

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

SYNOPSIS

Set near the headwaters of the Hudson River in colonial New York during the French and Indian War in July 1757, the novel opens in perilous times as the French General Montcalm menaces British forts farther south. Cora Munro and her younger sister Alice, daughters of Fort William Henry's commander, speed from Fort Edward toward Lake George to join their father. Escorting them are Major Duncan Heyward and Magua, the "sly fox," a native scout who secretly sides with the French. David Gamut, a naive vocal instructor traveling alone, encounters them along the way and asks to join them. By his musical accompaniment, he draws attention from savages lurking in the brush. Before Magua can betray the innocent party to the Hurons, Hawkeye, along with Uncas, the last of the Mohicans, and his doughty father, Chief Chingachgook, approach from the west and rescue the party, which Magua has deliberately led astray.

En route upstream to Glenn's Falls, Magua, wounded in the shoulder by a shot from Hawkeye's rifle, eludes the Mohicans, who are his tribe's enemies. The party makes its way by canoe to the falls and takes shelter under the cascade in a double cave, where David offers up a psalm. Their rest is interrupted by the cry of a horse, which senses the approach of danger. The group deserts the cave and sleeps in the forest. Near dawn, with Huron backing, Magua returns. A desperate battle leaves Gamut unconscious and Hawkeye's party nearly defenseless as a Huron spirits away the last of their powder. At Cora's urging, the threesome take heart and go for help.

At the cave, Magua and his Hurons capture the Munro sisters, Heyward and David. Magua threatens to scalp Alice. The Huron chief intercedes and rides away with his braves, leaving Magua and a small band to guard the captives. On the twenty-mile trail, Heyward tries to sway Magua's sympathies while Cora attempts to leave a trail. Magua, a Huron outcast who claims that Colonel Munro had him whipped for drunkenness, barter Alice's life for Cora, whom he wants to wed in retaliation for Munro's cruelty. Cora vehemently rejects him. In the ensuing melee, Magua threatens Alice with a tomahawk just as Hawkeye kills one of the Hurons. In the following fight Magua escapes.

The group proceeds north toward Fort William Henry, stopping for a brief rest at a dilapidated blockhouse adjacent to a hallowed Mohawk burial ground. Speaking French, Heyward outfoxes a French sentinel; Chingachgook kills and scalps him. By morning, the group climbs a thousand-foot escarpment in sight of Fort William Henry and Montcalm and his ten thousand troops, who battle with the badly outnumbered English. Through Uncas's expertise, the party arrives safely at the fort, where Munro clasps his daughters in tearful welcome.

Five days later, a truce ends the fighting. The French return Hawkeye, who had tried to carry a message to General Webb

at Fort Edward. Montcalm calls for a parley. Speaking with Major Heyward, he surrounds himself with Magua, other Indians, and French officers in an effort to intimidate the English. Returning to the fort, Heyward ferries Montcalm's message to Munro. In a digression from the business at hand, Heyward perturbs Munro by implying that he wants to marry Alice rather than Cora. Because Cora was born of a black West Indian mother, Munro fears that Heyward demonstrates the prejudice common to southern colonists. Munro divulges the story of his courtship of Alice's mother, Alice Graham, a Scot, who at first rejected his suit and whom he married twenty years later, after Cora's mother's death. At length, Heyward, who has fallen silent, hands over Montcalm's message.

With Heyward interpreting, Munro is able to confer with the Marquis de Montcalm. The French temper their demand for surrender with generosity, offering to let the British leave with their flag, guns, and a sense of honor. Munro, his options limited without Webb's intervention, accepts their offer and puts Heyward in charge of ironing out the details. A second meeting takes place on August 10. As Munro draws near Montcalm on the western wall of the fort, Magua, seeking revenge on his despised English enemy, aims a rifle at his former tormentor. Montcalm forces him to withdraw. The malcontented Huron departs.

The French move inexorably toward possession of the English camp, but the British troops' peaceful withdrawal is interrupted by an Indian who tries to snatch a woman's shawl. When the woman protests, he kills her child and tomahawks the outraged mother. The Indians begin to slaughter the English, whose guns are unloaded. Magua, taking advantage of the situation, beckons to Cora, who spurns him. He scoops up Alice, who has swooned. Cora races after them and is also taken prisoner. Galloping away on horseback, the trio, followed by the ingenious music teacher, reaches an overlook in full view of the massacre below.

