

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Last of the Mohicans

by James Fenimore Cooper

written by Kay Hampson

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit the student will be able to:

1. compare and contrast the fighting styles of European and Indian warfare.
2. write an essay discussing the writing style of James Fenimore Cooper.
3. describe the similarities and differences between Cora and Uncas.
4. cite instances of bias, both of women and of race.
5. identify the authorial voice and indicate its purpose.
6. understand the Indian belief of minimalism.
7. elaborate on one of the major themes:
 - A. nature is good
 - B. nature reflects human condition
 - C. effects of colonialism
 - D. death is inevitable
 - E. filial piety
8. indicate instances of the motif of parent/child relationships.
9. construct an interpretation of the motif involving a book.
10. list the characteristics of the five plot elements: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.
11. define and cite instances of the following literary terms:

• authorial voice	• irony
• antagonist	• protagonist
• point of view	• motif
• theme	• metaphor
• foreshadow	• parody
• personification	• simile
• setting	• climax
• conflict	• romanticism
• mood	• tone
• Freytag's pyramid	• comic relief
• allegory	• dramatic irony
• verisimilitude	• genre

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. What do “sentimentalizing” and “demonizing” mean? How does Cooper portray the American Indian?
2. Discuss Cooper’s development of David Gamut. How is he introduced? What part does David play in the story? Is he effective? How do the caricature and his name help create the character? Would you consider David to be a dynamic or static character?
3. Using comments and incidents from the book, explain one of the major themes of this novel.
4. Understand the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Explain which incidents represent which terms.
5. Interpret the meaning of the book motif as it applies to literacy. What is the message that Cooper wants to convey?
6. Identify the genre of the book. Support your choice with examples from the text.
7. Discuss the views of both racial and gender bias. Cite instances from the text that expose the bias and examples where these biased views are challenged or changed.
8. Identify the use of the authorial voice. What does the authorial voice indicate to the reader? What must the reader look for?
9. Cite instances from the text that support the idea of Indian minimalism. What does this term mean?
10. Explain how Cooper creates a feeling of verisimilitude? How quickly is it accomplished? Does this feeling show up occasionally or is it sustained throughout the book?
11. Explain viewpoint. What viewpoint is *The Last of the Mohicans* written in? Using the text, support your choice. Is this the best choice of viewpoint for this type of story? Why?
12. Write an essay describing the writing style of Cooper. What techniques does he use to introduce the characters and to develop them? What techniques does he use to change the mood, tone, or pace of the story?
13. Explain the differences in the fighting styles of the Europeans and the Indians. How do they differ in their views of fighting? How do they differ in actual combat? What are the differences in their ideals?

The Last of the Mohicans

All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *The Last of the Mohicans* written by James Fenimore Cooper, copyright 2003.

Chapter 1

VOCABULARY

abase – to lower in rank
abstracted – removed from a specific instance
acuteness – keenly perceptive
animadversions – strong criticisms
annihilation – utter destruction
appellation – a name or title
avidity – a craving or eagerness
caparisoned – outfitted with an ornamental covering
craven – cowardly
credulous – gullible
docility – a willingness to be taught
elicited – drawn out, provoked
emulating – striving to equal or excel
encumbered – hindered
fifes – a small, high-pitched flute
impervious – incapable of being penetrated
injudicious – unwise
interminable – seemingly without end
interposed – inserted between things
invincible – incapable of being overcome
limpid – transparent; clear
lineaments – distinctive contours, especially of the face
menials – servants
nether – located under
plumage – the covering of feathers on a bird
razed – leveled to the ground
repast – a meal
satiate – to satisfy fully
stoicism – indifference to pleasure or pain
swarthy – having a dark complexion
wanton – merciless

Chapter 3

VOCABULARY

accoutrements – accessory items of equipment or dress
alteration – a modification
antagonist – one who opposes or contends with another
attenuated – reduced in amount or degree; weakened
atwixt – between
chivalrous – having the qualities of gallantry and honor
dumb – silent
gay – bright or lively, especially in color
indurated – hardened
intimation – a subtle hint
sagamore – a subordinate chief among the Algonquians of North America
sinewy – lean and muscular
sultriness – a humid and hot condition
unremitted – undiminished
vaunts – speaks boastfully of

1. What does the interjection “we must use an author’s privilege” show?

2. What are the names of the two men conversing in the woods? From what ethnic background are they?

3. What example can you locate that reflects the theme of colonialism, the blending of the two cultures?

4. What is the only admissible trophy of victory?

Chapter 10

VOCABULARY

abated – reduced in amount or degree
annihilated – destroyed completely
artifice – a subtle but base deception
averted – turned away
baubles – showy ornaments of little value
confederacy – a union or conspiracy
deprecate – to express strong disapproval of
disdained – regarded with hatred or anger
enumeration – to count off or list one by one
feign – to fake
leagues – a unit of distance equal to 3.0 statute miles
malignant – evil
manes – the spirits of the dead
medal – an award; a flat piece of metal with an inscription
nomenclature – a system of names used
respite – a short interval of rest

1. Is the treatment of the travelers what you expect?

2. What language is used to interrogate them? Who understands it?

3. Who are the savages looking for?

9. How do they respond to the situation?

10. When the Hurons approach the blockhouse, Fort Oswego, what emotions do they display?

11. How did the Hurons leave the area, and why did they not inspect the fort?

12. How does the author set the mood in the final paragraph of chapter 13?

Chapter 20

VOCABULARY

acuteness – a penetrating intelligence
copse – a thicket of small trees
dexterity – the skill and grace in physical movement
fastidious – exacting; exhibiting meticulous attention to detail
formidable – difficult to defeat
gauntlet – a challenge; a severe trial
prodigious – impressively great in size
requisite – essential
sagacious – acutely insightful and wise
volition – the power of choosing; one’s will

1. What does Hawkeye say that signals danger is near?

2. What choice is made for an exit route? Why?

3. After leaving the ditch, where do they go?
