

***World Literature for  
Christian Homeschoolers***

**Volume 4:  
*A Connecticut Yankee  
in King Arthur's Court***

**Answer Key to Review Questions**

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## Week 17, Day 1 (Preface, A Word of Introduction, Chapters I-II)

1. What startling statement does the old man make to the author during their tour of Warwick Castle? What does the Yankee reveal to the author about how his (the Yankee's) story began?

*That he believes in time travel, and that he made the bullet hole that is in the armor of Sir Sagramor le Desirous. The Yankee reveals that he was an engineer who was struck on the head during a fight in 1879, and woke up in Camelot, where his tale begins.*

2. How does the Yankee direct the author to continue the story?

*He points him to a manuscript, and the author begins to read the Yankee's story from where he was captured by the knight and told he was in Camelot.*

3. Where does the Yankee think he is at first? Name some strange sights that he sees.

*He thinks he's near a circus, then near an asylum named "Camelot." He sees children who stare at him instead of the colorfully-dressed knight, poverty-stricken villagers, and a troop of knights driving up to a castle—a scene of frantic activity and confusion.*

4. What does the Yankee learn from "Clarence"? What gives the Yankee a chance to see if the page is, indeed, telling the truth?

*It is the year 528, and he is in the time of King Arthur. The page tells the Yankee that he is a prisoner of Sir Kay and will be thrown in a dungeon after being presented to King Arthur. The Yankee happens to remember that an eclipse is due soon, so he reasons that if he sees it this will confirm that "Clarence" is telling the truth.*

5. Describe the banquet scene.

*Knights, ladies and a king in colorful outfits eat, surrounded by dogs, shouting, laughing, talking merrily of bloody conquests. Twenty prisoners, wounded and starving, stand in chains by the group.*

### Additional Notes:

- Right away the differences between the knights and commoners are established. The knight threatens to attack the Yankee simply because he doesn't like his attitude, and the villagers salute and bow before the knights, who refuse to even acknowledge their presence. And the Yankee notes that the prisoners are trained to accept horrible treatment without complaining or expecting anything else.
- Twain's humor is already in sharp display, with the Yankee's saying Clarence "ain't no more than a paragraph" (a pun on the word "page"), describing Clarence as looking like a carrot (with his orange tights), and concluding that a man who uses phrases like "Marry, fair sir, me seemeth" belongs in an asylum.

## Week 17, Day 2 (Chapters III-VI)

1. Describe the Yankee's take on the knights' tales. Why does he still say the knights are endearing?

*They're childish and brainless, making obviously inflate, lying boasts on killing and fighting when there really was little reason to do so. The Yankee still likes the knights because they're so childlike.*

2. Describe the crowd during Merlin's tale. What is the tale like? Why do they allow him to go on?

*Many fall asleep, because the tale is so boring and has been told so often, although the Yankee says it wasn't bad, probably because it was the first time he had heard it. (Even "Clarence" falls asleep.) They allow him to retell the same tale because they are afraid of his "magic."*

3. Describe Sir Dinadan's "humor." What is "Clarence's" take on his jokes?

*It is unfunny, using stories and gags that are old and clichéd, although most of the crowd laughs as though it is hilarious. "Clarence" doesn't think Sir Dinadan is funny at all, and neither does the Yankee.*

4. What lies does Sir Kay tell, and what happens to the Yankee?

*He grossly exaggerates his capture of the Yankee, and the Yankee is stripped and thrown into prison.*

5. What does the Yankee note about the talk of the knights and ladies? How does this affect him personally?

*They are vulgar and crude in the topics they talk about, but apparently don't realize it. When he is stripped naked before he is thrown in the dungeon, the shame of it hardly registers to the crowd.*

6. Describe the plan the Yankee hatches in prison. Why is he confident that it will work?

*He realizes through talking to Clarence that everyone is afraid of Merlin's magic, so he pretends he is a magician himself and will cause the sun to be blotted out, coinciding with the solar eclipse he knows is due the next day.*

7. What two shocks does the Yankee receive in Chapter VI?

*That his execution date has been moved up, and that "Clarence" had the wrong date, so that day is actually the day of the eclipse.*

8. How does the Yankee's eclipse trick affect the people and him?

*They are frightened out of their wits because of their gullibility, and he is made second in command, treated like a king, and stared at by many who journey just to see him.*

#### **Additional Notes:**

- Again Twain disparages the character of the Knights of the Round Table, and by extension, England's history and culture of the time. (This is one of the reasons many British readers were offended at *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.)
- Twain makes an additional jab at the people of this era, calling them brainless, since they (a) seem to believe the ridiculous tales told by these knights, who supposedly kill 50 other knights with no problem and kill seven giants with one sweep of a sword; and (b) allow Merlin to continue with a long, boring story because they are afraid of his "magic."

- The threat of being a “magician” pits for the first time the Yankee’s knowledge of science against the people’s superstition. This is to be a recurring theme throughout the book.

## Week 17, Day 3 (Chapters VII-X)

1. What “little” then-modern conveniences does the Yankee miss?

*Sugar, tobacco, coffee, carpets, mirrors, and so on.*

2. Describe the Yankee’s next “miracle” and how it affects (a) the people, (b) him, and (c) Merlin.

*He blows up Merlin’s tower. This astounds and terrifies the people, exalts him as a powerful and great magician, and greatly reduces the prominence of Merlin (since Merlin was given a chance to try to stop it).*

3. How does the Yankee compare himself to Joseph? What power is he wary of?

*Both are powerful in the kingdom they are helping rule, but the Yankee has all the real power in his position. He is wary of the Roman Catholic Church.*

4. Explain the Yankee’s take on nobles and the aristocracy. Why does he call most English citizens “slaves, pure and simple”? Why does he say that the people regarded him as they would an elephant?

