

Tom Sawyer

Teacher's handbook

TS-01: how Tom makes work desirable

Guiding question, objectives, lesson sequence, support and feedback: this unit shows how observations about a scene lead to an explanation supported by textual evidence.

SELECTED MATERIALS · INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH

Secondary education · English as the main language of schooling

Trial edition 1.3 · October 2026

Pages included

04 · Teacher's handbook: pages 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.

Original page numbers and references to the complete documents are retained. This selection does not replace the full teaching package. Source pages are reproduced unchanged; only this introductory page has been added.

Explore the complete teaching package

Access for a classroom trial is arranged individually with Edwin Zschaler. The website presents selected materials; timing and conditions of use are agreed when you make contact.

TS-01 · STAGE 1 · 90 MINUTES

6.1 How Tom makes work desirable

Guiding question: How does Tom get Ben to pay for work Tom does not want to do himself?

Text basis: 03, Ch. 2, lines 81–124 and 143–154; initial situation, lines 6–13.

Focus: Connect Tom's behaviour and words with their effect; distinguish outward behaviour from inner experience; relate the narrator's comment to the scene.

Minimum objective: Accurately connect one specific move by Tom with Ben's response and explain it using a relevant passage.

Prior reading: Chapter 2 has been read; this unit can take place before the end of stage 1.

Materials and printing: 03, PDF pp. 15 and 16–18; use the existing novel. 05, pp. 15–16: two working pages, copy only if needed. Board columns: Tom does or says — Ben responds — our explanation.

Time	Planned core sequence
Lesson 1	0–13 min: initial situation and core passage; 13–41: A with modelling and paired work; 41–45: record an individual connection.
Lesson 2	0–7 min: recap; 7–27: B and narrator's commentary; 27–45: write C, check and supplement evidence.

Outcome and next step: TS-01-C on portfolio p. 16. Continue Chapters 3–4; further examples of recognition do not need a new writing task.

Why this scene? Revaluing an unwelcome job opens questions about recognition and influence. Comparing Tom's performance, Ben's response and the narrator's comment moves students from judging a character to testing an explanation against the text.

Appropriate support: If effect and evidence do not connect, locate Ben's response in lines 100–105. Use the three search sections and sentence opening in the core sequence. Do not present scarcity or the narrator's irony as a universal law.

Core sequence, tasks and expected responses: p. 35. Background and additional passages: p. 38. C is written once in the portfolio. The minimum objective identifies the subject-specific core; give T/B/E feedback without adding a new score threshold.

TS-01 · CORE SEQUENCE

Discussion prompts

“Where does the text first show Ben’s interest growing?”

“What does Ben not know that the narrator tells us?”

TS-01 · Model unit · first lesson

Minutes	Procedure
0–5	Reactivate the initial situation: what must Tom do, and what does he want? Check Ch. 2, lines 6–13.
5–13	Reread the core passage, lines 81–124; if needed, read sections aloud while the class follows.
13–20	Model the three columns together using lines 81–93. Keep an observation separate from its possible effect.
20–32	Begin task A in pairs. Each student records an individual explanation.
32–41	Order three different moves on the board. Ask: where is the response stated? What are we inferring?
41–45	Individually formulate one connection; mark the passage if the explanation is still uncertain.

TS-01-A · Tom’s approach and Ben’s response

Task for students: “Examine Ch. 2, lines 81–124. Record three moves through which Tom changes Ben’s view of painting. For each, note: what does Tom do or say? How does Ben respond? How are these connected? Give a relevant line reference for each move.”

“Then write one connection as a sentence: Tom ...; this makes ... seem ... to Ben. Go beyond simply saying that Tom is clever.”

Modelling the thinking

For lines 81–93, you might say: “I can see that Ben mocks Tom and Tom does not answer at first. Tom examines his paintwork carefully. Ben calls it work Tom has been given as punishment; Tom questions that description. I do not yet know whether Ben is convinced. I need to read on to find out.”

Do not claim an effect before the text shows it. Lines 100–105 provide the next step: Ben thinks, follows the movements and wants to paint himself.

Support without supplying an interpretation

For a pair, narrow the search to lines 81–105, 106–116 and 117–124. First ask students to mark Tom and Ben in each section. If needed, explain “reluctance” as visible hesitation or resistance. Students follow any reading aloud in the book; afterwards each formulates an answer independently.

Observation point: who names an effect without finding it in the text? First provide search support for Ben’s response, rather than the complete explanation.

