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Mark Twain Quotes

Mark Twain (1835–1910); born 11/30/1835, Florida.

“Mark Twain” is a term used by the Mississippi riverboats, which needed to constantly gauge the depths of the water at each location on the river. If the water was too shallow or too deep, it meant trouble. ‘Mark Twain’ indicated that the current depth was safe water (12 ft.)

Humorous

I believe our heavenly father created man because he was disappointed in the monkey.

Honesty is the best policy - when there is money in it.

The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.

Denial isn't just a river in Egypt.

Whenever I have ventured an entire opera, the result has been the next thing to suicide.

People ought to start dead and then they would be honest so much earlier.

Always acknowledge a fault. This will throw those in authority off their guard and give you an opportunity to commit more.

There is nothing you can say in answer to a compliment. I have been complimented myself a great many times, and they always embarrass me—I always feel that they have not said enough.

I have found out that there isn't a surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them.

Suppose you were an idiot, and suppose you were a member of congress; but I repeat myself.

Action speaks louder than words but not nearly as often.

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.

Advertisements contain the only truths to be relied on in a newspaper.

Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable.

Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't.

It's no wonder that truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction has to make sense.

Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.

'Classic.' A book that people praise and don't read.

Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get.

All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure.

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.

George Washington, as a boy, was ignorant of the commonest accomplishments of youth. He could not even lie.

Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for the company.

I was gratified to be able to answer promptly, and I did. I said I didn't know.

If man could be crossed with the cat, it would improve man but deteriorate the cat.

It is better to take what does not belong to you than to let it lie around neglected.

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Insightful Comments

Humor is the great thing, the saving thing. The minute it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit takes their place.

Humor is mankind's greatest blessing.

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up."

To get the full value of a joy you must have somebody to divide it with.

Great books are wine, mine are water, but everybody drinks water.

Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

To refuse awards is another way of accepting them with more noise than is normal.

One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives.

A man is never more truthful than when he acknowledges himself a liar.

When in doubt, tell the truth.

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.

Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest.

Any emotion, if it is sincere, is involuntary.

The holy passion of friendship is of so sweet and steady and loyal and enduring a nature that it will last through a whole lifetime, if not asked to lend money.

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

Nothing incites to money-crimes like great poverty or great wealth.

Prosperity is the best protector of principle.

Good breeding consists in concealing how much we think of ourselves and how little we think of the other person.

When red-haired people are above a certain social grade their hair is auburn.

It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.

True irreverence is disrespect for another man's god.

The best of us would rather be popular than right.

Self-approval is acquired mainly from the approval of other people. The result is conformity.

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been.

A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read.

It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them.

We have the best government that money can buy.

Patriot: the person who can holler the loudest without knowing what he is hollering about.

Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.

I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.

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Insightful Comments

Why is it that we rejoice at a birth and grieve at a funeral? It is because we are not the person involved.

Let us live so that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.

Repartee is something we think of twenty-four hours too late.

The more things are forbidden, the more popular they become.

There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspeakably desirable.

The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.

Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is lightning that does all the work.

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.

Don't let schooling interfere with your education.

Familiarity breeds contempt - and children.

There is no sadder sight than a young pessimist.

Truth is mighty and will prevail. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it isn't so.

What is the difference between a taxidermist and a tax collector? The taxidermist takes only your skin.

When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look, it's a sure sign you're getting old.

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

Man is the animal that blushes. He is the only one that does it—or has occasion to.

Better a broken promise than none at all.

It is easier to stay out than get out.

It's not the size of the dog in the fight; it's the size of the fight in the dog.

Laws control the lesser man... Right conduct controls the greater one.

Necessity is the mother of taking chances.

Only kings, presidents, editors, and people with tapeworms have the right to use the editorial "we."

It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened.

It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

A man's character may be learned from the adjectives that he habitually uses in conversation.

When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.