



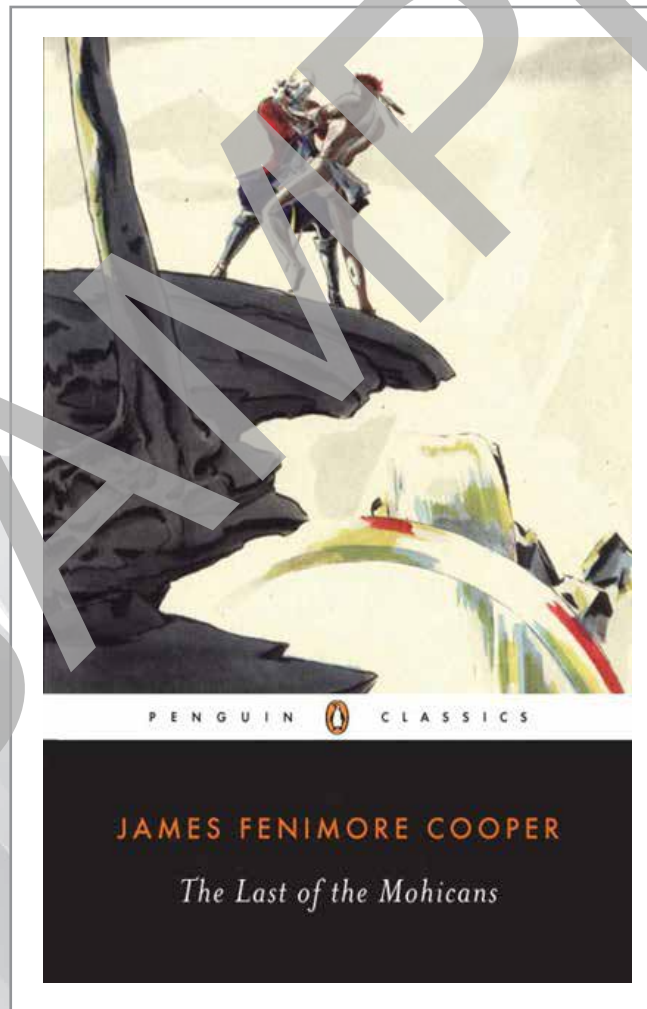
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **The Last of the Mohicans**

James Fenimore Cooper



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Last of the Mohicans

James Fenimore Cooper

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

[sales@novelunits.com](mailto:sales@novelunits.com)

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## Skills and Strategies

### Writing

Poetry, compare/contrast,  
diary entries, movie critique

### Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,  
application

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

### Thinking

Research, compare/contrast,  
analysis

### Literary Elements

Characterization, simile,  
personification, metaphor,  
allusion, plot development,  
antagonist/protagonist,  
setting, theme

### Comprehension

Predictions, cause/effect

### Fine Arts

Art—collage, drawing;  
Drama—skit, monologue;  
Music—ballad

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**Genre:** fiction

**Setting:** New York wilderness between Hudson River and Lake George, 1757, during the French and Indian War

**Date:** written in 1826

**Point of View:** third-person narrative

**Themes:** the frontier, revenge, individualism, brotherhood, and captivity/survival

**Conflict:** man vs. man; man vs. nature; nation vs. nation; culture vs. culture

**Protagonist:** Hawk-eye

**Antagonist:** Magua

**Style:** narrative; classic American legend featuring pursuit, capture, and escape; Cooper employs disguise and contrast. The text is fictitious but includes references to real people and events.

## Characterization

**Static character:** one who changes little as the narrative progresses; includes most of the characters in *The Last of the Mohicans*

**Dynamic character:** one who is changed by the actions through which he or she passes; David Gamut becomes more forceful and brave; Col. Munro becomes weak and ineffective through tragedy; Uncas appears to become less savage after he is drawn to Cora

## Summary

Cora and Alice Munro, accompanied by Major Duncan Heyward and David Gamut, a psalmodist, begin a wilderness journey to join their father, Col. Munro, at Fort William Henry. After being betrayed by their treacherous Indian guide, Magua, they are rescued by Hawk-eye, Chingachgook, and Uncas, who assume the task of leading them to the fort. The group experiences attack, pursuit, capture, and escape before reaching their destination, which is besieged by French forces. Col. Munro is forced to surrender the fort to the French commander, Montcalm, who promises protection for the Americans. After the Americans leave the fort, however, they are attacked by Indians, and the narrative begins the second pursuit/capture/escape sequence. The plot culminates in the deaths of Cora and Uncas, who is the last son of the Mohican tribe.

**Note:** *The Last of the Mohicans* was originally published as two separate volumes. Two long pursuit/capture/escape scenes (chapters 1-14 and 18-33) are separated by an interlude at Fort William Henry which ends in "The Massacre of William Henry."