*He ridicules kings and noblemen as foolish and generally no-good losers throughout history who wouldn’t be able to make much of themselves if they had to produce and compete like normal people.*

*He says most English citizens are slaves to the aristocrats because of how they are treated, looked down upon, taxed, and oppressed by them. The Yankee says the people regarded him as an elephant because they feared him, but didn’t respect him, because he had no “noble birth” or title of nobility.*

5. What nickname does the Yankee pick up? Explain this saying, which closes Chapter VIII: “I didn’t charge for my opinion about them, and they didn’t charge for their opinion about me: the account was square, the books balanced, everybody was satisfied.”

*The Yankee is now regularly called “The Boss.” The closing line of Chapter VIII means that he doesn’t highly regard the nobility, and they don’t regard him highly, either, so they’re “even.”*

6. The Yankee’s disdain for the noble class is matched by his disgust at the Roman Catholic Church’s promotion of the “divine right of kings.” What do Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 teach about earthly authority? How does a Christian balance this idea that whatever rulers do is right (simply because they are rulers) with what a Christian is commanded to do in God’s Word?

*Obviously a ruler’s being in power doesn’t mean everything he does is Biblical, but Christians are still commanded to submit themselves to those in authority, and to be subject to the higher powers. This, of course, doesn’t apply when rulers command Christians do act against God’s Word.*

*Mark Twain, speaking through the Yankee, is rightly disgusted at the Roman Catholic Church’s abuse of these passages, which are not ingrained in the people to encourage them as Christians to live godly lives under sometimes oppressive rulers. Instead, the Roman Catholic Church used these admonitions to keep the common people ignorant, submissive, and oppressed by those in power—which enriched the RCC with material wealth and power itself.*

7. What major items does the Yankee say in Chapter IX are necessary to a new nation? Do you agree or disagree, and why?

*A patent office, a school system, and a newspaper. Answers will vary as to agreeing or disagreeing, but most homeschoolers will disagree that a school system is necessary—we have seen what a disaster it is in educating citizens to be independent-minded, critically thinking, godly people!*

8. Why does Sir Sagramor challenge the Yankee to a duel?

*He overhears the Yankee hoping Sir Dinadan will be killed in a duel, and thinks the Yankee is referring to him.*

9. List the cultural and technological advances that the Yankee has set into motion. Why does he say he is “afraid of the Church”?

*Factories, telegraphs, telephones, tax reform, Protestant churches, teacher schools, Sunday schools, a military academy, and a naval academy. The Yankee is afraid that the Roman Catholic Church will try to squash his advances in technology, which could threaten its power hold on England.*

10. Explain the Yankee’s statement: “I was afraid of a united Church; it makes a mighty power, the mightiest conceivable, and then when it by and by gets into selfish hands, as it is always bound to do, it means death to human liberty and paralysis to human thought.”

*When a religion becomes the official state religion, it oppresses the people by using the power of the government to enforce beliefs that should be up to the individual. It is also dangerous because it can threaten those who disagree with big government with danger regarding their souls, which keeps people in fear and more subservient to the state.*

11. What talent does Clarence demonstrate?

*Just about anything he tries, especially working as editor of a newspaper.*

12. Explain the Boss’s restructuring of the tax code and the results.

*He makes it more fair and evenly distributed, and as a result, tax revenues quadruple.*

13. Why does the Boss interrupt his several years of work on progress?

*To go on an adventure, to make himself more worthy of dueling Sir Sagramor.*

#### **Additional Notes:**

- The eclipse in Chapter VI is an effective visual reminder that represents the superstitious “darkness” that the people here live under.
- The difference of opinion between the king and Merlin is on display in Chapter VI, with Merlin wanting to burn the Yankee, and the king stopping him.
- The Yankee says he is a Presbyterian, but his real faith seems to be in technology.

- The colorful clothing of the nobility makes another visual contrast with the drab, dull clothing and existence of the peasants.

## Week 18, Day 1 (Chapters XI-XII)

1. Explain (a) how “Sandy’s” answers to the Yankee undercut her tale, and (b) what her answers demonstrate about the general public. How does Clarence say “Sandy” will be able to show the Yankee the way to the castle?

*She backtracks a little, indirectly answering his questions, avoiding telling him where the supposed castle is and how far away. The fact that her tale is so readily believed by all the people demonstrates the gullibility of the public. Clarence says that Sandy will want to accompany the Yankee on his trip to show him the way.*

2. Explain the humor in the Yankee’s knight getup.

*He gives a long and detailed explanation of how uncomfortable and ridiculous and complicated a suit of armor is, saying he feels like a ship’s anchor, and telling how the boys around him mocked him and threw dirt clods at him.*

3. What irritations does the Yankee suffer while riding to the castle?

*The armor is heavy and hot and clanks constantly, he can’t reach in to wipe sweat out of his eyes, he itches terribly, and flies get into his helmet and annoy him. Also, Sandy talks constantly, so the Yankee is unable to think, and worse, she never really says anything of substance.*

## Week 18, Day 2 (Chapters XIII-XIV)

1. What does the Yankee mean by saying about the common people, “By a sarcasm of law and phrase, they were freemen”?

*Those regarded as “freemen” are in many ways not free, and under the subjection of the nobility and the Roman Catholic Church.*

2. How does the Yankee comment upon the French and American revolutions?

*He says that only the short, violent French Revolution is remembered, not the thousand-year violence against common people by the nobles. He also says that it is different in America, where there is no “noble class.”*

3. Sum up the Yankee’s thoughts on revolution in England.

*He thinks it is necessary because of the inequalities between the nobles and peasants. He doesn’t, however, think the time is right because the common people are so conditioned to believe in their inferiority that they would never follow through with a revolt.*

4. What does the Yankee do for the man of whom he says, “This one’s a man”? What comment on the state church (RCC) does the Yankee make?

