*Huck Finn* assignment

You will be reading *Huck Finn* to finish up this school year. Since we are in a time crunch you will only be required to read certain chapters and I will provide summaries for the chapters in between. You will be asked to do some close reading exercises and complete an outline for a synthesis essay upon completing the novel.

You will read the following chapters:

1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15, 18, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43

Here are the summaries for the chapters in between:

**Chapter 3:**

After punishing Huck for dirtying his new clothes during his night out with Tom, Miss Watson tries to explain prayer to him. Huck gives up on it after some of his prayers are not answered. Miss Watson calls him a fool, and the Widow Douglas later explains that prayer bestows spiritual gifts, such as acting selflessly to help others. Huck, who cannot see any advantage in such gifts, resolves to forget the matter. The two women often take Huck aside for religious discussions, in which Widow Douglas describes a wonderful God, while Miss Watson describes a terrible one. Huck concludes there are two Gods and decides he would like to belong to Widow Douglas’s, if He would take him. Huck considers this unlikely because of his bad qualities. Meanwhile, a rumor circulates that Huck’s Pap, who has not been seen in a year, is dead. A corpse was found in the river, thought to be Pap because of its “ragged” appearance. The face, however, was unrecognizable. At first, Huck is relieved. His father had been a drunk who beat him when he was sober, although Huck stayed hidden from him most of the time. Upon hearing further description of the body found, however, Huck realizes that it is not his father but rather a woman dressed in men’s clothes. Huck worries that his father will soon reappear. After a month in Tom’s gang, Huck and the rest of the boys quit. With no actual robbing or killing going on, the gang’s existence is pointless. Huck tells of one of Tom’s more notable games, in which Tom pretended that a caravan of Arabs and Spaniards was going to camp nearby with hundreds of camels and elephants. It turned out to be a Sunday-school picnic, although Tom explained that it really was a caravan of Arabs and Spaniards—only they were enchanted, like in *Don Quixote*. The raid on the picnic netted the boys only a few doughnuts and jam but a fair amount of trouble. After testing another of Tom’s theories by rubbing old lamps and rings but failing to summon a genie, Huck judges that most of Tom’s stories have been “lies.”

**Chapter 4:**

Over the next few months, Huck begins to adjust to his new life and even makes some progress in school. One winter morning, he notices boot tracks in the snow near the house. Within one heel print is the shape of two nails crossed to ward off the devil. Huck immediately recognizes this mark and runs to Judge Thatcher. Huck sells his fortune (the money he and Tom recovered in *Tom Sawyer,* which the Judge has been managing for him) to the befuddled Judge for a dollar. That night, Huck goes to Jim, who claims to possess a giant, magical hairball from an ox’s stomach. Huck tells Jim that he has found Pap’s tracks in the snow and wants to know what his father wants. Jim says that the hairball needs money to talk, so Huck gives Jim a counterfeit quarter. Jim puts his ear to the hairball and relates that Huck’s father has two angels, one black and one white, one bad and one good. It is uncertain which angel will win out, but Huck is safe for now. He will have much happiness and sorrow in his life, he will marry a poor woman and then a rich woman, and he should stay clear of the water, since that is where he will die. That night, Huck finds Pap waiting for him in his bedroom.

**Chapter 8**

The next morning, a ferryboat passes Jackson Island, carrying Pap, Judge Thatcher and his daughter Bessie (known as Becky Thatcher in Tom Sawyer), Tom Sawyer, Tom’s aunt Polly, some of Huck’s young friends, and “plenty more” on board, all discussing Huck’s apparent murder. They shoot cannonballs over the water and float loaves of bread with mercury inside, in hopes of finding Huck’s corpse. Huck, still hiding carefully, catches one of the loaves and eats it. He is pleased that they are using such high-quality bread to search for him, but he feels guilty that his disappearance has upset the Widow Douglas and the others who care about him.Huck spends three peaceful, lonely days on the island, living on plentiful berries and fish and able to smoke whenever he wishes. He spends his nights counting ferryboats and stars on the tranquil river. On the fourth day, while exploring the island, Huck is delighted to find Jim, who at first thinks Huck is a ghost. Huck is pleased that he will not be alone on the island but shocked when Jim explains that he has run away. Jim says that he overheard Miss Watson discussing selling him for $800 to a slave trader who would take him to New Orleans, separating him from his family. Jim left before Miss Watson had a chance to decide whether or not to sell him. Jim and Huck discuss superstitions—in which Jim is well-versed—and Jim’s failed investments, most of which have been scams. Jim is not too disappointed by his failures, since he still has his hairy arms and chest, which, according to his superstitions, are a sign of future wealth.

