

JIGSAW INSTRUCTIONS FOR HUCK FINN

In a **Jigsaw**, students break into groups to accomplish a task, then come back to the whole class (or to another group) to report on what they have done. The purpose of a **Jigsaw** is to break a large assignment into small tasks that can be accomplished by a group. One way to use **Jigsaw** is to tackle a large reading assignment. The process for this kind of **Jigsaw** would be as follows: The teacher gives each group a different section of the reading to do. After each group reads the section they are responsible for, students return to the whole class. Once there, each group reports on their section of the reading, while the rest of the class takes notes. This way, all students report on one section of the reading, and listen to reports on three other sections. This helps students to learn to disseminate information effectively and clearly in an organized manner. It also helps students to be responsible for themselves and to each other for the information they learn. Another method would be to have the students number off, one to four. Then, all *ones* group together, all *twos* together, all *threes* together, and all *fours* together. Each numbered group is assigned a specific section to read. After reading it, students return to their regular groups and report on their section. Everyone takes notes on the information being presented to them with the same goals for learning as mentioned above.

Jigsaw is also an effective way to enter into a new text, in this case the novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Decide what background information students will need to know to help them understand their upcoming novel, and how many groups you will need. For example, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, you may want them to research the following topics: The Minstrel Stereotype, The Abolitionist Movement, Historical Controversies about the Novel, and Current Controversies about the Novel. These are the topics that emerge repeatedly in discussions about the text. Because it is the first novel written entirely in vernacular, the issue of language has always been central to criticism about the novel. Twain's portrayal of Jim and concurrent racial imagery from Twain's period have also been the focus of much of the criticism (hence the focus on issues of language and race throughout this unit). If there is more time to explore key themes, you might also have students research topics such as Twain's political leanings, other important writing by Twain (like *Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, or *Letters From Earth*), the history of satire in literature, or steamboats and river transport in the 19th century. Give each group materials for research, and questions to focus on during the research. Then give them one class period to read about the topic. Have them **highlight/annotate** the text. Then have them summarize the important points of the reading and the message/s the author is trying to convey, list at least 4 questions they still have about the topic even after having read the piece, list at least 2 ideas that they feel need clarifying and then have them try to clarify each (as well as defining 4 terms from the reading), and predict how the specifics of the article will play themselves out in the novel they are about to read. Each member of the group must choose one of the previously listed tasks to be responsible for writing down the responses of the whole group. Ask them to decide how they can most effectively present the information they have to the rest of the class who will not have read the article and may not understand it. Everyone in the group must have a role in the presentation. And they must save time at the end for questions their audience/classmates may have. Tell them they will have one period for all of the groups to present their information to the rest of the class.