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## Using Character Webs in the Novel Unit Approach

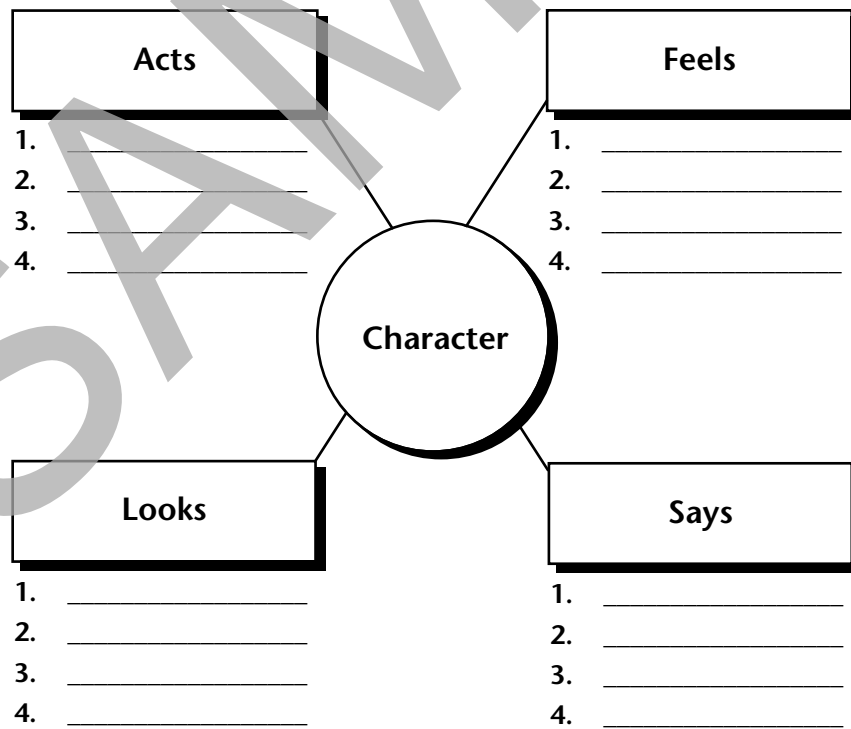
Attribute webs are simply a visual representation of a character from the novel. They provide a systematic way for students to organize and recap the information they have about a particular character. Attribute webs may be used after reading the novel to recapitulate information about a particular character, or completed gradually as information unfolds. They may be completed individually or as a group project.

One type of character attribute web uses these divisions:

- How a character acts and feels. (How does the character act? How do you think the character feels? How would you feel if this happened to you?)
- How a character looks. (Close your eyes and picture the character. Describe him/her to me.)
- Where a character lives. (Where and when does the character live?)
- How others feel about the character. (How does another specific character feel about our character?)

In group discussion about the characters described in student attribute webs, the teacher can ask for backup proof from the novel. Inferential thinking can be included in the discussion.

Attribute webs need not be confined to characters. They may also be used to organize information about a concept, object, or place.



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## Prediction Chart

What characters have we met so far?	What is the conflict in the story?	What are your predictions?	Why did you make those predictions?
<b>SAMPLE</b>			

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**Note:** Students should become aware of Cooper’s use of literary devices. Several of these are included in the supplementary activities for each section. Have students record devices they find as they read, and discuss these at the beginning of each day’s class. As an added activity, have students write similes and metaphors that refer to events in the novel. Biblical allusions refer to the King James Version of the Bible.

## Chapters 1-2, pp. 11-31

These chapters establish the setting, allude to the conflict, and introduce some of the primary characters. Alice and Cora Munro, accompanied by Major Duncan Heyward and David Gamut and guided by an Indian (later revealed to be Magua), begin their trek to join their father, Col. Munro, at Fort William Henry.

### Vocabulary

impervious (11)  
palpable (27)

formidable (15)  
churlishly (27)

stoicism (19)  
veneration (29)

sinuous (25)

### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the importance of the setting. Note the location and year. (*The setting is the wilderness area between the headwaters of the Hudson River and adjacent lakes, referred to as the Horican, during the French and Indian War. It is 1757, the third year of the war between England and France. This sets the stage for the wilderness journey, the treachery, and the conflict. pp. 12-13*)
2. Discuss the description and roll of each character. Note first reference to Magua. (*Munro sisters who wish to join their father—Alice: youngest sister, fair with golden hair and blue eyes, naive; Cora: dark-eyed, four or five years older, darker complexion with shining black hair, beautiful; seems to admire yet fear the Indian guide. Heyward: major who is to accompany the sisters; trusts the Indians. David Gamut: “master of song” who wishes to join the group; ungainly, awkward. Indian guide (Magua): wears war paint, has wild eyes, appears sullenly fierce; has had some problem with Col. Munro. pp. 20-28*)
3. **Prediction:** What is the significance of the presence of someone in the forest who is tracing the route of his “intended victims”? (p. 31)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Give information about French/Indian War found in introductory material of this guide.
2. Note the literary devices: **Metaphor**—Horican district: bloody arena (p. 13). **Personification**—forest (appeared to swallow up the living mass which had slowly entered its bosom, p. 17). **Similes**—his eye glistened like a fiery star (p. 20); tresses of lady...like the plumage of the raven (p. 21); colt gliding like a fallow deer (p. 25). **Allusions**—“He paweth in the valley...”: (p. 19; Bible, KJV, Job. 39:21-25); Apollo (god of youth and light, p. 27); royal David (p. 28; refers to the writer of many of the Biblical Psalms); “How good it is...”: (p. 29; Bible, Psalm 133).