**Chapter 9:**

In order to make a hiding place should visitors arrive on the island, Jim and Huck take the canoe and provisions into a large cave in the middle of the island. Jim predicts that it will rain, and soon a storm blows in. The two safely wait it out inside the cave. The river floods, and a washed-out house floats down the river past the island. Inside, Jim and Huck find the body of a man who has been shot in the back. Jim prevents Huck from looking at the “ghastly” face. Jim and Huck make off with some odds and ends from the houseboat. Huck has Jim hide in the bottom of the canoe so that he won’t be seen, and they make it back to the island safely.

**Chapter 10:**

Huck wonders about the dead man, but Jim warns that it’s bad luck to think about such things. Huck has already incurred bad luck, according to Jim, by finding and handling a snake’s shed skin. Sure enough, bad luck comes: as a joke, Huck puts a dead rattlesnake near Jim’s sleeping place, and its mate comes and bites Jim. Jim’s leg swells but gets better after several days. A while later, Huck decides to go ashore to get information. Jim agrees, but has Huck disguise himself as a girl, using one of the dresses they took from the houseboat. Huck practices his girl impersonation and then sets out for the Illinois shore. In a formerly abandoned shack, he finds a woman who looks about forty years old and appears to be a newcomer to the town. Huck is relieved because, as a newcomer, the woman will not be able to recognize him. Still, he resolves to remember that he is pretending to be a girl.

**Chapter 11:**

The woman lets Huck into the shack but eyes him suspiciously. Huck introduces himself as “Sarah Williams” from Hookerville. The woman chatters about a variety of subjects and eventually gets to the topic of Huck’s murder. She reveals that Pap was a suspect and that some townspeople nearly lynched him. Then, people began to suspect Jim because he ran away the same day Huck was killed. Soon, however, suspicions again turned against Pap, after he squandered on alcohol the money that the judge gave him to find Jim. Pap left town before he could be lynched, and now there is a $200 reward being offered for him. Meanwhile, there is a $300 bounty out for Jim. The woman has noticed smoke over Jackson’s Island and has told her husband to look for Jim there. He plans to go there tonight with another man and a gun. The woman looks at Huck suspiciously and asks his name. He replies, “Mary Williams.” When the woman asks about the change, he tries to cover himself by saying his full name is “Sarah Mary Williams.” She has him try to kill a rat by throwing a lump of lead at it, and he nearly hits the rat, increasing her suspicions. Finally, she asks him to reveal his real male identity, saying she understands that he is a runaway apprentice and claiming she will not turn him in to the authorities. Huck says his name is George Peters and describes himself as an apprentice to a mean farmer. She lets him go after quizzing him on several farm subjects to make sure he is telling the truth. She tells Huck to send for her, Mrs. Judith Loftus, if he has trouble. Back at the island, Huck builds a decoy campfire far from the cave and then returns to the cave to tell Jim they must leave. They hurriedly pack their things and slowly ride out on a raft they found when the river flooded.

**Chapter 14:**

Jim and Huck find a number of valuables among the robbers’ bounty from the *Walter Scott,* mostly books, clothes, and cigars. As they relax in the woods and wait for nightfall before traveling again, Huck reads books from the wreck, and the two discuss what Huck calls their “adventures.” Jim says he doesn’t enjoy adventures, as they could easily end in his death or capture. Huck astonishes Jim with stories of kings, first reading from books and then adding some of his own, made-up stories. Jim had only heard of King Solomon, whom he considers a fool for wanting to chop a baby in half. Huck cannot convince Jim otherwise. Huck tells Jim about the dauphin (whom Huck mistakenly calls the “dolphin”), the son of the executed King Louis XVI of France. The dauphin currently is rumored to be wandering America. Jim refuses to believe that the French do not speak English, as Huck explains. Huck tries to argue the point with Jim but gives up in defeat.

