

Goal:	To introduce and explore themes of <i>Tom Sawyer</i>
Standards Addressed:	501.2.1; 0501.2.4; 0501.3.1; 0501.3.9
Materials Needed:	Open playing space Pencil and paper
Approximate Length:	20-30 minutes

PROCEDURE:

I. INTRODUCTION/HOOK: WORD ASSOCIATIONS

As a class, in small groups, or as individuals, have students brainstorm as many words (or free write) on two words for 30 seconds: Freedom and Trapped. Encourage students to think broadly and get down as many words or associations as possible.

II. TRANSITION

Explain to the students that they will be seeing *Tom Sawyer* at Nashville Children's Theatre soon. In that play, the main character, Tom, feels trapped in a number of situations and cleverly works his way out of being trapped. In the main conflict of the play, Tom and his friends are trapped in a cave with a murderer and they have to find a way out to save their lives! Today, students will have an opportunity to become "trapped" and use creative problem solving to help them return to freedom.

III. ACTIVITY: HUMAN KNOT

Break students into groups of 6-10. Have each group stand in a circle. This is a silent activity for students; you may have students start over if they are talking during the process. Standing in the circle, have students raise their right hand and grab someone else's right hand across the circle (not next to them). Then, have them raise left hands and grab left hands of someone different across the circle. Students are now in a human knot. Without talking or dropping hands, students must untangle their bodies to form a circle (or sometimes a figure 8, depending on the pattern of hands). Groups should not race through this process, but take the time to solve the problem safely and cooperatively.

IV. WRAP UP/REFLECTION

After students have untangled their knots, have them reflect on the activity by writing about their experience in relation to the words Freedom and Trapped.