Three days later, the fort lies in smoking ruins. Uncas, a tireless tracker, locates a green snippet of Cora's riding cloak; after a day's rest he leads Hawkeye, Munro, and Heyward toward the women. Along the way, Chingachgook kills and scalps a skulking Oneida brave. Traveling swiftly by canoe, the party outdistances pursuing Hurons, leaves a false trail, and, with Uncas's keen eye, locates an obscured footprint in a streambed. In the meantime, Heyward nearly kills Gamut, who has posed as an Indian and learned that Alice remains with the Hurons while Cora has been turned over to neighboring Delawares. Gamut returns to the Indian camp along with Heyward, who is disguised as a French juggler.

Two miles further on, Gamut and Heyward enter the village. Uncas suddenly appears and is forced to run the gauntlet. He is mocked and harassed by Huron women. Magua vilifies him. Heyward, posing as a healer, is summoned to the bedside of a dying woman in a cave and is accompanied by a conjuror

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dressed as a bear. Alone with his patient, he discovers that the bear is really Hawkeye in disguise. Hawkeye locates Alice and ties up Magua. Playing on Indian superstitions at the entrance of the cave, Heyward cows the tribe so that he can carry Alice to the woods and on to a village of friendly Delaware.

Hawkeye, intent on rescuing Uncas, returns to the Huron village. He joins Gamut, who is at first frightened by the bear suit, then recognizes Hawkeye and evolves a plan of action. In the guise of the conjuror, he finds Uncas, cuts him free, and leaves Gamut in his place in the main lodge. Before Uncas and Hawkeye get completely away, their trickery is discovered. They arm themselves and race toward the Delaware village.

The next morning, Magua approaches Hard Heart, a Delaware chief, and attempts to learn the whereabouts of Cora. A council is called, presided over by the esteemed Tamenund, an aged sage. Braves converge on the site with Alice, Cora, Hawkeye, and Heyward. To gain time, both white men claim to be "long rifle." A shooting match proves Hawkeye's deadly aim. Magua convinces the revered chief to hand over the white men. Cora intervenes and asks for Uncas. The proud Uncas denounces Magua and stoically prepares to be roasted alive. Stripped of his shirt, he halts the offending braves with the revelation of a turtle tattooed on his chest. Because the turtle symbolizes Uncas's royal lineage among the Mohicans, Chief Tamenund welcomes him and proclaims him a worthy kinsman.

Magua demands possession of Cora, whom he claims as his squaw. Uncas, who has no legal claim on the woman, can do nothing to prevent Magua from leading her away. Hawkeye proffers himself and his rifle as inducements to let her go, but Magua stalks away with his capture. Uncas, withdrawn into a dance and invocation to the god Manitou, mesmerizes the admiring Delaware. As an acclaimed leader, he plans to lead the Delawares into battle. Gamut arrives with news of Cora's whereabouts. Heyward joins in the preparations to attack the Huron village and recapture Cora.

In the final battle, all participants converge on the scene. Magua retreats to the cave where Cora, dressed in a white robe, is hidden. Hawkeye and his companions pursue. High on a crag, Uncas fights for Cora, whom one of Magua's followers stabs in the chest. Magua downs Uncas with a quick thrust of his knife. Uncas sinks, then rises long enough to kill Cora's attacker. Magua mutilates Uncas's lifeless body with three more thrusts of the knife. Fleeing across a gap in the crags, Magua is felled by a shot from Hawkeye's trusty rifle Killdeer. Magua teeters briefly on the rim of the rock and falls to his death.

The next morning, the Delaware and their guests mourn the cold bodies of Uncas and Cora. The Delaware celebrate the couple's union in the afterlife, but Hawkeye rejects their primitive philosophy. Munro, comforted by religious beliefs, embraces all races and their divergent views of the afterlife. Hawkeye, the lone dissenter, grasps the hand of Chingachgook and vows to replace Uncas as his faithful son. Tamenund, the noble orator, concludes the ritual with an appropriate farewell to the "last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Son of the prominent frontier land developer, judge, and congressman William Cooper and Elizabeth Fenimore Cooper, James Fenimore Cooper, one of America's earliest travel writers and social commentators, was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on September 15, 1789. The family moved to Otsego

Hall in a frontier settlement in central New York State the following year, which was named Cooperstown in honor of William Cooper's entrepreneurial leadership. There the boy enjoyed the privileges of wealth, private tutoring under an Episcopal rector in Albany, and elevated social rank.

