

"My Papa, Mark Twain" by Susy Clemens
Vocabulary Builder

Word List

absent-minded consequently impatient incessantly peculiar striking

A. DIRECTIONS: For each item below, follow the instructions and write a sentence. Be sure that you use the Word List words correctly and that your sentence expresses the meaning of each word.

1. Use *absent-minded* and *consequently* in a sentence about homework.

2. Use *striking* and *incessantly* in a sentence about a fireworks display.

3. Use *impatient* in a sentence about standing in a long line of customers at a store.

4. Use *peculiar* in a sentence about a strange costume.

B. WORD STUDY: The Latin root *-sequ-* or *-sec-* means "to follow." Use context clues and what you know about this root to answer each question.

1. What is the correct *sequential* order of these months: May, February, March, September?

2. Which student would be most likely to attend a *secondary* school, a 5-year-old or a 16-year-old? Explain.

3. Would a *sequacious* person tend to be a leader or a follower? Explain.

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Enrichment: Expressing Facts and Opinions

Susy Clemens’s perspective on Mark Twain was that he could do no wrong. It would have been difficult for her to describe him in a way that included only facts. Try writing your own description of someone you admire.

A. DIRECTIONS: *Think of someone you admire a great deal, such as a family member, a friend, or a national hero you have seen on TV. Then, answer these questions.*

1. Whom have you chosen? _____
2. What is your opinion of this person? _____
3. What character traits and achievements support your opinion of this person?

4. What are some facts about this person? Include only details that can be checked or proved. For example, you might list age, height, eye and hair color, and where the person lives.

B. DIRECTIONS: *On the following lines, describe your subject in two ways. In the first paragraph, write sentences that include only facts. In the second paragraph, combine facts and opinions to show your perspective on the person.*

Paragraph 1 (Only the facts): _____

Paragraph 2 (Facts and opinions): _____

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Open-Book Test

Short Answer Write your responses to the questions in this section on the lines provided.

1. In "My Papa, Mark Twain," Susy Clemens writes that her father was absentminded. What would an absentminded person do with an umbrella on a rainy day?

2. A fact is information that can be checked and proved. An opinion is a person's judgment or belief. In "My Papa, Mark Twain," Susy Clemens writes, "Our burglar alarm is often out of order." Explain why this statement is a fact or why it is an opinion.

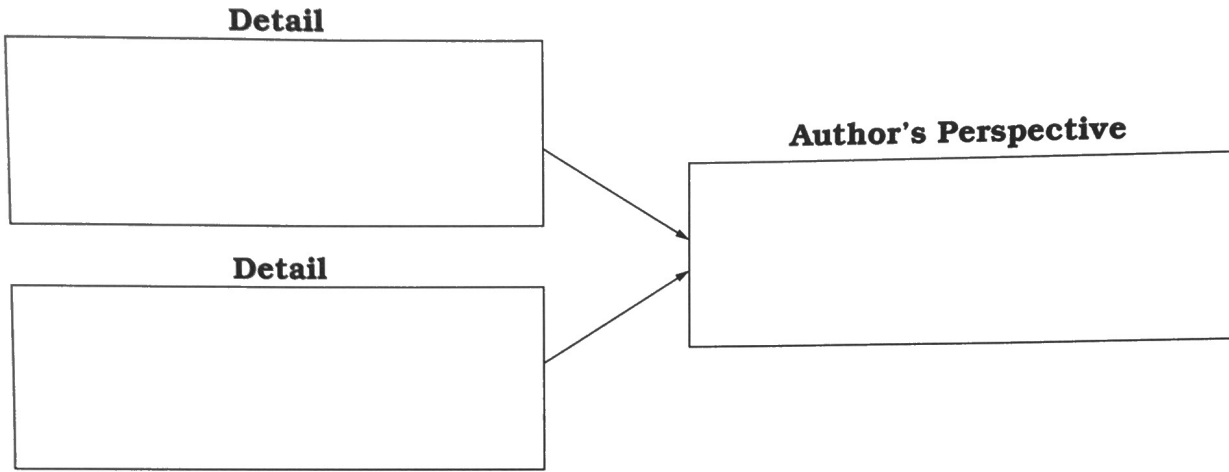
3. In "My Papa, Mark Twain," Twain goes down and opens a window. Consequently, the alarm bell rings. Use the word *consequently* to describe another situation in the biography.

4. In "My Papa, Mark Twain," Susy Clemens includes a description of Twain's problems with a burglar alarm. Consider what Twain does not understand about the situation. Then, explain what Susy wants to reveal about her father by including this description.

5. Explain why Susy Clemens includes the paragraph about pet cats in "My Papa, Mark Twain."

6. In writing about her father's story, Susy Clemens says, "I think that one of the most touching scenes in it is where the pauper is riding on horseback with his nobles. . . ." Explain why this statement is an opinion. Identify the phrase that indicates an opinion and the one that indicates a personal judgment.

7. In each of the two detail boxes, write a detail from “My Papa, Mark Twain” showing Susy’s opinion of *The Prince and the Pauper*. Then, use these details to write a sentence in the third box describing Susy’s perspective of her father’s writing.



8. What reason might Susy Clemens have had for writing “My Papa, Mark Twain”? Use details from the biography to support your answer.

9. Think about what Susy Clemens knows about Mark Twain that others do not. What perspective, or viewpoint, can she bring to “My Papa, Mark Twain” that another author could not? Use details from the biography in your answer.

10. Suppose that a biographer not related to Mark Twain wrote about him. Explain how that biography would show a different attitude toward the subject than “My Papa, Mark Twain.”

Essay

Write an extended response to the question of your choice or to the question or questions your teacher assigns you.

11. In “My Papa, Mark Twain,” Susy Clemens tells what it is like to have Mark Twain as a father. In an essay, discuss whether you think Twain is a good father. Consider how Susy describes him and how she feels about him. Think about what kind of relationship they have. Use details from the biography to support your ideas.
12. In “My Papa, Mark Twain,” Susy Clemens writes about her father’s bad qualities as well as his good ones. In an essay, describe Mark Twain’s good points and faults as Susy Clemens sees them. Include examples from the biography in your answer.
13. Suppose that Mark Twain had written this selection about himself. In an essay, explain how his version might differ from “My Papa, Mark Twain” and how it might be similar.
14. **Thinking About the Big Question: How do we decide what is true?** In “My Papa, Mark Twain,” the reader gets Susy Clemens’s perspective of her father. A loving daughter might be partial to her father. In an essay, discuss what parts of the biography you believe and what parts you doubt. Use details from the biography to support your ideas about what you think is true.

Oral Response

15. Go back to question 5, 8, 9, or 10 or to the question your teacher assigns to you. Take a few minutes to expand your answer and prepare an oral response. Find additional details in “My Papa, Mark Twain” that support your points. If necessary, make notes to guide your response.