Introduction to Mark Twain and Huck Finn

1. What is racism? Is it a belief? Is it an action?
2. What causes racism? What beliefs do people invoke to try to justify racism? In what kinds of situations do we see or find racism?
3. When did you first recognize your own racial, ethnic, religious (or other) identity? What does it mean to you to identify yourself in this way? What do you like most and least about being a member of your group?
4. How has racism affected you or people you know?\*
5. Do you think most minorities have a positive or negative image of whites? Do you think most whites have a positive or negative image of other races?\*
6. What's the biggest misconception blacks have about whites? Whites about blacks?\*
7. What are stereotypes? Why and how are they formed? Have students form a working definition of the word "stereotype" as they did with "racism" in Section I.
8. How were stereotypes used to justify slavery? To reassure slave owners?
9. Why might slaves themselves have reinforced stereotypes?
10. How have slave stereotypes influenced portrayals of African Americans today?