By his teen years, Cooper, forced to study Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, developed into a fiercely independent thinker. He was dismissed from Yale at age thirteen for pulling childish pranks involving a homemade explosive. To escape domination by his father and to occupy restless energies, he signed on the British merchant vessel *Stirling* in 1806 and sailed parts of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. He was later appointed a midshipman in the United States Navy. By age twenty, upon the death of his father after being struck by a political rival, Cooper came into his inheritance. Within two years, at his fiancée's insistence, he left the navy and on New Year's Day settled into married life at Mamaroneck with Susan Augusta De Lancey, an heiress whose background resembled Cooper's own.

In 1817, dependent on the De Lancey name and connections, Cooper set himself up as gentleman farmer at Fenimore Farm near Scarsdale. As a budding social lion, he bore himself well, but he failed to bridle his brothers' expenditures, which, along with his own unwise investments, spent down the considerable sum left him by his father. With little literary background, Cooper, challenged by his wife to compose romance in the style of Sir Walter Scott, in 1819 abruptly turned to the production of novels and published *Precaution* the following year. Undeterred by the work's mediocrity, he produced *The Spy* in 1821, earning critical acclaim and a place in literary history as America's first historical novelist. Success brought Cooper an entourage of hangers-on, who assembled regularly as New York's Bread and Cheese Club. After *The Pilot* and *The Pirate* appeared in 1823, he inaugurated his noteworthy "Leatherstocking Tales," comprised of five works featuring the adventures of Nathaniel "Natty" Bumppo, later called Hawkeye, a composite figure drawn from prominent pioneers and adventurers whom Cooper knew and admired.

Written out of chronological sequence, the Leatherstocking quintet—*The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841)—were by no means Cooper's only achievements. He also wrote *Lionel Lincoln* (1825), *The Red Rover* (1827), *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish* (1829), *The Water-Witch* (1829), *The Bravo* (1831), *The Heidenmauer* (1832), and *The Headsman* (1833). With the proceeds of his prolific pen, in 1826, while U.S. consul at Lyons, he traveled Italy, Switzerland, France, and England. Continuing to write about colonial America and life at sea, he settled in Paris, provided amply for his children's schooling, and enjoyed accolades from an adoring following, including novelist Honoré de Balzac, who dubbed him "*le grand écrivain américain*."

Despite Cooper's noteworthy literary contributions, Parisian fans began to tire of him and his support of the liberal politics of the Marquis de Lafayette. In 1833, after seven years abroad, he returned to New York. Disgruntled at his reception on both sides of the Atlantic for opinionated treatises such as *Notions of the Americans* (1828) and *The American Democrat* (1838), Cooper completed the Leatherstocking Tales while writing travel lore and compiling his *History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839). His last major fictional works—*Wyandotté* (1843), *Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1845), *The Redskins* (1846), and *The Crater* (1848)—did little to strengthen his reputation as novelist or philosopher. Although

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Cooper won two celebrated lawsuits against New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley in 1842, he was ridiculed as a continental aristocrat and elitist turncoat. He died a broken man in Cooperstown on September 14, 1851, and was buried in Christ Church Cemetery.

CRITIC'S CORNER

For all his popular acclaim, Cooper, a member of the Knickerbocker Group, which included Washington Irving and William Cullen Bryant, raised the hackles of American and French critics for his view on American society and his boldness in criticizing French political matters. As ineptness and melodrama plagued his fiction, Cooper embroiled himself in a series of defensive pamphlets, which only clouded issues by mixing politics with literary matters. Incapable of distancing himself from blatant accusations of American chauvinism, lack of charity, and ostentation, he managed to cling to a single strength—a robust championship of the frontier spirit. At his death, Cooper maintained his reputation as father of the American historical romance and the forerunner of Hawthorne and Melville, as well as the western novels of Zane Grey, Louis L'Amour, and Owen Wister, but added little to his fame or respectability during years of empty contention with the press and lawsuits for slander and libel.