**Chapter 16:**

Jim and Huck worry that they will miss Cairo, the town at the mouth of the Ohio River, which runs into the free states. Meanwhile, Huck’s conscience troubles him deeply about helping Jim escape from his “rightful owner,” Miss Watson, especially after all she has done for Huck. Jim talks on and on about going to the free states, especially about his plan to earn money to buy the freedom of his wife and children. If their masters refuse to give up Jim’s family, Jim plans to have some abolitionists kidnap them. When Huck and Jim think they see Cairo, Huck goes out on the canoe to check, having secretly resolved to give Jim up. But Huck’s heart softens when he hears Jim call out that Huck is his only friend, the only one to keep a promise to him. Huck comes upon some men in a boat who want to search his raft for escaped slaves. Huck pretends to be grateful, saying no one else would help them. He leads the men to believe that his family is on board the raft and is suffering from smallpox. The men, fearing infection, back away and tell Huck to go further downstream and lie about his family’s condition to get help. Out of pity, they leave Huck forty dollars in gold. Huck feels bad because he thinks he has done wrong in not giving Jim up. However, he realizes he would feel just as bad if he had given Jim up. Huck re solves to disregard morality in the future and do what’s “handiest.” Floating along, Huck and Jim pass several towns and worry that they have passed Cairo in the fog. They stop for the night and resolve to take the canoe upriver but in the morning discover that it has been stolen. They attribute the canoe’s disappearance to continued bad luck from the snakeskin on Jackson’s Island. Later, a steamboat collides with the raft, breaking it apart. Jim and Huck dive off in time but are separated. Huck makes it ashore, but a pack of dogs corners him.

**Chapter 17:**

A man calls off the dogs, saving Huck, who introduces himself as “George Jackson.” The man invites “George” into his house, where the hosts express an odd suspicion that Huck is a member of a family called the Shepherdsons. Eventually, Huck’s hosts decide that he is not a Shepherdson. The lady of the house tells Buck, a boy about Huck’s age, to get Huck some dry clothes. Buck says he would have killed a Shepherdson had there been any Shepherdsons present. Buck tells Huck a riddle, but Huck does not understand the concept of riddles. Buck says Huck must stay with him and they will have great fun. Huck, meanwhile, invents an elaborate story to explain how he was orphaned. Buck’s family, the Grangerfords, offer to let Huck stay with them for as long as he likes. Huck innocently admires the house and its humorously tacky finery, including the work of a deceased daughter, Emmeline, who created unintentionally funny sentimental artwork and poems about people who died. Settling in with the Grangerfords and enjoying their kindness, Huck thinks that “nothing couldn’t be better” than life at the comfortable house.

**Chapter 19:**

Huck and Jim continue down the river. On one of his solo expeditions in the canoe, Huck comes upon two men on shore fleeing some trouble and begging to be let onto the raft. Huck takes them a mile downstream to safety. One man is about seventy, bald, with whiskers, and the other about thirty. Both men’s clothes are badly tattered. The men do not know each other but are in similar predicaments. The younger man used to sell a paste that was meant to remove tartar from teeth but that took off much of the enamel with it. He fled to avoid the locals’ ire. The older man used to run a temperance revival meeting but had to flee after word got out that he drank. Having heard each other’s stories, the two men, both professional con artists, decide to team up. The younger man declares himself an impoverished English duke and gets Huck and Jim to wait on him and treat him like royalty. The old man then reveals his true identity as the dauphin, the long lost son of King Louis XVI of France. Huck and Jim then wait on the men and call them “Duke” and “Your Majesty,” respectively. Huck quickly realizes that the two men are liars, but to prevent “quarrels,” he does not let on that he knows.

**Chapter 20:**

The duke and the dauphin ask whether Jim is a runaway slave. Huck makes up a story about how he was orphaned and tells them that he and Jim have been forced to travel at night since so many people stopped his boat to ask whether Jim was a runaway. That night, the duke and the dauphin take Huck’s and Jim’s beds while Huck and Jim stand watch against a storm. The next morning, the duke gets the dauphin to agree to put on a performance of Shakespeare in the next town they pass. They reach the town and find that everyone in the town has left for a religious revival meeting in the woods, a lively affair with several thousand people singing and shouting. The dauphin gets up and tells the crowd that he is a former pirate, now reformed by the revival meeting, who will return to the Indian Ocean as a missionary. The crowd joyfully takes up a collection, netting the dauphin more than eighty dollars and many kisses from pretty young women. Meanwhile, the duke takes over the deserted print office in town and earns nearly ten dollars selling print jobs, subscriptions, and advertisements in the local newspaper. The duke also prints up a “handbill,” or leaflet, offering a reward for Jim’s capture, which will allow them to travel freely by day and tell anyone who inquires that Jim is their captive. Meanwhile, Jim has been innocently trying to get the dauphin to speak French, but the supposed heir to the French throne claims that he has forgotten the language.