*The Yankee sends the man to his “Man-factory,” where he will be educated and taught about technology and how to be useful. The fact that the man doesn’t believe Clarence can read without being a priest is a zinger at the fact that the church discouraged and even fought against the common people’s right to be literate, in order to keep its power.*



5. How does Sandy prove useful to the Yankee?

*She handles a situation where knights attack the Yankee's group, but are scared by the smoke from his pipe, better than the Yankee could have himself. This results in their safety, and in the knights turning themselves in as servants of the Yankee.*

### Week 18, Day 3 (Chapters XV-XVI)

1. Describe Sandy's storytelling "style." What does the sing-songy fashion of Sandy's voice remind the Yankee of?

*Boring and long-winded, which causes the Yankee to often fall asleep in the middle of her tales. Her sing-songy style reminds the Yankee of a barker on a train robotically calling out news to passengers.*

2. What does Sandy's description of a fifteen-year-old girl remind the Yankee of? How does this affect him?

*It reminds him of his "hello-girl" sweetheart in Connecticut; he is homesick afterwards, longing to be back in his century.*

3. For what two reasons does the Yankee use knights as advertising billboards for soap? Why do you think he calls them "missionaries"?

*First, to make them look ridiculous and undermine the custom of knighthood. Second, to introduce the idea of using soap throughout the nobility, then the common people, both of whom are generally dirty. Calling them "missionaries" is an ironic joke to underscore the fact that the Yankee hates the state (Roman Catholic) church.*

4. Who is Morgan le Fay? What is she like?

*She is the sister of King Arthur. She is wicked, but beautiful, a criminal who committed murders, and who convinced the people that she was a powerful sorceress.*

5. How does Sandy again save The Boss?

*Morgan le Fay is angered at his compliment of her brother, whom she hates, and she orders him to the dungeon. Sandy, however, reminds Morgan le Fay that he is The Boss, and a powerful magician, so Morgan le Fay pretends to have been joking.*

#### Additional Notes:

- The Yankee's disgust at the knights is underscored by his disgust at the fact that so many *horses* are killed in jousts, not caring much for what happens to the knights themselves.
- It is strange, although apparently common, that a person like Morgan le Fay, who claims to be a powerful sorceress (though she knows she is not), can be intimidated by someone like The Boss, simply because he has a reputation as a great magician. (Although admittedly, she no doubt heard about his eclipse trick and blowing up of Merlin's castle.)

## Week 18, Day 4 (Chapters XVII-XVIII)

1. Explain the irony in the reason Morgan le Fay is unable to give the Yankee a chance to kill someone.

*She can't finish her plan, because she is called to prayers. This is the Yankee's (or Mark Twain's) zinger of the phoniness of the religion of many.*

2. How do the nobles and priests behave at the banquet?

*They are rude, loud, and filled with crude stories.*

3. What is the significance of the muffled screams heard below? How does Morgan le Fay explain the situation to the Yankee? How does the accused explain his reluctance to confess?

*The queen tries to justify her torture of the man accused of killing the stag by saying it's OK because she's just trying to save his soul from hell by getting a confession out of him. The man DID kill the deer, but refuses to confess, the Yankee learns, because a confession would put his wife and child out of their home.*

4. What observations on religion does the Yankee make in the beginning of Chapter XVIII?

*That he noticed many priests speak out against abuses, which gives him hope; but that a state religion is the worst institution there is, and that denominations are the best thing for a nation, since they tend to police each other and keep power from consolidating.*

5. How does Morgan le Fay try to justify her murder of the page? What belief about "training" does this get the Yankee to write about?

*She says it was acceptable to murder the page because she intended to "pay for him." The Yankee gives up trying to explain it to her, saying that her training in that belief system makes it impossible for her to change.*

6. What comments does the Yankee make about his conscience?

*That he thinks it is useless, since it just bother him all of the time.*

7. What does the Yankee discover in Morgan le Fay's dungeon? What does she do when he says he would like to photograph the prisoners?

*The Yankee frees 47 prisoners in the queen's dungeon, most of their "crimes" being little or nothing: A man and wife whose only crime was refusing to allow a noble to assault her on her wedding day; a man imprisoned for 22 years because he called the queen's hair red, and so on. In that case she invented funerals to torture the man into wondering who had died in his family. When he says he would like to photograph the prisoners, Morgan le Fay says she will do it for him—and goes after the freed prisoners with an axe!*

### Additional Notes:

- Much of the disgust that the reader feels in the account of torture in these chapters is directed at Morgan le Fay, and rightly so, but the reader should not forget that she is not the torturing the suspect—the torturers bear much blame for simply following immoral orders. They have no right to say, "I was just following orders." They bear the blame as well.

- Sandy is slowly becoming less useless and annoying to The Boss, and more of an asset.

