes *(This may be used as an extension activity)*

**Materials:** Timeline from the previous lesson

**Objectives:**
- Gain a better understanding of the time period in which the Clemens family lived in the Hartford house to prepare students for what they will see on tour.
- Interpret a timeline to form conclusions about everyday life and material culture during the Victorian period.

**Procedure:**

1. Add the following items to your timeline. Add any other important dates students may be familiar with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>gas lighting first used in homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>the camera is invented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830s</td>
<td>first indoor shower installed in an American home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>the Remington typewriter is manufactured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>the first automobile is built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>first movie is shown in the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>electricity appears in private homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>the first radio station is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>television is demonstrated for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>the modern ballpoint pen is created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Apple creates the personal computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Music CDs are developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>the World Wide Web is launched</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Remind students they will be visiting the Twain house. Using the timeline, ask what years the family lived in the house. Highlight or mark these years on the timeline.

3. What will be inside the house? Have students take a piece of paper and make two columns, one labeled: What will be at the house, the other: What will not be at the house. By interpreting the timeline, have students find 3 things for each category.

**Answers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Will Be Inside:</th>
<th>What Won’t Be Inside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gas lighting</td>
<td>cars / garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photographs</td>
<td>electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shower</td>
<td>radio &amp; television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typewriter</td>
<td>computers / Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>Music / CDs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Review the answers and raise more questions about what students will see at the Twain house. If there’s gas lighting will it be bright or dark inside? What do you think will be decorating the walls? What kind of noises/sounds will be in the house? What do you think the children did for fun? How did they get around town? Where did they get information about world events?

5. Conclusion: The Clemens family lived in Hartford over 100 years ago. Some of the things they had are similar to what we have today and some are very different. While on tour, look for things that are similar and different from the things we own today. Consider how these things may have affected their lives.
Refer to the “Adventures of Mark Twain” biography you just read to fill out this worksheet. You will have to do math problems to find some of the answers. Use the workspace on the bottom of the page to do your math.

1. What year was Sam Clemens born? ________
2. Sam was almost 12 when his father died. What year did his father die? ________
3. Sam became a riverboat pilot when he was 23 years old. What year did he get his license? ________
4. Sam moved west at the beginning of the Civil War. If the war started 39 years before the turn of the century (1900), when did the Civil War start? ________
5. What year did Sam get a full time job as a journalist? ________
6. What year were Sam and Livy Married? ________
7. Livy was 24 years old when she got married. How old was Sam? ________
8. What year did the Clemens family move into their Hartford house? ________
9. The Clemens family lived in their Hartford house for 17 years. What year did they move out? ________
10. What year did Sam start on his round-the-world-tour? ________
11. How old was Sam when he started his round-the-world-tour? ________
12. What year did Sam return to the United States after his lecture tour? ________
13. What year did Sam Clemens die? ________
14. How old was Sam when he died? ________
15. What year were you born? ________
16. How many years after his death were you born? ________
17. Mark Twain’s Hartford home was built in 1874. How old is the house? ________
What I’ve always wanted to do
Was to sail the river blue.
So in this year I took a test,
And behind the wheel I did my best.
And the next thing I knew,
My boyhood dream had come true!

What year is it and what am I doing?
Answer: 1858, becoming a steamboat pilot.

Now that 75 years have passed by,
I fear its time to say good-bye.
But please do not feel sorry or sad,
For the life I’ve known anyone should be glad.
Instead pick up books and read to your fill,
Because it’s through my stories that I live on still.

What year is it and what’s happening?
Answer: 1910, Sam Clemens dies.
I couldn’t make any money in a silver mine, 
So I chose a different way to spend my time. 
I took up a pen and made a few notes, 
And lo and behold, people liked what I wrote. 
So I gave up digging in the ground, 
To begin to write year-round.

What year is it and what am I doing? 
Answer: 1863, getting a full-time job as a journalist.

After selecting a spot on the far side of town, 
Livy and I decided to settle down. 
In the new building atop a hill of green, 
where we raised our Susy, Clara and Jean.

What year is it and what are we doing? 
Answer: 1874, moving into the Hartford house.
She had the prettiest face I ever did see,
And I knew right away that she was for me.
So after two years of dating I was truly blessed,
Because in this year she finally said “yes.”

What year is it and what am I doing?
Answer: 1870, getting married to Olivia (Livy).

For 17 years in Hartford we stayed,
but now a tough decision was made,
to pack up our things and head out to sea,
to discover where our new home would be.

What year is it and what are we doing?
Answer: 1891, moving to Europe.
(Photo is from 1885 and includes from left to right: Clara, Livy, Jean, Sam, Susy & Hash, the dog)

She had the prettiest face I ever did see,
And I knew right away that she was for me.
So after two years of dating I was truly blessed,
Because in this year she finally said “yes”.

What year is it and what am I doing?
Answer: 1870, getting married to Olivia (Livy).
My family needed money right away,  
So I quit my schooling and spent my day  
Putting letters together in a giant press,  
Making my hands and fingers quite a mess!

What year is it and what am I doing?  
Answer: 1847, going to work as a typesetter.

At age 60 I took out my traveler’s cap,  
and traced out a route on a big map.  
Along the way, beautiful sights I did see,  
from kangaroos hopping to elephants running free.

What year is it and what am I doing?  
Answer: 1895, starting the around the world lecture tour.
Many of Mark Twain’s stories came from his own experiences. Column A lists the names of some of Twain’s books or short stories. Column B lists some of his experiences. See if you can match a book to an experience. Write the letter of the experience next to the name of the book you think it matches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Twain’s books or stories</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> Twain’s Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Roughing It</td>
<td>a. Lived in Hartford for 17 years but visited England often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Life on the Mississippi</td>
<td>b. Worked for a newspaper in San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Innocents Abroad</td>
<td>c. Traveled around the world on a lecture tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</td>
<td>d. Was a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court</td>
<td>e. Traveled out west over difficult lands and unpaved roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Following the Equator</td>
<td>f. Grew up playing along the river in Hannibal, Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Californian’s Tale</td>
<td>g. Went to Europe for the first time to visit places like Italy and France.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>