Mark Twain: “The Celebrated (Notorious) Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”
Study Questions

1. Read the first paragraph and the fourth paragraph. What differences exist between the narrator (¶ 1) and Simon Wheeler (¶ 4)? How do you know? Give examples.

2. How do you know that Smiley has a gambling problem? Give examples.

3. Describe Smiley’s bet about the Parson’s wife.

4. Why do you think Smiley’s dog was named Andrew Jackson? (Andrew Jackson was the 7th President and Jackson was nicknamed "Old Hickory" because of his toughness and aggressive personality). What happens to Smiley’s fighting dog?

5. Why might Smiley have named his frog Dan’l Webster? (Daniel Webster was a senator and famous speaker in the early 1800s; President John Quincy Adams wrote about “the gigantic intellect, the envious temper, the ravenous ambition, and the rotten heart of Daniel Webster”.) (use a dictionary if you need to)

6. What is ironic about Smiley teaching the frog to jump and catch flies?

7. How does Smiley end up losing his bet on his frog?

8. What is a possible theme of the story?

9. Based on what we learn about the narrator (¶ 1 and the last 4 paragraphs), in what way(s) are he and Smiley similar?

10. Why is “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” called a story-within-a-story?

11. While the story is obviously intended to be humorous, who are the two people who might be considered the victim/target of the humor?