

# Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Unit Plan for "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"

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Hannibal, Missouri

## "Humor in Twain's Writing- 'Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn'"

UNIT PLAN for "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"	
<b>Concept or Topic:</b> Humor in Twain's Writing	<b>Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course:</b> 7th
<b>Subject:</b> English/Language Arts-Literature/Writing	<b>Suggested Time Frame:</b> 3 days, 70 minute class periods
<b>Objective(s):</b> 7th grade students will determine the meaning of several unknown or difficult vocabulary words from Mark Twain's writing and will score at least 18 out of 22 (82%) on the "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"- Vocabulary Quiz.  7th grade students will explain the use of humor in Twain's texts through the writing of explanatory paragraphs containing <u>at least one specific example</u> from the text, an <b>explanation of the source of humor</b> , and an <b>explanation of what lesson or larger idea Twain was trying to convey</b> and will score at least 20 out of 24 (83%) on the "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"- Explanatory Writing Feedback Rubric (formative) and the Explanatory Writing Rubric (summative)	
<b>Common Core State Standards:</b> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.  CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2	

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**Assessments:**

- Vocabulary quiz on words from “Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”
- Explanatory paragraphs

**Vocabulary:**

Tier 2

yarn  
scarcely  
fluent  
latter  
commonplace  
bristling  
grammar  
lockjaw  
ignorant  
aggravating  
sacredness  
obligation  
elegant  
countenance  
reckon  
cussing  
rudiments  
devotion  
inquire  
galley-west  
absurdity  
guffaw

Tier 3

humor  
dialect  
explanatory writing

**Subject Area Integration:**

- Language Arts--close reading, understanding humor and dialect, explanatory writing
- Social Studies--study of humor using political cartoons from relevant eras, connecting historical events to the timeline of Mark Twain’s life, Who built log cabins and how were they built?

- Science--dendrology (study of trees), How are knot holes formed?, ornithology (study of birds), study of blue jays or owls, animal behavior and communication, compare/contrast bird behavior, habitats, migration patterns, etc.
- Mathematics--study of volume, How many acorns could fit inside of the log cabin?

**Background Information Required for Unit/Lesson:**

- These lessons will be taught prior to a class unit on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- Background on who Mark Twain was and his importance in American literature
- Review of students' prior knowledge of the time in which he lived
- What is a log cabin?
- What is a knot hole?

Possible tools:

- Review chronology of Clemens's life: <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/mark-twain/timeline>
- Ken Burns' PBS documentary on Twain's life- ~first 20 minutes <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/mark-twain/>
- BrainPOP Introduction to Mark Twain (subscription required) <https://www.brainpop.com/english/famousauthorsandbooks/marktwain/>
- Log cabin on Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Log\\_cabin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Log_cabin)

**Materials:**

- "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn"
- "Taming the Bicycle"
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

**Technology:**

- YouTube videos (listed below)
- Online timers, such as those found on YouTube
- Google Docs for students to collaborate on creating lists and writing explanatory paragraphs
- Twain Quotes: <http://www.twainquotes.com>
- Quizlet (<http://www.quizlet.com>) for vocabulary study
- PBS & Ken Burns resources (see above)
- BrainPOP videos (see above)
- Wikipedia (see above)
- John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Mark Twain Prize for American Humor (see below)
- Audio from LibriVox (see below)

**Related Twain Quotes/Passages:**

"The humorous story is told gravely; the teller does his best to conceal the fact that he

even dimly suspects that there is anything funny about it.”

- "How to Tell a Story"

“Humorists of the 'mere' sort cannot survive. Humor is only a fragrance, a decoration.”

- *Mark Twain's Autobiography*

“What is it that strikes a spark of humor from a man? It is the effort to throw off, to fight back the burden of grief that is laid on each one of us. In youth we don't feel it, but as we grow to manhood we find the burden on our shoulders. Humor? It is nature's effort to harmonize conditions. The further the pendulum swings out over woe the further it is bound to swing back over mirth.”

- Interview in *New York World Sunday Magazine*, November 26, 1905

“Against the assault of Laughter nothing can stand.”