## Week 19, Day 1 (Chapters XIX-XX)

1. What does the Yankee ask Sandy to get her to stop talking?

*He asks her how old she is.*

2. What image does the knight on a horse with a toothbrush ad present? Why is he angry?

*The knight looks ridiculous. He is angry because another knight who was selling stove polish (even though there are no stoves yet) told him there were potential customers across swamps and fields—but didn't tell him that they were recently released prisoners with no teeth!*

3. What strikes the Yankee most strongly about the situation of the man who has been released from prison after serving 50 years? How does this affect his plans for revolution?

*He is appalled that the man's family is not angry at all at those who unjustly imprisoned him; they are just grateful that he has been released. The Yankee does not think he can start a revolution against the nobles when the average commoner feels this way about injustice.*

4. Who are the “ogres” and “princesses”? How does the Yankee “defeat” the “ogres”? Why does Sandy still believe that they are ogres and princesses?

*Swineherds and pigs. The Yankee simply buys the pigs off the farmers. Sandy thinks that some magic enchantment has made them only appear to be swineherds and pigs.*

### Additional Notes:

- The Yankee/Mark Twain again takes aim at a state church by ridiculing its policy of forcibly taking “tithes” from poor farmers.
- The Yankee/Mark Twain is troubled much by the gratefulness of the commoners at being let out of jail after being unjustly imprisoned. This makes him greatly question whether or not his planned revolution will actually work, since the peasants are so ingrained in their belief that it is the right of nobles to treat them this way.

## Week 19, Day 2 (Chapters XXI-XXII)

1. What does the Yankee believe about Sandy's sanity, and why?

*He doesn't believe she's crazy for believing in magic; he just believes that's the way she's been trained. He compares it to his telling someone in the sixth century about hot air balloons, trains, and telephones, and says they would say he is crazy, too.*

2. Describe the groups of pilgrims the Yankee encounters.

*The first seems colorful and lighthearted; the second is gloomy and silent, because they are slaves being sold. The first group is going to the “Valley of Holiness.”*

3. Explain the situation at the “Valley of Holiness.”

*It is a place where supposedly miraculous water flows from a spring unless anyone takes a bath. The Yankee follows them because he wants to be informed about the kinds of people in the country.*

4. What news does a knight bring, and how does The Boss respond?

*A knight comes to tell the Pilgrims that the spring has run out. The monks and nuns are all torturing themselves to try to bring it back, and everyone is upset, so the Yankee sends orders to one of his men to bring some chemicals and two trained assistants.*

5. What is the Valley of Holiness like?

*It is pallid in appearance, and so are the citizens there, because of their fear and distress over the well's drying up.*

6. Why does the Yankee delay in fixing the fountain? What is the problem with it?

*The Yankee delays fixing the fountain, despite the pleas of the monk, saying he can't mix magic with Merlin or be disrespectful by showing him up (he's really buying time). The well has a leak, which the Yankee finds by lowering himself and using a candle to observe it.*

7. How does the Yankee view the "pious" hermits? How does he put one to good use?

*He is disgusted with them, whom he describes as dirty, self-satisfied, and always attempting to draw attention to their own "holiness." He uses one who bowed in a pedal-like motion—he hooks up cords and a sewing machine to him, and makes linen shirts, which he sells as "perfect protection against sin."*

#### **Additional Notes:**

- The Yankee is still irritated by Sandy's long-winded speaking, but realizes he is hard to understand from her perspective. After he loses patience with her inability to understand his 19th-century slang, she responds with a typical 299-word sentence apologizing for her inferior intelligence, and he is ashamed of himself. So he tries to communicate more effectively and be more patient with her—and their relationship is strengthened.

### **Week 19, Day 3 (Chapters XXIII-XXIV)**

1. How does Merlin explain his failure to restore the well? Describe the show that the Yankee puts on in restoring the well.

*Merlin explains his failure to revive the well by saying it has been cursed by a powerful evil spirit which nothing on earth can overcome. The Yankee and his assistants fix the well and provide a "miracle" at night complete with colorful fireworks for the crowd.*

2. Describe the "bath situation" in the valley. What does the Yankee mean when he says he would like to see "at least one layer of [a monk's] real estate removed"?

*Baths seem to be forbidden. One knight the Yankee talks to hasn't taken one since he was a boy. The Yankee convinces the Brother that taking baths wasn't the reason that the fountain dried up. The "real estate*

*removed” means the Yankee would like to see this monk take a bath and then lose some of the dirt that has accumulated on him.*

3. What does the Yankee learn via telephone from Clarence?

*That the king and queen are coming to make a pilgrimage to the fountain, and that the king has assembled a standing army without the Boss’s input or without choosing any of the Boss’s “West Point Military Academy” graduates.*

4. What is the fraudulent “magician’s” game? How does the Yankee expose him?

*The fraud claims to know what anyone in the world is doing, which is unverifiable, of course. The Yankee exposes him by asking the magician what he (the Yankee) is doing with his hand, and by using his telephoned information to announce that the king and queen are coming, not sleeping, as the “magician” claims.*

#### **Additional Notes:**

- The Yankee is baffled at the gullibility of the people, and their lack of reason, when they believe the fraudulent “magician” and his claim to know what is totally unverifiable. He is also distressed that even though he just produced a huge fireworks show and fixed the well, that the people don’t have sense enough to trust him over a “magician” they know nothing about.

### **Week 19, Day 4 (Chapters XXV-XXVI)**

1. Describe how the king judges legal cases that come before him. What example is given?

*The king arrives and judges cases as fairly as he can, given his preference for nobility over peasants regarding disputes. He rules against a young couple, whose property goes to the state church.*

2. Sum up the difference between the Yankee’s requirements for a man fit to be in the army, and the king’s requirements. Give an example.

