American Literature

Reflecting on the beginning of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Chapters 1-6)

In-class journal prompt: Write a response to ONE of the following prompts. Your prompts should…

…include textual evidence

…include 8 analysis of the evidence

…and be at least 35 lines in length

* Twain chooses a 13-year-old boy as narrator for his novel. In what way does this help to accomplish Twain’s purpose? Discuss the ways in which a young, innocent narrator can make a profound statement about the hypocrisy of his society. Explain your answer.
* Although Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer are presented as contrasting characters in the novel, they are alike in many ways. Compare and contrast the characters of Huck and Tom, giving examples from the novel to support your argument.
* Superstition is a recurring theme in the novel. Analyze Twain’s satiric treatment of the hairball scene. Examine the answers Huck receives about his life. How does Jim keep the hairball’s comments believable?
* Analyze the relationship of Huck and his father. In what ways was he different from the ideal? How did this influence Huck’s feelings about society as a whole? Explain your reasoning.
* Analyze Judge Thatcher’s reactions to Huck’s request to take his money. Why did the judge exchange one dollar for six-thousand dollars? Was he cheating Huck? Explain your answer.
* Huck seems to adapt to almost any situation. He has become accustomed to civilized life with the Widow Douglas. Later he finds life in the woods carefree and easy. Analyze the character of Huck. Discuss possible reasons for his adaptability to different situations. Use examples from the novel to support your argument.
* In the novel Pap does not appear to be a civilized man. Discuss ways in which he does, however, fit into the larger society. Does he compare to the Widow Douglas in any way? Explain your answer.