



# **Student Performance Events**

## ***Stimulus Materials***

**Proficiency Assessments for Mississippi Students-Alternate**  
**MISSISSIPPI-ALT**

**English II Released**

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**The class is preparing to conduct a science experiment involving chemicals. The teacher will stress the importance of following the safety rules. She wants to make sure there are no accidents.**

**apply force to**

**worry about**

**emphasize**

**The teacher did not want anyone to get hurt in any way. She did not want even a minor accident to happen.**

**not serious**

**young person**

**It was brighter than usual when I woke up this morning. Oh no, I didn't wake up when my alarm clock rang! I had missed the bus! I had a test that day and needed to get to school quickly. I called out for my mom, but there was no answer. I forgot that she had an early meeting at work. Dad was out of town on business. What was I going to do? Then I remembered that my aunt was visiting for the week. She was able to give me a ride to school.**

**My aunt gets up early every morning.**

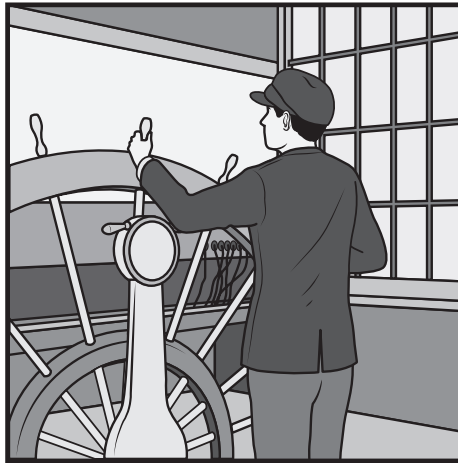
**I wish my mom didn't have  
an early meeting.**

**I never want to have a  
morning like that again.**

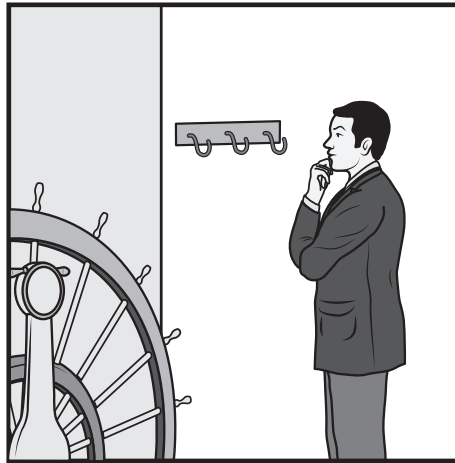
## **Mystery on the Mighty Mississippi**

I've done a lot of things in my life. I've written books and traveled around the world, but nothing outshines my days as a steamboat river pilot on the Mississippi River. Why, I once wrote a letter to my dear friend William Dean and told him that I would rather sink a steamboat than eat, anytime. As a pilot, I needed to know the river well. Navigating the mighty Mississippi with its currents and changing depths was dangerous work, and it was the best job I ever had. This is a story about one of the most mysterious events that I ever experienced on the river.



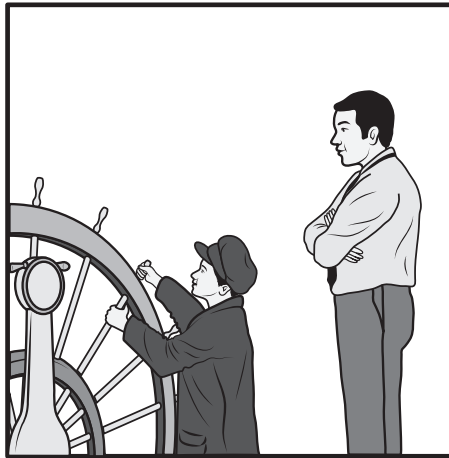


It was during one spring long ago: we left St. Louis with a full crew, passengers, a load of timber, and—as I later learned—a mystery. Day and night, I relied on my knowledge of the river to safely navigate the riverboat. There was little time for conversation and being idle. My eyes and ears were glued to the river. That’s how young, mischievous Arty (the mystery guest) got the better of me.



During the day, I liked to keep my cap on. The brim shaded my eyes from the sunlight reflecting off the water. One day after sunset, as I did each day, I hung my cap on the hook near the steering wheel. However, the next morning when I reached for my cap, the hook was bare. I thought maybe one of the crew was pulling a prank on me. They denied it one by one.

The next day, I piloted without my cap. When I could, I shaded my eyes with one hand while my other hand tightly gripped the wheel. As the day began to get warmer, I took off my jacket. As I always did, I hung it on the hook near the wheel. That evening after arriving at another port, some passengers departed and new passengers boarded. As the evening temperatures cooled, I reached for my jacket. The hook was bare. I thought maybe the captain had hung it in a closet. He denied it.



The next day, I was back at the wheel without my cap and without my jacket. Visibility was impaired due to heavy rain. I was especially watchful for snags in the river, and paid close attention to the current. It was a long and strenuous day. That evening, as we arrived at another port, a full moon shone on the deck like glowing fireflies. As I strolled the deck, much to my amazement, I spied a miniature version of me standing behind the ship's wheel. It was a little boy, no older than twelve. He was dressed in my cap and my jacket. I crept up behind him as he pretended to pilot the boat and bark orders to an imaginary crew.

I suddenly remembered that I had seen the young boy board with his family in St. Louis. I observed that his enthusiasm about being on this boat was equal to mine when I was his age. I gently whispered in his ear, "Pilot, beware the snag up ahead. Be sure to stay near the left; it's mark twain there. That means we won't run aground."

The boy spun around and looked up at me with eyes as big as saucers. He started to flee as I gently placed a hand on his shoulder. I smiled and said, “A true pilot cares nothing about anything on Earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings. If you’ll return my belongings, I’ll show you how to become a true river pilot when we leave port tomorrow.” That’s how I met little Arty and solved the river mystery.

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**playing a trick**

**tugging at clothing**

**moving part of the boat**

**a story**

**a trick**

**a dance**