- "The Chronicle of Young Satan," *Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*

### **Lesson Sequence (3 days):**

#### **Day 1: (70 minutes)**

##### **Hook/Intro:**

- Show a popular/classic YouTube video to start class such as one of the following:
  - “David After Dentist”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txqiwrbyGrs>
  - “Charlie Bit My Finger”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBqSz8sSM>
  - “Chewbacca Mom”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3yRv5Jg5TI>
- Ask students to volunteer answers about what made the video funny. Why did they laugh?
- Point out that much of what students found to be funny about the video was unintentional. Things that make us laugh are not always planned. However, true artists of humor work hard to get laughs. Mark Twain was known to many as a humorist. He was internationally famous for his side-splitting writings and lectures.
- Show pictures of some of the following performers and ask students what they have in common:
  - Dave Chappelle
  - Julia Louis-Dreyfus
  - David Letterman
  - Bill Murray
  - Eddie Murphy
  - Ellen DeGeneres
  - Will Ferrell
  - Tina Fey
- Once students have had a chance to guess, let them know that these people are all past winners of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. This award “recognizes people who have had

an impact on American society in ways similar to the distinguished 19th century novelist and essayist best known as Mark Twain.”

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/pages/specialevents/marktwain>

- Give students a few minutes to write in their writer’s notebooks on the following prompts:
  - Who do you think is the funniest entertainer/celebrity/comedian/etc.?
  - What makes that person funny?
  - How would you describe their humor?
  - What sorts of things do they do or say that make you laugh?
- Allow students to turn and talk to share their written responses with a neighbor before soliciting responses from individual students.

(15 minutes)

### **Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- Humor in Writing--Now that students have had a chance to think a bit about things and people that make them laugh and have shared with one another, it’s time to think about how we can identify some methods of humor. The teacher should ask students to share some of their responses to help generate a list on the whiteboard. Follow-up questions (below) to generate more responses might be necessary.
  - Think about a funny scene you recently saw in a movie or TV show. What made that scene funny?
  - Think about a favorite joke you like to tell. What causes those you tell it to laugh?
  - Have you ever laughed out loud while reading something? A book? An online article? A text message? What caused this reaction?
- Other important points to convey:
  - It is important to know that humor is subjective. What is funny to one person may not be funny to another.
  - Also, humor *is* an art form. Creating humor is a risky business. The best humorists and funniest comedians work tirelessly on finding the perfect phrasing or most hilarious punchline, and they often learn from repeated failure.
  - Additionally, trying to analyze humor can be quite a tedious task. There are seemingly infinite ways that humans have found to be funny.
  - One great source of comedy and humor is anxiety or a sense that something has gone wrong.
  - Our list is just scratching the surface. Analyzing humor is also difficult because doing so may in fact “kill the joke.” Nevertheless, analyzing and explaining humor is important to understanding authors like Mark Twain.
  - Some humor tends to be universal across the ages. Other examples of humor may not translate well from the past to our present day.
- Although Mark Twain lived and wrote a long time ago, much of his humor is still

relevant and funny today.

(15 minutes)

**Suggested Questions:**

- What is humor?
- What makes something funny?
- How do writers create humor?
- What does it mean to have a “sense of humor”?
- Can we accurately describe or identify humor?
- What examples of humor created from human anxiety or a sense of something going wrong can you think of from other texts or your own personal experiences?
- What examples of humor from the past might not still be seen as funny today?

**Learning Activity:**

- Today we will read one of Twain’s stories that uses humor to great effect. Review any needed background information on log cabins or knot holes before reading.
- Handout copies of “Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn” by Mark Twain. Be sure copies of the story have numbered paragraphs for easier reference during discussion.
- Allow time for students to read the text independently. While reading, students should “mark up” the story in the following ways:
  - Highlight or underline major points
  - Circle confusing or unknown words and/or phrases
  - Put a “?” next to wonderings or questions
  - Put a “!” next to anything they found surprising

(20 minutes)

- Next, students will need to form a “flock” of 4-5 students. Decide whether to randomly assign, intentionally assign, or let students choose their groups.
- In these newly formed groups, students should do the following:
  - Discuss the major points of the story
  - Write a summary of the story in at least 5 sentences
  - Generate a list of confusing or unknown words and/or phrases
  - Discuss any wonderings, questions, surprises, etc.
  - Decide on a name for their “flock”
- Each “flock” will select a member to share their summary with the class and another member to share their list of words and/or phrases.
- Teacher should write words from each group’s list on the whiteboard, making sure that each of the above Tier 2 words are included.