*The Yankee has some of his West Pointers go before the king to be examined for candidacy for the army. The king and his company are horrified that Webster, a weaver’s son, is even considered, since he’s a commoner, but he awes the crowd with his knowledge of war, science, and mathematics. The Yankee makes mincemeat out of the king’s candidates, who can’t read, write, do arithmetic, or anything else of substance, but the king says that candidates are ineligible unless they can prove four generations of nobility.*

3. How does the Yankee solve the problem of potentially having an army filled with the king’s candidates?

*The Yankee suggests to the king that they continue as the king has started, fill this first regiment of the army entirely with nobles, and increase the number of officers to accommodate all the nobles who wish to be in the army. This regiment has freedom to act as it chose. The other regiments would be officered with commoners chosen solely for their effectiveness and would bear the brunt of military duty. The Yankee hits on the idea of making the regiment up entirely of officers, the lower ranks filled by nobles who serve free and at their own expense, and the higher ranks filled by Arthur’s many royal relatives, who would be paid a good salary and given an impressive title in return for renouncing their royal grants.*

4. Explain how King Arthur “cures” sick commoners who come to him. How does the Yankee save the government a great deal of money?

*Arthur lays his hands on the sick and “cures” them by his touch, which works for many because of psychological benefits of seeing and being touched by the king. The Yankee mints new coins to give out to the sick (which is the custom) that are worth less but look better, saving the kingdom money.*

5. Describe the newspaper. How does the Yankee feel about it?

*Clarence has put out a newspaper called the Camelot Weekly Hosannah and Literary Volcano (a ridiculous name that parodies self-important newspaper titles of Mark Twain’s time). The Yankee is generally pleased at the paper, but a little disturbed at its flippant tone. He feels like a mother does at a baby’s birth.*

**Additional Notes:**

- The newer, less valuable coins the Yankee mints could represent the knights in the story, which he is turning into men who are less and less valuable (making them look ridiculous by parading them around the country holding soap advertisements, and asking them numerous questions about their qualifications for the army, which they have no idea how to answer).

## Week 20, Day 1 (Chapters XXVII-XIX)

1. How does the Yankee prepare the king's appearance for their secret trip to observe the peasants of the kingdom? How does the king struggle with this?

*The Yankee cuts the king's hair and beard, gives him common clothes, and gets him used to sitting when others sit, so he'll not be found out. The king has difficulties acting like a commoner, and at one point a procession of nobles gets angry that the king doesn't bow, which angers him.*

2. What does the Yankee have to do to keep his place above Merlin with the king?

*He has to convince the king that he is a greater prophet than Merlin to secure his place, bragging about his ability to foretell the future for 1300 years.*

3. How does the Yankee save the king when the king insults two knights on horses for almost running him over?

*He kills two knights that come to punish him and the king for not stepping out of the way for them and for hurling insults at them by blowing them up with dynamite.*

4. Describe the various "drills" that the Yankee puts Arthur through.

*How to properly act like a peasant who is hungry, oppressed, overworked, and so on.*

5. Describe the "smallpox hut." What does the king show about himself?

*The Yankee and king see a desolate landscape and a house. In it is a family dead and dying of smallpox. The king proves himself gallant and noble in his actions to bring comfort to the wife, who is caring for her still alive family members.*

6. List some examples of pointed remarks the woman makes about the king and the Roman Catholic Church.

*First, she tells the Yankee and Arthur that there's nothing left for them to steal, thinking that they're priests. Then she is relieved that her husband is dead, even if he is in hell, because there there'll be no abbots or bishops. Then she talks about the "heavy hand of the Church and the king."*

### Additional Notes:

- The Yankee's drilling the king offers commentary on how hard life is for peasants, and how different it is for nobles to get used to.
- King Arthur is shown not to be just a one-note character here, gallantly assisting with the people in the smallpox hut (even though he knows he is immune to it, having had it before), and showing concern for their troubles.

## Week 20, Day 2 (Chapters XXX-XXXII)

1. Why is Chapter XXX titled "The Tragedy of the Manor House"?



*The sons of the family in the “smallpox hut” who were wrongly imprisoned escape prison, only to find their family dead of smallpox.*

2. Describe the manor house situation.

*The Yankee sees a fire (he’s making money on fire insurance—which the priests oppose—and is starting to build steam fire engines, and is selling accident insurance to knights injured in tournament). The fire was started by a peasant to protest his master.*

3. How is the Yankee both discouraged and encouraged by what he sees in the peasants around the burned-down manor house?

*First, the fact that the peasants run after the perpetrators and hang many people, letting the prisoners in the manor burn to death rather than free them, greatly discourages The Boss. But he is greatly encouraged by his talk with one peasant named Marco (whose cousins started the fire), who says the only reason he helped was to show his loyalty, and that he opposes the master, talking freely about it.*

4. Why do you think the author includes a scene of children playing “mob” and almost killing another child by hanging?

*Answers will vary, although possibly to show the negative effects of common events, like hangings of peasants, on children.*

5. Explain the proposal that the Yankee offers to the relatively wealthy blacksmith Dowley. Why does this upset Marco so much?

*The Yankee invites Dowley to Marco’s for dinner and tells Marco he will cover the entire expense. This distresses Marco because of the great expense.*

6. How does The Boss cover any possible odd behavior by King Arthur?

*He tells Marco that King Arthur is a successful farmer named Jones, and that Jones has several odd quirks of habit that he (Marco) should ignore—in case the king acts kingly.*

7. Describe Dowley. How does the banquet at Marco’s house affect him and the rest of the crowd?

*He is a self-made man who tells about his hard life up to now. To set up the meal, Marco brings one fine item out after another for effect. The guests are impressed, and Dowley is humiliated, because his own wealth pales in comparison.*

### **Additional Notes:**

- Regarding the conflict between the nobles and peasants, this section demonstrates the Yankee’s disgust at (a) the king, who is unwittingly brutal in suggesting that they should return the “smallpox hut” sons to the lord from whom they escaped, and (b) the peasants, who for some reason gladly help track down the arsonists for their lord, who is brutally oppressing them.

