

Analysis Questions – “The Private History of a Campaign That Failed”

1. In the opening paragraphs, how does Twain rationalize his telling of this story?
- 2. What purpose does the introduction serve? What does it establish?**
3. In section 2, what is he saying about the boys in the group? What does this description tell us?
4. How do the group of boys envision their “military expedition”?
5. In section 4, Twain describes their first experience in the war. Summarize their efforts.
- 6. What do you think is the purpose of section 5? Explain its significance to the overall text.**
7. Explain the conflict that arises in section 6.
8. What is the question that is so important in the 7th section?
9. What happened in section 9 that “takes the romance” out of the situation?
10. Locate passages throughout the text in which Twain trivializes the boy’s role in the war. What actions demonstrate that they do not take their roles seriously?
- 11. Explain Twain’s description in section 12 of when he kills the man....what were his initial feelings? Explain.**
- 12. Statement about war here? Narrator’s epiphany in section 12?**
13. Why does it offer him relief to know that his bullet wasn’t necessarily the one that killed the man?
- 14. Explain what the narrator means by the last four sentences in section 13.**
15. Why do they disband?
16. Explain what Twain believes is “valuable” about his “war paper”?
- 17. How are Southerners depicted in this narrative? Why?**
- 18. What is Twain saying about the reality of war?**
- 19. How is this work both a *regionalist* work and a work of *realism*?**
- 20. Compare this work to Bierce’s “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge.” What do they have in common besides the setting/time period in which they occur? Consider how each work focuses on aspects of psychology....among other things of course.**