TS-01 · Model unit · second lesson

Minutes	Procedure
0–7	Check two explanations from lesson 1: do observation and evidence match?
7–17	Task B: reread lines 121–124; first individually, then exchange briefly.
17–27	Read the narrator’s comment, lines 143–154, together. Clarify difficult sentences in students’ own words.
27–39	Task C: each student writes a supported explanation; a partner checks only the evidence.
39–45	Discuss one response, add to individual explanations and record any support used.

TS-01-B · What Ben sees and what we additionally learn

Task: “Read Ch. 2, lines 121–124. What does Tom show outwardly, and what does he feel? How do we know about this difference? Explain how it changes our view of the exchange.”

Two sentence openings provide enough support: “Ben can see that...” and “The narrator additionally tells us that...”. Accept “Ben knows...” only where the text actually shows that knowledge.

TS-01-C · Putting an explanation to the test

Task: “In five to seven sentences, explain why Ben ends up paying to paint. Connect two moves from the scene with the narrator’s claim in lines 143–147. Cite the passages. Add: does the commentary explain this scene convincingly? Does that mean its claim must always hold?”

The final question may be answered with a brief counterexample. The aim is to test the scope of a statement; a personal experience is unnecessary.

Support and optional extension

Students not yet able to make a connection can use: “Tom makes painting desirable by... We can see this in... This fits the commentary because...”. If needed, reduce the text to lines 99–111 and 117–124; retain the shared demand for explanation.

Optional extension: examine lines 148–154. How does the narrator speak about himself? Which phrase also makes the lesson comic? Share the answer orally or use it instead of another text comparison.

Record: retain the individual C explanation as the first fuller evidence of learning. Mark a sentence added after discussion in another colour or with a short note.

TS-01 · Expected responses

TS-01-A · Supported connections

Redirecting attention: Tom ignores the mockery and examines his work like an artist (Ch. 2, lines 81–96). Ben is meant to see a valuable activity. His growing interest becomes explicit only in lines 100–105.

Restricting access: Tom stresses the rare opportunity and claims special requirements (lines 99, 107–116). Ben wants to join in and keeps asking. This does not establish that Aunt Polly really trusts only one boy in a hundred: Tom is speaking here.

Increasing the offer: Ben first offers part of an apple, then a whole apple as well (lines 117–120). Tom’s feigned hesitation raises Ben’s offer. Other divisions into three moves are possible if action, response and explanation fit together.

TS-01-B · Readers’ greater knowledge

Tom’s face shows reluctance while he feels joy (line 121). The narrator gives readers access to both. Calling other boys possible “victims” (line 124) invites a critical view of the exchange. Readers can find Tom’s idea funny and recognise the deception at the same time.

TS-01-C · Possible short student answer

“Tom acts as though painting is a special opportunity, and Ben wants to try it himself (lines 99–105). Tom then says very few boys could do it properly (lines 107–111). This makes Ben want it even more. Eventually he pays for it with apples (lines 117–120). This fits the commentary: something difficult to access can seem desirable (lines 143–147). That is convincing for this scene, but something can also be hard to get without being something you want.”

Recognising the next step

Already secure: one specific move and its effect are accurately connected. **Develop further:** two moves are explained through the commentary; the answer distinguishes a character's words from the narrator's knowledge. These are observations, not grade levels.

For "Tom is clever, so Ben does the work", ask: "Which action changes Ben's view?" For a quotation merely attached to the answer, ask: "Which word in it supports your explanation?" For an incorrect reference, first ask the student to look it up. Feedback identifies just one next step at a time.

Extension: in lines 148–149 the narrator presents himself as a great philosopher. This inflated self-presentation can be read as ironic; students must identify the textual observation supporting that reading.

Portfolio: TS-01-C; connect two moves with the commentary. First evidence of learning.

TS-01 · BACKGROUND

Extension objective: Examine the narrator's ironic self-presentation and limit the scope of his generalisation.

Understanding the scene as literature

At first, painting stands between Tom and the leisure he wants. When Ben appears, Tom performs the same activity with apparently artistic devotion. He emphasises its value and the difficulty of gaining access. Ben should not merely want to paint, but feel he is among the few qualified to do so.

The physical activity changes little; its meaning for Ben changes greatly. The narrator lets readers see behind Tom's performance. This is particularly clear when he hands over the brush: outward reluctance and inner joy diverge. We can thus recognise the deception while Ben enjoys what he believes is a privilege.

Function	Checked passage
Initial situation	Ch. 2, lines 6–13: the large fence and Tom's despair.
Core investigation	Ch. 2, lines 81–124: Ben's mockery, Tom's performance, request and exchange.
Narrator's commentary	Ch. 2, lines 143–154: scarcity, work and pleasure.
Wider context	Ch. 2, lines 125–142: other boys and the exaggerated reckoning.