## **Week 20, Day 3 (Chapters XXXIII-XXV)**

1. Why doesn't the Yankee have the complete respect of Dowley, even though he is tremendously wealthy?

*He doesn't have a title of nobility.*

2. Sum up the frustrating "wages" discussion that the Yankee has with Dowley.

*Dowley proudly tells how much higher the wages are in this kingdom than in Arthur's realm, which the Yankee has moved away from protection to free trade. The Yankee explains that because of the average prices for consumer goods, Dowley's area actually pays less, even though they technically make more wages. He expects this to stifle Dowley's arguments, but he and the other guests are too confused by the concept of real wages to understand what the Yankee has proved.*

3. Why does the Yankee argue that the pillory should be abolished? Why does he think he might have gone too far in his speech about it?

*The Yankee argues that the pillory should be abolished, as it is cruel and many die by stoning while locked in it and that it is unfair for people to be pilloried for not turning in an offender if they know of his crime. Then, he declares that they are all in danger of the pillory, since the smith admitted earlier to sometimes paying his laborers more than the wage set by the magistrates, thereby breaking the law. The whole company is stunned; they are even too frightened to beg the Yankee not to turn them in as he expected them to do.*

4. What turns the crowd against the Yankee and King Arthur?

*The Yankee knows that he has lost the trust of the crowd with his talk about illegally paying wages, and is upset when the king prattles on, making humorously ignorant mistakes about farming, which arouse the suspicions of the others.*

5. What is the irony in the slave auctioneer's oration about British liberties?

*It is in the middle of a slave auction!*

6. Explain the logical fallacy of what the slavemasters do concerning the status of the Yankee and the king as freemen. What does the Yankee remark after this incident affects him personally?

*The Yankee and king say they are freemen, but instead of someone proving that they're not, they're told they must prove they are freemen. The Yankee remarks that this also happened in America, and that although he hated slavery, the horror never affected him until it came to him personally.*

7. Why does the king "brood" constantly after being sold as a slave? How does it affect his feeling toward slavery?

*He brings only \$7, when others who are lower in rank bring much more, causing him to lament that he wasn't thought of as more worthy. The whole incident, of course, makes him a fierce opponent of slavery.*

8. What is the "pitiful incident" of Chapter XXXV?

*The group of slaves comes across a young mother being hanged for stealing to feed her child after her husband was impressed into service at sea.*

### **Additional Notes:**

- It doesn't seem wise for the Yankee to make such a big show of spending a huge amount for a feast, because he and King Arthur are traveling incognito, and an event like this might raise suspicion as to their identity and where they got the money.
- The Yankee's belief about the worth of people is again shown here, when he argues that geniuses of science and technology are worth much more than those who are regarded as highly as kings, for no other reason than that they are born into a royal family.
- Two more incidents in this section underscore the injustice Twain believes about sixth-century England: (1) the incident in which, again (in addition to the "prove you're not slaves" argument), someone is wronged because she is accused of a crime (a woman accused of being a witch); and (2) the practice of impressing young men (kidnapping them into slavery on British ships).
- The king's bringing only \$7 is probably Mark Twain's sly way of again stating his opinion that kings throughout history have been pretty worthless. The king, however, again proves his worth as a man, refusing to break, even under brutal whippings.
- The Yankee once again says of a brutal person he runs into: "I got his number," meaning that, if he gets back to his position as The Boss, he will get his revenge.
- It seems odd that there are so many laws—like the one prescribing hanging for stealing food—that people of the time know are unjust, yet no one does anything about it besides admitting that they are unjust, but that they have to go ahead and execute them anyway.

## Week 21, Day 1 (Chapters XXXVI--XXXVIII)

1. What is the Yankee's escape plan? How does it go wrong, and how does he get back?

*The Yankee's plan of escape is to get a piece of iron to pick his lock, change places with the slave master, and parade the slaves to the king's palace for a dramatic touch. Trying to escape, however, he attacks the wrong man in the dark, is caught, and is marched off to prison. He is, however, able to make up a story in court about being the slave of Earl Grip, who was just trying to get a doctor for his master when he was attacked.*

2. What has happened in the Yankee's absence? What is his next plan of action? How is his plan seriously threatened?

*He discovers that the king has escaped, enraged the master, and caused him to die by the hand of the other slaves, who are beaten by the master when he discovers the king is gone. The slaves are all condemned to die for the riot. The Yankee disguises himself and sends a telegraph to Clarence to send 500 knights (led by Launcelot) to London to save him. His plan is put in deep jeopardy by the fact that the hanging is scheduled for that day at noon, too late for the knights to save him, and that the "other slave" was also caught.*

3. How do the knights come and save the Yankee and King Arthur?

*On bicycles!*

### Additional Notes:

- The first sentence of Chapter XXXVI is Mark Twain's zinger at the British; it was this kind of thing that made many English readers angry with him.
- The knights' arrival on bicycles is another example of "technology over tradition" in *A Connecticut Yankee*. The Yankee's method surpasses the old method (horses), and it's the only way he would have been saved in time.