**Chapter 21:**

Waking up after a night of drinking, the duke and dauphin practice the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* and the swordfight from *Richard III* on the raft. The duke also works on his recitation of the “To be, or not to be” soliloquy from *Hamlet,* which he doesn’t know well at all, throwing in lines from other parts of *Hamlet* and even some lines from *Macbeth*. To Huck, however, the duke seems to possess a great talent. Next, the group visits a one-horse town in Arkansas where lazy young men loiter in the streets, arguing over chewing tobacco. Huck gives a detailed, absurd description of the town. The duke posts handbills for the theatrical performance, and Huck witnesses the shooting of a rowdy drunk by a man, Sherburn, whom the drunk has insulted. The shooting takes place in front of the victim’s daughter. A crowd gathers around the dying man and then goes off to lynch Sherburn.

**Chapter 23:**

The Royal Nonesuch plays to a capacity audience. The dauphin, who appears onstage wearing nothing aside from body paint and some “wild” accoutrements, has the audience howling with laughter. But the crowd nearly attacks the duke and the dauphin when they end the show after only a brief performance. The people in the crowd, embarrassed at having been ripped off, decide to protect their honor by making certain that *everyone* in the town gets ripped off. After the performance, they tell everyone else in town that the play was wonderful. The second night, therefore, also brings a capacity crowd.

As the duke has anticipated, the crowd on the third night consists of the two previous nights’ audiences coming to get their revenge. Huck and the duke make a getaway to the raft before the show starts. They have earned $465 over the three-night run. Jim is shocked that the royals are such “rapscallions.” Huck explains that history shows nobles to be rapscallions who constantly lie, steal, and decapitate, but his history knowledge is factually very questionable. Huck does not see the point in telling Jim that the duke and the dauphin are fakes. Jim spends his night watches “moaning and mourning” for his wife and two children. Though “it don’t seem natural,” Huck concludes that Jim loves his family as much as white men love theirs. Jim is torn apart when he hears a thud in the distance that reminds him of the time he beat his daughter Lizabeth for not doing what he told her to do. When he was beating her, Jim didn’t realize that Lizabeth couldn’t hear his instructions because a bout with scarlet fever had left her deaf.

**Chapter 26:**

The dauphin arranges to stay in the Wilks house. Huck has supper with Joanna, the youngest Wilks sister, whom he calls “the hare-lip” because of her cleft lip, a birth defect. Joanna tests Huck’s knowledge of England, and he makes several slips, forgetting that he is supposedly from Sheffield and that the dauphin is supposed to be a Protestant minister. Finally, Joanna asks if he has made the entire thing up. Joanna’s sisters, Mary Jane and Susan, interrupt and instruct Joanna to be courteous to their guest, and she graciously apologizes. Huck feels terrible about letting such sweet women be swindled and resolves to get them their money back. He goes to the con men’s room to search for the money and hides when they enter. The duke wants to leave town that night, but the dauphin convinces him to stay until they have stolen all the family’s property. After the men leave the room, Huck finds the $6,000 in gold, takes it to his sleeping cubby, and then sneaks out late at night.

**Chapter 27:**

Huck hides the sack of money in Peter Wilks’s coffin as Mary Jane, crying, enters the front room where her dead father’s body lies. Huck, who doesn’t get another opportunity to remove the money safely, worries about what will happen to it. The next day, a dog barking in the cellar disrupts the funeral. The undertaker slips out and returns after a “whack” is heard from downstairs. In a voice that everyone present can hear, he whispers that the dog has caught a rat. In the next moment, though, Huck watches with horror as the undertaker seals the coffin without looking inside. Huck realizes he will never know whether the duke and the dauphin have gotten the money back. He wonders if he should write to Mary Jane after he has left town to tell her to have the coffin dug up. Saying he will take the Wilks girls to England, the dauphin sells off the estate and the slaves, sending a slave mother to New Orleans and her two sons to Memphis. The scene at the grief-stricken family’s separation is heart-rending, and the Wilks women are upset. Huck comforts himself with the knowledge that the slave family will be reunited in a week or so when the duke and the dauphin are exposed. When the con men question Huck about the missing money, he manages to make them think the Wilks family slaves were responsible for the disappearance.

