

# My Papa, Mark Twain

Susy Clemens

## Activate Prior Knowledge

Think about someone you admire, or like a great deal. What do you like about this person?

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## Reading Skill

**Facts** can be proved to be true.

**Opinions** are what a person believes. Write one fact found in the bracketed paragraph.

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Write one opinion found in the bracketed paragraph.

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Underline the clue word that helps you know that this is an opinion.

## Reading Check

What color does Twain always wear?

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Circle the reason in the text.

We are a very happy family. We consist of Papa, Mamma, Jean, Clara and me. It is papa I am writing about, and I shall have no trouble in not knowing what to say about him, as he is a *very striking* character.



The author said that Papa had beautiful gray hair, an attractive nose, kind eyes, and a mustache. He was a very handsome and fit man. He was also a good man, and he was very funny. Sometimes he had a bad temper, but everyone in her family did. Sometimes he was forgetful. And sometimes, he paced back and forth across a room while he thought.



Papa is very fond of animals particularly of cats, we had a dear little gray kitten once that he named “Lazy” (papa always wears gray to match his hair and eyes) and he would carry him around on his shoulder, it was a mighty pretty sight! the gray cat sound asleep against papa’s gray coat and hair.



The author’s father gave the family cats very funny names, such as Stray Kit, Buffalo Bill, and Soapy Sall.

The author’s father often used strong language, and he didn’t like to be interrupted. He said that he didn’t like to listen to anyone talk except himself. The author says he meant that as a joke, but she thinks there is some truth in it!



## Vocabulary Development

**consist** (kuhn SIST) *v.* be made up of

**striking** (STRYK ing) *adj.* interesting; noticeable

**particularly** (per TIK yuh ler lee) *adv.* especially; more than others

## TAKE NOTES

One of papa's latest books is "The Prince and the Pauper" and it is unquestionably the best book he has ever written, some people want him to keep to his old style, some gentleman wrote him, "I enjoyed Huckleberry Finn immensely and am glad to see that you have returned to your old style." That enoyed me, that enoyed me greatly, because it trobles me to have so few people know papa, I mean realy know him, they think of Mark Twain as a humorist joking at everything . . . .



The author said that people described him in the strangest ways. For example, they said that he had messy red hair and a wrinkled, sad face. The author said that it's not true. And he's not always funny. She wanted him to write a book that showed his soft, kind side. She thought "The Prince and the Pauper" did that perfectly.



I never saw a man with so much variety of feeling as papa has; now the "Prince and the Pauper" is full of touching places, but there is always a streak of humor in them somewhere. Papa very seldom writes a passage without some humor in it somewhere and I don't think he ever will.



When the author's father was young, he played "hookey" all the time. Sometimes he even pretended to be dying so that he would not have to go to school! Instead of making him go to school, his mother let him go to work in a printing office.



He did so, and gradually picked up enough education to enable him to do about as well as those who were more studious in early life.

### Read Fluently

Circle *enoyed*. Say the word aloud. What word does this sound like?

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Circle any other words that you think are misspelled in this sentence. Why do you think the author misspelled some words?

### Literary Analysis

The author's **perspective** shows the writer's feelings and beliefs about a subject. How might this biography be different if someone outside Mark Twain's family had written it?

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### Stop to Reflect

How do you think this biography would be different if Susy had written it when she was an adult?

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### Vocabulary Development

**seldom** (SEL duhm) *adv.* not very often  
**enable** (i NAY buhl) *v.* allow

## My Papa, Mark Twain

1. **Deduce:** Susy's father often played tricks to get out of going to school. Explain how you think Susy feels about her father's lack of formal education.

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2. **Speculate:** This essay contains many misspelled words. Why do you think the misspelled words were not corrected?

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3. **Reading Skill:** Use this chart to list two **opinions** that Susy gives about her father. Then, list the clue words that helped you know that each one is an opinion.

Opinion	Clue Word

4. **Literary Analysis:** You can understand an **author's perspective** by finding out details about the author's life. List one detail from Susy Clemens's life that helps you see her author's perspective.

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### Writing: Dramatic Scene

Turn a passage from “My Papa, Mark Twain” into a **dramatic scene**. Answer the following questions to help you write your dramatic scene.

- First, you must choose a passage from the essay for your scene. Your passage should have at least two characters. What is your passage about?

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- Which characters are speaking?

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- How do the characters feel as they are talking?

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### Research and Technology: Research for Charts

Create a **poster** that shows some of Mark Twain’s best-known works and characters. Use this chart to list details about the stories and characters you choose to put on your poster.

Title of Work	Important Character(s)	Description of Work	Description of Character(s)

### Word List A

Study these words from “Stage Fright.” Then, complete the activity that follows.

**awed** [AWD] *v.* amazed

*The crowd was awed when the hitter slammed a five-hundred foot home run.*

**audience** [AW dee uhns] *n.* people gathered to watch something

*The movie drew a large audience on its first day in the theaters.*

**auditorium** [aw di TAWR ee uhm] *n.* a large room where people come to see something

*There weren't enough seats in the auditorium for all the people.*

**appreciation** [uh pree shee AY shun] *n.* thankfulness

*To show my appreciation for helping me study, I thanked my tutor again and again.*

**horrible** [HAWR uh buhl] *adj.* awful, terrible

*The medicine tasted so horrible that Nancy spit it out right away.*

**kindness** [KYND nes] *n.* friendliness, helpfulness

*She showed her kindness by giving us an umbrella when we were caught in the rain.*

**memory** [MEM uh ree] *n.* ability to remember things

*Shelly's memory is so good she can remember something you said last year.*

**speech** [SPEECH] *n.* text meant to be read aloud in front of a group of people

*After winning the election, the candidate gave a speech thanking those who voted for him.*

### Exercise A

Fill in each blank in the paragraph below with an appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.

The senator gave a dynamic [1] \_\_\_\_\_ in front of a large [2] \_\_\_\_\_ of students. He spoke in the town's high-school [3] \_\_\_\_\_. Many students and teachers thought he sounded [4] \_\_\_\_\_ because of his sore throat. Others didn't mind. They were [5] \_\_\_\_\_ by the amazing things that he said. The senator is known for not using notes; instead, he speaks from [6] \_\_\_\_\_. Afterward, he thanked the school for its [7] \_\_\_\_\_ in inviting him to speak. The listeners clapped in [8] \_\_\_\_\_ of his thoughtful words.