(15 minutes)

**Review/Closure:**

- Let students know that they will be reading this story again during the following class period and doing activities around it. Students should be encouraged to

think further about what makes this a humorous tale.

- Homework: Give students the handout with the Tier 2 vocabulary words from above. Students should add any additional words to the list that the teacher wrote on the whiteboard. Students should find definitions to each word in either a print or online dictionary resource.

(5 minutes)

## **Day 2: (70 minutes)**

### **Hook/Intro:**

- Mark Twain had a lot of thoughts on humor. Display and read the above quotes for students and ask them to reflect one in writing for 5 minutes. Students may choose to explain what the quote means, what it means to them, how it connects to their own life, something that the quote reminds them of, how it connects to the story they read last class, etc.
- Students should turn and talk to a classmate to share their writing. Full class discussion/sharing could also follow.

(10 minutes)

### **Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- Dialect--In addition to being known for his humor, Twain is also well-known for his use of dialect in his writings. He often wrote his stories using the language that people actually used in everyday speech.
- The teacher should lead students in generating a list of examples of common ways they use dialect or even improper grammar/speech in their everyday lives (i.e. text messaging, slang, etc.)

(10 minutes)

### **Suggested Questions:**

- What is dialect?
- What is the effect of using dialect in writing?
- How does the way Jim Baker talks differ from the ways the blue jays talk?
- What does this difference reveal about these characters?

### **Learning Activity:**

- Students should return to their “flocks” to share the vocabulary definitions they found for homework, checking to make sure their findings are similar. If any discrepancies arise, the teacher may help to clarify.
- (10 minutes)
- Acorn Grab: As a way of reviewing the story, students will work within groups to answer comprehension questions. Students should have their annotated copies of the text out once again. Each “flock” will be given a handout numbered 1-10 (below). This activity is adapted from the #EggDashChallenge created by John

Meehan and outlined in his book *EDrenaline Rush*, 2019, Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

- In the center of the classroom, the teacher should place a basket full of “acorns.” Plastic Easter eggs work well for this (or crumpled up slips of paper). In each “acorn” the teacher should place a slip of paper with a numbered question from the list below (adapted from <https://quizlet.com/309136722/bakers-bluejay-yarn-flash-cards/>):

1. What animal does Jim compare bluejays to when talking about animal's grammar? **(cat)**
2. Where does Jim Baker live? **(the woods in California)**
3. Where was Jim Baker when he first started to understand blue jay communication? **(his front porch)**
4. How many blue jays did Baker say must have been above his house? **(5,000)**
5. What was Mark Twain's real name? **(Samuel Langhorne Clemens)**
6. A jay hasn't got any more \_\_\_\_\_ than a congressman **(principle)**
7. What are some bad traits of a bluejay? **(they will lie, steal, deceive, betray, and go back on their promises)**
8. What are some human traits the blue jays have? **(they can laugh, cry, reason, plan, gossip, and have a sense of humor)**
9. What do jays become ashamed of? **(using bad grammar)**
10. Who didn't find anything funny in this story **(the owl)**

- The teacher should set a timer for 7 minutes. Each group should send a member to the basket to retrieve one “acorn” to bring back to their “flock.”
- At the end of the time, tally up points for each “flock” based on correct responses and add to scoreboard on whiteboard.

(10 minutes)

- Students will read through the text a second time, this time with either the teacher reading the story aloud or by listening to an audio version of the story (such as this recording from LibriVox: <https://librivox.org/a-tramp-abroad-by-mark-twain/>, start at Chapter 2 14:12 and continue on through Chapter 3).
- Students should annotate their text as follows:
  - Put a “😄” or “LOL” next to anything that they found funny/humorous
  - Put a box around any words or phrases that seem like examples of dialect in the text

(10 minutes)

- Again with their “flocks,” students will use their annotations to create a list based on the following questions:
  - What makes this story humorous?