Critics identify in Natty Bumppo the prototypical epic hero, the knight errant of medieval romance, and the noble savage of Rousseau's vision. An amalgam of the best of Native American wisdom and lore and of Christian generosity and brotherhood, Natty demonstrates the woodsman's code of honor. Although Cooper's craftsmanship in *The Deerslayer* rates highest acclaim for structure, it is *The Last of the Mohicans*, an action-packed tale of vengeance and unrequited love, which remains most popular. The Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, burial spot of Tschoop, the Mohican model for Uncas, remains a tourist attraction, as does Cooper's Cave, at the foot of the falls in Glens Falls, New York, and the tomb of Nathaniel Shipman, a frontier trapper and model for Natty Bumppo who is buried in Hoosick Falls, New York. Another possible Natty, Ephraim Webster, is buried in the Onondaga Valley Cemetery in Syracuse.

On the whole, Cooper's romanticism fails because it clings to European convention, glorifies illogic, and idealizes a lofty notion of the frontiersman. Even though female characters come perilously close to being raped, the author distances himself from the sexuality of his characters, particularly those of disparate races. To create such sanitized wishful thinking, the author relies on stilted language and contrived cliff-hangers. His crafting of events wanders into boring digressions and one-dimensional actors set against shimmering descriptions of the New York wilderness that Cooper knew firsthand. What few vivid events survive, however, along with the writer's command of Indian lore, earn him a place among America's foremost romantic authors.

Numerous memorials keep the Cooper legend alive. His daughter Susan, born in 1813, followed her father's career and from 1876 to 1884 penned biographical prefaces to his works. A statue of Natty Bumppo stands at Lakewood outside Cooperstown. Cooper himself is commemorated there in a seated statue in Cooper Park. The site of his home, Fenimore Cottage, houses the New York Historical Association, which preserves documents, paintings, and original manuscripts.

Other of his papers reside at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze a romance and identify themes, characters, plot, setting, tone, and mood
2. To discuss the significance of race and pride to character interaction
3. To identify aspects of Indian and woods lore that are crucial to the story
4. To identify examples of loyalty, perseverance, dishonesty, mayhem, and deceit
5. To recount the historical setting of the novel, particularly the relationship of the Dutch, English, French, Iroquois, Huron, and Delaware
6. To examine the effects of alcoholism and disgrace on the behavior of the outcast
7. To identify examples of brotherhood and acceptance
8. To evaluate the importance of family and national ties
9. To discuss reasons for caution, suspicion, jealousy, rage, and vengeance
10. To note the effect of third person point of view
11. To characterize the passage of time
12. To discuss the importance of irony, allusion, simile, and sense impressions as literary devices
13. To evaluate examples of oratory
14. To evaluate frequent use of the disguise motif

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss Cora's attitude toward her racial heritage
2. To contrast Uncas, Hawkeye, David Gamut, the Marquis de Montcalm, Chingachgook, Colonel Munro, Tamenumund, Hard Heart, and Magua in terms of masculinity and treatment of women
3. To comprehend the reasons for Alice's frailty
4. To note the interaction between Heyward, Hawkeye, Uncas, and David Gamut during their dealings with the enemy
5. To contrast the persistence of Magua in pursuit of Cora
6. To comment on Hawkeye as a Christian, woodsman, tracker, fighter, rescuer, ambassador, and friend
7. To characterize the value of Killdeer
8. To account for the deaths of Uncas and Cora and their noble funerals
9. To enumerate Magua's manipulative skills
10. To explain Hawkeye's ambivalence toward Indians

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. Near its southern termination, it received the contributions of another lake, whose waters were so limpid as to have been exclusively selected by the Jesuit missionaries to perform the typical purification of baptism, and to obtain for it the title of lake "du Saint Sacrement." (Chapter 1, p. 2) (*The coming of French Jesuit fathers to North American shores was meant as a civilizing device, particularly among the pagan Huron. The proselytizing efforts of the French Catholics produced questionable results. In part, Huron tribes imported some of the ritual and lore of Christianity into their worship of Manitou, but they remained animistic, as Uncas's prayer chant indicates. In actuality, the French*

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missionaries, trappers, and soldiers who explored much of Canada and the Ohio Valley had a greater influence on language than on religion, as demonstrated by Magua's understanding of the French language and by his loyalty to Montcalm. A more convincing example of Christianity appears, ironically, in the behavior of the Munro sisters and Hawkeye, who cautions Heyward not to wreak vengeance on Indians but rather to pray for their guidance.)