**Chapter 30:**

The dauphin nearly strangles Huck out of anger at his desertion, but the duke stops him. The con men explain that they escaped after the gold was found. The duke and the dauphin each believe that the other hid the gold in the coffin to retrieve it later, without the other knowing. They nearly come to blows but eventually make up and go to sleep.

**Chapter 34:**

Tom remembers seeing a black man delivering food to a shed on the Phelps property earlier that evening and deduces that the shed is where Jim is being held. His perceptive observation impresses Huck, who hatches a plan to free Jim by stealing the key to the shed and making off with Jim by night. Tom belittles this plan for its simplicity and lack of showmanship. Tom then comes up with a wild plan that Huck admits is fifteen times more stylish than his own—it might even get all three of them killed. Meanwhile, Huck finds it hard to believe that respectable Tom is going to sacrifice his reputation by helping a slave escape. Huck and Tom get Jim’s keeper, a superstitious slave, to let them see Jim. When Jim cries out in recognition, Tom protects their secret by tricking Jim’s keeper into thinking the cry was the work of witches. Tom and Huck promise to dig Jim out and begin to make preparations.

**Chapter 35:**

Tom, disappointed that Silas Phelps has taken so few precautions to guard Jim, proclaims that he and Huck will have to invent all the obstacles to Jim’s rescue. Tom says they must saw Jim’s chain off instead of just lifting it off the bed’s framework, because that’s how it’s done in all the books. Tom rattles off a list of other things that are allegedly necessary in plotting an escape, including a rope ladder, a moat, and a shirt on which Jim can keep a journal, presumably written in his own blood. Sawing Jim’s leg off to free him from the chains would also be a nice touch. But since they are pressed for time, they will dig Jim out with case-knives, or large table knives. Despite all the theft that the plan entails, Tom chastises Huck for stealing a watermelon from the slaves’ garden and makes Huck give the slaves a dime as compensation.

**Chapter 36:**

Late that night, Tom and Huck, after much fruitless effort, give up digging with the knives and switch to pick-axes instead. The next day, they gather candlesticks, spoons, and tin plates. Tom says that Jim can etch a declaration of his captivity on the tin plate using the other objects, then throw it out the window for the world to read, just like in Tom’s novels. That night, the boys dig their way to Jim, who is delighted to see them. He tells them that Sally and Silas have been to visit and pray with him. Jim does not understand the boys’ fancy scheme but agrees to go along. Tom convinces Jim’s keeper, Nat, who believes witches are haunting him, that the only cure is to bake a “witch pie” and give it to Jim. Tom plans to bake a rope ladder into the pie.

**Chapter 38:**

Tom insists that Jim scratch an inscription bearing his coat of arms on the wall of the shed, the way the books say. Making pens from the spoons and candlestick is a great deal of trouble, but they manage. Tom creates an unintentionally humorous coat of arms and composes a set of mournful declarations for Jim to inscribe on the wall. Tom, however, expresses disapproval at the fact that they are writing on a wall made of wood rather than stone. The boys try to steal a millstone, but it proves too heavy for them, so they sneak Jim out to help. As Huck and Jim struggle with the millstone, Huck wryly notes that Tom has a talent for supervising while others do the work. Tom tries to get Jim to take a rattlesnake or rat into the shack to tame, and then tries to convince Jim to grow a flower to water with his tears. Jim protests against the unnecessary amount of trouble Tom wants to create, but Tom replies that his ideas present opportunities for greatness.

**Chapter 39:**

Huck and Tom capture rats and snakes to put in the shed with the captive Jim and accidentally infest the Phelps house with them. Aunt Sally falls into a panic over the disorder in her household, while Jim hardly has room to move with all the wildlife in his shed. Uncle Silas, not having heard back from the plantation from which the leaflet said Jim ran away, plans to advertise Jim as a captured runaway in the New Orleans and St. Louis newspapers—the latter of which would surely reach Miss Watson in St. Petersburg. Tom, partly to thwart Silas and partly because the books he has read say to do so, puts the last part of his plan into action, writing letters from an “unknown friend” that warn of trouble to the Phelpses. The letters terrify the family. Tom finishes with a longer letter pretending to be from a member of a band of desperate gangsters who are planning to steal Jim. The letter’s purported author claims to have found religion, so he wishes to offer information to help thwart the theft. The letter goes on to detail when and how the imaginary thieves will try to seize Jim.