- What examples of dialect can be found in this story?
- On large sheets of butcher paper, each “flock” will list their responses on a T-chart. Since we know that blue jays are fairly clever creatures, each “flock” will be encouraged to sneak a peek at rival “flocks” while also doing their best to keep their answers hidden from rival “flocks” before time is up!
- “Flocks” will share their answers at the end of the time. Correct answers will be added to their score on the classroom scoreboard.
- Additional fun: At the end of this activity, each “flock” could receive a pipe cleaner for each point they have on the scoreboard. The group will be given a set amount of time to build a “nest” with their pipe cleaners. Once built, the teacher could fill up each group’s “nest” with candy (i.e. Hershey’s Kisses) for the group to share.

Adapted from the Anchor Chart Keep-Away (created by John Meehan) activity and Firestarter (created by Kathleen McDermott) activity outlined in John Meehan’s book *EDrenaline Rush*, 2019, Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

(15 minutes)

**Review/Closure:**

- Small group discussion (perhaps while enjoying candy) about what Twain might have been trying to say with this story. Beyond being funny, what is Twain’s larger purpose? What does this humorous story teach us or tell us about human nature?
- Homework: Study vocabulary words from the story. Quiz next class!

(5 minutes)

**Day 3: (70 minutes)**

**Hook/Intro:**

- Vocabulary quiz on Tier 2 words (see list above)
- Writer’s notebook: Think back to the discussion you had with your “flock” at the end of our last class. Write a response based on the following prompts:
  - Beyond being funny, what is Twain’s larger purpose for telling this story?
  - What does this humorous story teach us or tell us about human nature?
  - Even though Jim Baker’s “yarn” is about blue jays, what do these birds do or say that seem human-like?
- Give students time to turn and talk with someone from another “flock” and then transition to a whole class discussion.

(25 minutes)

**Teaching of the Concept(s):**

- Explanatory writing- “requires you to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately.”
- “An effective response requires you to READ the ‘text’ closely, in order to demonstrate an understanding of the topic and locate evidence from the ‘text’ to support your response.”

Found at: <http://www3.wayne.kyschools.us/userfiles/250/Classes/11798/Informative.pptx>

**Suggested Questions:**

- Beyond being funny, what is Twain's larger purpose for telling this story?
- What does this humorous story teach us or tell us about human nature?
- Even though Jim Baker's "yarn" is about blue jays, what do these birds do or say that seem human-like?
- How can I use writing to explain complex ideas?

**Learning Activity:**

- We have already been reading "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn" very closely. Take a look at all those annotations! We've had a lot of good thinking and discussion about humor and have found examples in Twain's writing.
- You will be reading the story once more with the below assignment in mind.
- Your objective is to clearly explain how humor is used in this story. You will first need to briefly **summarize the story** (look back on the work you did with your "flock"). Then, you should choose **one example of humor** in the story. Next, explain **why** you think this example is humorous. What makes it funny? Lastly, you should **explain** how this example helps to show something deeper. Think about the questions we dealt with at the beginning of today's lesson. What is the larger purpose of this story? What does it say about human nature?
- Before you begin writing, it may be helpful to have an example. Let's take a look at a part of another of Twain's story called "Taming the Bicycle" and a sample of the type of writing you will complete.
- Here the teacher should make the text of "Taming the Bicycle" available to students, summarize the beginning of the story (autobiographical story about learning how to ride a large, old-fashioned bicycle, receiving lessons, and then trying to get the knack of it) and begin reading to the class starting at "Of course I had trouble mounting the machine, entirely on my own responsibility. . ." through the story's end.
- After reading, share the following example with students:

*In "Taming the Bicycle" by Mark Twain, the author describes an experience he really had learning to ride a large, old-fashioned bike. He begins his learning by getting help from an expert instructor. After learning the basics, he later attempts to ride the bicycle on his own. He encounters many difficulties and some doubters, but he eventually feels fully confident in his riding and even recommends that readers get their own bicycles.*

*This story is quite humorous. One source of this humor is the young boy who observes Twain as he struggles to learn how to ride. The boy constantly teases Twain, even sarcastically saying "My, but don't he rip along!" when Twain is moving sluggishly down the road. While the boy's constant ribbing is funny, the true source of the humor here is that Twain gets the last laugh. By the end of the story, Twain has gotten so good at riding*

a bike “that the boy couldn’t keep up with” him. He even vows to run over the boy in order to get his revenge. Readers know that Twain is joking here, but he is also revealing a great truth: do not let others discourage you from your undertakings.

