



Huckleberry Finn Contemporary Colloquialisms

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn takes place before the Civil War. The story's narrator is barely educated and speaks in a heavy regional dialect. Here are just a few of the colloquialisms that appear in the novel, grouped by the chapters in which they appear. Read the lists and then sort each term into the categories below. If you can't guess the meanings, find the words in the text and check the context. You may also use a dictionary or the Internet. Remember that many words have multiple meanings—use the meaning that fits the context.

Chapters 1–10	Chapters 11–20	Chapters 21–30	Chapters 31–last
Bullyragged cowhide flatheads lit out pecking rowlocks shinning skiff	crawfished derrick galoot humbugs lining lynch sockdolager texas	blackguarding chuckleheads flapdoodle gabble goo-gooing heel it lunkheads yawl	blow chipped cylinder-head muggins mullet-headed pegged along rapscallions yellocution

Foot Transport	Speech	Insults and Violence	River Transport
crawfished heel it	blow chipped	blackguarding bullyragged	rowlocks skiff

RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

L.11-12.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

L.11-12.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Answer Key

Foot Transport	Speech	Insults and Violence	River Transport
crawfished	blow	blackguarding	rowlocks
heel it	chipped	bullyragged	skiff
hump	flapdoodle	chuckleheads	derrick
lit out	gabble	cowhide	galoot
pegged along	goo-gooing	flatheads	cylinder-head
shinning	lining	humbugs	texas
	pecking	lunkheads	
	yellocution	lynch	
		muggins	
		mullet-headed	
		rapscallions	
		sockdolager	