*In the novel, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain shows the theme that morality is a character trait that must be developed over time, through the progression of Huck’s conscience in relation to the topics of racism and deception.*

Due to his surroundings as a child, Huck uses stereotypes to justify his feelings of racism, especially when observing Jim’s interactions with other black people. Towards the beginning of the novel, as Huck watches groups of black people congregate around Jim to hear his stories about “witches”, he narrates, “Niggers is always talking about witches in the dark by the kitchen fire” (Twain 36). **The reader can infer here that Jim and his group were not talking about witches at all, but rather something secret such as plans of escape.** This demonstrates both the fact that Huck is very naïve, but also that he uses negative stereotypes of black people to consciously put them lower in his mind. However, towards the end of the novel, the reader can see that Huck begins to broaden his views by overlooking his deeply engrained stereotypes. He is able to see that Jim “was a mighty good nigger” (Twain 154), because of the shame Jim had in himself for hitting his daughter, who turned out to be deaf. **This shows that** even though Huck believes in many of the various black stereotypes, he is able to slowly put those behind him throughout the course of the story and see Jim in a positive light. In his literary criticism, Charles H. Pullen commented that “Huck, in turn, discovers that however much he tries to distinguish Jim as other than an equal, however much he is bothered by his determination to see Jim as a lesser being than the white man, he cannot ignore his growing concern for him nor his deepening affection and respect for the way in which Jim endures and goes on”. **This reinforces the idea that it is actually possible for Huck to evolve morally and ethically.** The stereotypes Huck firmly held in his beliefs at the beginning of the novel were certainly less persistent and pervasive as the novel continued.

**Extra Help session: Monday after school 2-2:30**