- Begin by outlining your ideas using the graphic organizer (below). On it, you will have a space for each of the following:
  - An introductory summary of the story (paragraph 1)
  - One humorous example from the story
  - Explanation of what makes this example humorous
  - Explanation of how this example helps to show something deeper
- After outlining, you will type your paragraph on a Google Doc. Remember to write in a formal style (we ain’t usin’ no dialect here!)

(35 minutes)

#### **Review/Closure:**

- Students will share their explanatory writing pieces with a peer. Using the feedback rubric, students will comment on one another’s writing.
- Homework: Students will revise their writing and complete for next class. Teacher will use the feedback rubric to grade student writing for formative credit.

(10 minutes)

#### **Homework (for the unit):**

- As students begin reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, they will note instances of humor found within some of the first few chapters. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Tom’s attempt to deceive Aunt Polly/Aunt Polly’s guile (Chapter 1)
  - Tom’s fight (Chapter 1)
  - Whitewashing (Chapter 2)
  - Church fun (Chapter 4)
  - Bible tickets (Chapter 4)
  - Tom’s tooth (Chapter 6)
- The writing assignment is the same as it was for the short story, but this piece of explanatory writing will be assessed summatively using the rubric below.

#### **Strategies for Exceptional Students (for the unit):**

- Expand your explanatory writing by creating a thesis around something you think Twain was trying to express in his writing. Support your thesis with two or three paragraphs explaining how Twain uses humor to communicate this. Use specific examples!
- Write another story with the translated talk of other animals. Give your animal characters unique and appropriate personalities and put them in a humorous scene.

#### **Suggested Follow-Up Activities (for the unit):**

- Keep track of humor throughout *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- Read and discuss Twain's use of humor in other stories such as "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"
- Compare and contrast "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn" with "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" by Rudyard Kipling
- Creative writing using humor. Use a method of creating humor similar to what Twain used in your own short story writing.



## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn” Review- Acorn Grab**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**4.**

**5.**

**6.**

**7.**

**8.**

**9.**

**10.**

Send one member of your flock up to retrieve an “acorn” from the basket. Bring it back for the group to read. Place your answers above and repeat! Get as many answers as you can before time runs out!

## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Vocabulary Words**

yarn-

scarcely-

fluent-

latter-

commonplace-

bristling-

grammar-

lockjaw-

ignorant-

aggravating-

sacredness-

obligation-

elegant-

countenance-

reckon-

cuss-

rudiments-

devotion-

inquire-

galley-west-

absurdity-

guffaw-

## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Vocabulary Words** (with definitions)

yarn- a long or rambling story, especially one that is implausible

scarcely- only just; almost not

fluent- able to express oneself easily and articulately

latter- denoting the second or second mentioned of two people or things

commonplace- not unusual; ordinary

bristling- aggressively brisk or tense

grammar- the whole system and structure of a language

lockjaw- spasm of the jaw muscles, causing the mouth to remain tightly closed

ignorant- lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated

aggravating- causing annoyance or exasperation

sacredness- devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose

obligation- an act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment

elegant- pleasingly graceful and stylish in appearance or manner

countenance- a person's face or facial expression

reckon- conclude after calculation; be of the opinion

cussing- cursing/swearing

rudiments- a basic principle or element or a fundamental skill

devotion- love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause

inquire- ask for information from someone

galley-west- contrary, in the opposite direction, askew

absurdity- the quality or state of being ridiculous or wildly unreasonable

guffaw- a loud and boisterous laugh

## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Vocabulary Quiz**

- |                |       |   |
|----------------|-------|---|
| 1. scarcely    | _____ | A. only just; almost not  |
| 2. lockjaw     | _____ | B. a person's face or facial expression                                     |
| 3. ignorant    | _____ | C. spasm of the jaw muscles, causing the mouth to remain tightly closed     |
| 4. aggravating | _____ | D. lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated |
| 5. countenance | _____ | E. causing annoyance or exasperation  |
- 