## Week 21, Day 2 (Chapters XXXIX-XL)

1. Describe the Yankee's fight with the knights. What does this duel actually represent?

*The Yankee jousts Sir Sagramor, who is armored, but the Yankee is not. The Yankee lassos Sir Sagramor and yanks him off his horse, greatly pleasing the crowd. The Yankee lassoes one knight after another, ending with Sir Launcelot.*

*Merlin steals the Yankee's lariat, and the Yankee has to joust again. He takes a dragoon revolver out of his pocket, shoots Sagramor dead, and holsters it before anyone realizes what has happened. Nobody else challenges him, until he challenges ALL the knights. They all come, and he picks them off one by one. Then they stop coming, and the Yankee declares knighthood to be defeated permanently.*

*The contest is actually a contest between the Yankee and Merlin. For the Yankee, his purpose is to destroy knight errantry.*

2. What is the situation in England three years later with regard to (a) technology and culture, (b) knighthood, and (c) the Yankee himself?

(a) *The Yankee exposes his telegraphs, telephones, factories, schools, and mines, thinking he has nothing to fear. England is changed: colleges, schools, and factories appear; railroads and telephones are everywhere. Slavery is abolished, and all citizens are equal before the law.*

(b) *Knighthood is reduced to almost nothing; the knights are put to productive use. The Yankee introduces baseball to the nobles to keep them from killing each other in jousts. Amazingly enough, the knights regularly disagree with the umpire.*

(c) *The Yankee has married Sandy and has a daughter named "Hello Central"!*

3. What are the Yankee's two main goals?

*To destroy the Roman Catholic Church and replace it with free Protestantism, and to introduce universal suffrage upon King Arthur's death.*

4. What are the Yankee and Sandy forced to do, and why?

*Hello Central has become sick, and they are ordered by their doctor to take her to the French countryside to get better.*

#### **Additional Notes:**

- Hank takes a huge risk in continuing to challenge the knights; he could have been killed had he run out of bullets.
- The surprise of Hank's marriage to Sandy and their daughter is touching and funny, especially their naming her "Hello Central"!

### **Week 21, Day 3 (Chapters XLI-XLII)**

1. Why don't the ships return to pick up the Yankee and his family?

*The Roman Catholic Church has taken over England once again, and they do not want the Yankee to return with his innovations and advances.*

2. What is an interdict? What has it done to England? Why is this method of takeover effective?

*An interdict is a decree from the Roman Catholic Church forbidding the church's offering the "sacraments" to the people until their demands are met. It has turned England back to its previous sixth-century state. The interdict works because the people are so ignorant and under the heel of the RCC that they believe salvation can only come through the sacraments delivered by it.*

3. Sum up what Hank learns from Clarence about what has happened in his absence. What has the Roman Catholic Church been up to?

*Sirs Mordred and Aglovale, after Launcelot beat them at stocks, told Arthur about Guenever's love for Launcelot. Arthur and Launcelot have killed each other in battle. The RCC has taken power, and it has been working against them all along; that the doctors who advised the Yankee to take his daughter on a sea cruise*

were in the Church's employ. The RCC has destroyed the Yankee's nineteenth-century technology, and the Yankee's trained employees have reverted to their previous superstitious mindsets.

4. What has Clarence done with 52 boys? Why are these chosen, being so young?

*Clarence selected a group of 52 faithful boys who grew up under the Yankee's system and fortified a cave of Merlin's, which contains an electric plant with electrified fences, Gatling guns, and land mines, so they can be ready when the knights attack. The boys are only 14 to 17 years old, and they are chosen because they have not been raised up in the superstitious, state-church fashion, but are literate, used to technology, and not superstitious.*

5. Sum up the Yankee's proclamation.

*He declares all the old institutions of the monarchy, aristocracy, and the established Church to be null and void. He also calls for the people to assemble and elect representatives to govern them in a new republic.*

### **Week 21, Day 4 (Chapters XLIII, XLIV, Postscript by Clarence, and Final Post Script by Mark Twain)**

1. When the knights, slaves, and church come against Hank and the boys, why do the boys approach him and say they can't fight? What is Hank's answer?

*They say they can't attack their own people, but Hank tells them the 30,000 knights will be first to attack, and when they approach the mines they'll be blown up, and the peasants will be too frightened to continue.*

2. Describe the final battle.

*The knights charge and the first line is blown up by mines. The Yankee also blows up his factories so they can't be used by the knights or church. The knights attack that night under cover of darkness, but are killed by the thousands by the electric fences; then by water, drowning as the ditch fills up; finally, by Gatling guns.*

3. How is the Yankee wounded? What happens afterwards? How does *A Connecticut Yankee* end?

*He is stabbed by a wounded knight, and later he is put under a spell by Merlin, who is disguised as an old woman. Merlin touches an electric wire and is electrocuted soon after. Some of the Yankee's boys hide him in a cave with the manuscript. The story ends with Mark Twain finishing reading Hank's story at dawn. He then hears the Yankee mumbling deliriously about Sandy and being in the king's castle, and then Hank dies.*

## ***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court:*** **For Additional Thought/Essay Topics**

1. What tone is the ending of *A Connecticut Yankee*? What does Mark Twain seem to be saying about progress, technology, and mankind?