- |                 |       |  |
|-----------------|-------|--|
| 6. latter       | _____ | F. able to express oneself easily and articulately                 |
| 7. elegant      | _____ | G. not unusual; ordinary   |
| 8. fluent       | _____ | H. aggressively brisk or tense                                     |
| 9. bristling    | _____ | I. denoting the second or second mentioned of two people or things |
| 10. commonplace | _____ | J. pleasingly graceful and stylish in appearance or manner         |
- 

- |                |       |   |
|----------------|-------|---|
| 11. inquire    | _____ | K. devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose                                   |
| 12. guffaw     | _____ | L. ask for information from someone   |
| 13. grammar    | _____ | M. a loud and boisterous laugh  |
| 14. obligation | _____ | N. the whole system and structure of a language   |
| 15. sacredness | _____ | O. a long or rambling story, especially one that is implausible                                   |
| 16. yarn       | _____ | P. an act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment |

**more on back!**

## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Vocabulary Quiz**

- |              |       |   |
|--------------|-------|---|
| 17. devotion | _____ | Q. contrary, in the opposite direction, askew |
|--------------|-------|---|



18. rudiments \_\_\_\_\_

19. cussing \_\_\_\_\_

20. galley-west \_\_\_\_\_

21. absurdity \_\_\_\_\_

22. reckon  
skill \_\_\_\_\_

R. cursing/swearing

S. conclude after calculation; be of the opinion

T. the quality or state of being ridiculous or wildly unreasonable

U. love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person, activity, or cause

V. a basic principle or element or a fundamental

## **“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Graphic Organizer for Explanatory Writing**

**Briefly summarize the story**  
(1st paragraph)

**Paraphrase or Quote of Example from Story**  
(2nd paragraph)

**Explanation of Why Example Is Humorous**  
(2nd paragraph)

**“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Graphic Organizer for Explanatory**

## Writing

**Explanation of How Example Helps to Show Something Deeper  
(Lessons or Ideas)**  
(2nd paragraph)

**“Jim Baker’s Blue-Jay Yarn”- Explanatory Writing Feedback Rubric (formative)**

<b>Areas for Growth</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Areas of Success</b>
	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b> A strong introduction paragraph includes background information on the story through a brief but complete summary.</p>	
	<p><b>EXAMPLE OF HUMOR</b> A clear example paraphrased or quoted directly from the story is provided.</p>	
	<p><b>EXPLANATION OF HUMOR</b> A clear explanation of why the example should be considered humorous.</p>	
	<p><b>DEEPER EXPLANATION</b> Additional explanation shows how the example helps to demonstrate a deeper, larger idea about human nature, human failings, etc.</p>	
	<p><b>CONVENTIONS</b> Writing is cleanly edited with little or no errors.</p> <p>Writing avoids run-ons and sentence fragments and is free of spelling errors.</p> <p>Minimal errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.</p>	

## Explanatory Writing Rubric (summative)

Criteria	Attempting- 1	Progressing- 2	Accomplishing- 3	Exceeding- 4
Focus	Writing is not sufficiently focused on addressing Twain's use of humor and fails to meet most of the task demands	Writing is somewhat focused on addressing Twain's use of humor and meets some of the task demands.	Writing is focused on addressing Twain's use of humor and meets the task demands.	Writing is strongly and consistently focused on addressing Twain's use of humor and meets all task demands.
Textual Evidence	Writing attempts to support the controlling idea with inaccurate or irrelevant references to the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with inconsistently accurate or relevant evidence from the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with accurate and relevant evidence from the central text.	Writing supports the controlling idea with well-chosen, accurate and relevant evidence from the central text.
Organization	Writing is disorganized and/or confusing.	Writing is somewhat organized but could be more structured.	Writing is organized with a structure that clarifies and explains the controlling idea and meets the task demands.	Writing is organized with a purposeful structure that clarifies and thoroughly explains the controlling idea and meets the task demands.
Conventions	Writing has consistent errors and uses language that is inappropriate for the audience and purpose.	Writing has some errors and uses language that is not consistently appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few errors and uses appropriate language for the audience and purpose of the task.	Writing has few to no errors and consistently uses language appropriate for the audience and purpose of the task.