*The ending of A Connecticut Yankee is famously cynical. In keeping with his theme of scorning humanity, which he does throughout the book, Mark Twain doesn't seem to be very hopeful that technology can offer much hope to a race that he thinks is beyond hope. In fact, it's the technology itself (the dynamite and electric fences)—made by members of humanity itself—that ends up hurting the conquerors, because it works too well, surrounding them with thousands of dead and thereby threatening their health. Twain is probably arguing that technology and science will never be able to overcome superstitions that are ingrained in the people. In addition, the Yankee says several times that he hopes for a peaceful revolution, without bloodshed, which doesn't come to pass.*

*In a book titled The Mysterious Stranger, which was not published until six years after his death, Mark Twain writes, "There is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream—a grotesque and foolish dream." Twain's own personal hardships, including the death of several family members, apparently contributed to his cynicism and hatred for the human race. This point of view is clearly shown a number of times via the mouth of Hank Morgan in A Connecticut Yankee. It's possible that Twain's cynicism at technology evident in the novel stemmed also from his recent bankruptcy, which he experienced after putting all his money into investing in a new typesetting machine that did not compete well on the market.*

2. Because of the various wrongdoings and beliefs of others, Hank Morgan mentions several times throughout the novel that he is "ashamed of the human race." In what ways is he a flawed member of the human race as well? Give several examples.

*Hank Morgan does not always behave in a seemly, fair, and enlightened manner; in fact, he contradicts his own beliefs and standards a number of times in A Connecticut Yankee:*

- *He ridicules the superstition of the peasants, but he contributes to it by pretending to do a number of "miracles" that are simply technological advances (the eclipse trick, fixing the well, blowing up Merlin's castle, shooting the knights, and so on).*
- *He chastises Morgan le Fay for capriciously killing a page for accidentally touching her, but later on he has the band hanged because he doesn't like the music. (In fact, Hank shares a name with her, since his last name is Morgan—which serves to link the two.)*
- *Throughout the tale, Hank decries the whole idea of the nobility's being inherently better than the peasants, but he takes a title of "The Boss" and enjoys all the privileges of royalty, even at one point saying, "I made up my mind to two things: if it was still the nineteenth century and I was among lunatics and couldn't get away, I would presently boss that asylum or know the reason why; and if on the other hand it was really the sixth century, all right, I didn't want any softer thing: I would boss the whole countryside inside of three months."*

3. What is baffling about Merlin's putting a spell on Hank Morgan, making him sleep for 1300 years until he wakes up in the present? What alternative explanation of the old man's *Connecticut Yankee* tale does this present?

*It is unusual that a fraudulent "magician" like Merlin is apparently able to get his magic to work for once, putting a spell on the Yankee that puts him back to sleep for 1300 years. Of course, it is possible that the Yankee's entire manuscript is just a story of a dream he had, and that getting knocked on the head with a crowbar caused it, and he woke up later and wrote down the story.*

4. When King Arthur takes charge of comforting the family in the "smallpox hut," the Yankee says about him, "He was great now—sublimely great." What makes a king or president or other type of ruler great?

*Answers will vary, but the focus probably will be on his morality and goodness, not his wealth or power or the fact that he is ruler simply because of hereditary laws.*

5. Research the 1887 Francis Bellamy novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1987* and read a summary of the story. How does Bellamy's view of humanity in *Looking Backward* contrast with Mark Twain's in *A Connecticut Yankee*? Which one do you think is a more accurate description of how humankind has behaved over the millennia?

*Bellamy's novel is a prediction (or hope) that by the year 2000 (the novel, of course, was written in 1887), American would be a socialist paradise, with the government distributing wealth to all citizens, and that everyone would live an ideal life because of the combination of technological advances and government benevolence and wisdom. A Connecticut Yankee is almost the opposite, with a more cynical view of the possibilities of salvation through technology. Of course, both deny—or at least don't acknowledge—the power of Jesus Christ to transform people, and by extension, society itself.*

6. How should a Christian respond to someone like Hank Morgan, who says or believes that the solution to mankind's ills is either education ("training") or technology?

*Answers will vary, but the focus should be on the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to change a person, and mankind is made up of persons!*



## ***A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court:*** **Quotations—Agree or Disagree?**

For the following *Connecticut Yankee* quotations by Hank Morgan, tell whether you agree or disagree, and why.

1. “Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.”

*Answers will vary, but students might mention things like frivolous things that children and adults alike “have” to have after they seen an ad for them.*

2. “Intellectual ‘work’ is misnamed; it is a pleasure, a dissipation [indulgence].”

*Some students might agree that enjoying your work makes it “not work,” but many will say that thinking is work, and just because a person doesn’t have a hoe in his hand doesn’t mean he’s not working. Those who tax their brains to invent machines to save lives, make work easier, relieve suffering, and so on can certainly be credited with working. Inventors like Thomas Edison are examples, of course.*

3. “In a country where they have ranks and castes, a man isn’t ever a man, he is only part of a man, he can’t ever get his full growth.”

*Some students might agree, that ranks and castes stifle a man’s potential. Others might say that regardless of laws, a man is a man because of who he is inside, not how he is officially categorized or whether he is recognized as “good enough” by governments or society.*

4. “Men write many fine and plausible arguments in support of monarchy, but the fact remains that where every man in a State has a vote, brutal laws are impossible.”

*Answers will vary, but students might mention that just because a majority votes for something doesn’t mean it’s going to benefit everyone. Democracy as a form of government was famously scorned by America’s founders, for instance. Also, if a majority votes in favor of abortions, does that make that law any less brutal?*

5. “Training—training is everything; training is all there is to a person....We have no thoughts of our own, no opinions of our own; they are transmitted to us, trained into us.”

*Answers will vary, but while no doubt training is important, every person has thoughts of his own, and opinions of his own. Millions of persons have “undone” their training as children—sometimes to their benefit, sometimes to their detriment.*