2. A young man, in the dress of an officer, conducted to their steeds two females, who, as it was apparent by their dresses, were prepared to encounter the fatigues of a journey in the woods. (Chapter 1, p. 9)

(From their appearance in the opening scene, the Munro girls develop into crucial characters, but even more significant to Cooper's intent, they become racial emblems as well. Cora, Munro's daughter by a West Indian wife, is swarthy and tough, especially endowed with determination to protect her fair, curly-haired sister, Alice, who is over two decades younger and much more tender and defenseless in difficult circumstances. Critics dwell on the repeated fainting spells which take Alice out of the action and on the doughty courage of Cora, who clings to Alice and does her best to repel the evil of Magua, who has targeted her. He envisions her as the actualization of his spite toward Munro rather than a likely bride.)

3. "The man is, most manifestly, a disciple of Apollo," cried the amused Alice, "and I take him under my own especial protection." (Chapter 2, p. 16)

(David Gamut, the bumbling singing master, enters the novel in classical guise. As Alice proclaims, he is a follower of the Greek and Roman god of sunlight, prophecy, and creativity. Throughout his role, he proves incapable of the manly, two-fisted action of Heyward and Hawkeye, but amusingly ingenious at adapting his vocal talents to the moment, especially after he realizes that the Indians revere "non-composers" or mental defectives. The fact that Alice intends to protect him is comical, particularly as her inability to cope with danger and distress causes her repeated collapses.)

4. His closely shaved head, on which no other hair than the well known and chivalrous scalping tuft was preserved, was without ornament of any kind, with the exception of a solitary eagle's plume, that crossed his crown, and depended over the left shoulder. (Chapter 3, p. 21)

(Chingachgook's hairstyle, called a roach or Mohawk, consists of a tall ruff of hair brushed into an upright ridge. Often, the wearer made the roach more dramatic by singeing, shaving, or plucking the outer portions of the scalp and letting the scalplock grow long behind. Eastern Indians sometimes fashioned an artificial roach from the bristly hair of deer, porcupine, or moose which was dyed a bright color and fastened in place by a v-shaped roach spreader, through which the wearer threaded the scalplock and fastened it in place with a carved pin. Among forest Indians, only a brave might wear an artificial roach. The addition of the eagle's feather, like a medal or ribbon, indicates past deeds. Chingachgook wears his simple adornment nobly, like a badge of honor.)

5. He also wore a hunting-shirt of forest green, fringed with faded yellow, and a summer cap of skins which had been shorn of their fur. He also bore a knife in a girdle of

wampum like that which confined the scanty garments of the Indian, but no tomahawk. (Chapter 3, p. 21)

(Nathaniel Bumppo, known throughout as Hawkeye, adorns himself in a frontier blend of native camouflage gear. Wampum refers to belts, strings, bandoleros, or sashes woven of sinew strung with cylindrical shell beads from one-eighth to one-half inch long and fashioned from the whelk, periwinkle, conch, and the valve of freshwater clams ranging in color from white to violet to deep purple, the most valuable. Crafted by skilled female workers, these adornments served East Coast Indians as invitations, messages, condolences, settlement of a treaty, peace covenants, or ceremonial badges and decorations. After the coming of European colonists, wampum was the equivalent of currency among colonists and was even used in exchanges between Dutch and English settlers, who established local laws against counterfeiters. The most valuable was judged for smoothness and color. When used as messages, dark wampum signified bad news; white wampum meant good news. As settlement in a civil suit, a murder victim's family might accept six strings of beads as restitution. The tribe often selected a Keeper of the Wampum, who recited verses commemorating events connected with a special belt of wampum. Symbolically, Hawkeye adopts the trappings of his Mohican companions, but he declines the tomahawk, which represents a more savage type of killing than the clean shot of his beloved Killdeer.)

6. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores, until I, that am a chief and a sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the trees, and have never visited the graves of my fathers! (Chapter 3, p. 25)

(Chingachgook indicates that he is a sagamore, the Abnaki term indicating a high-ranking tribal leader. The concept of chief or sachem, which does not equal the concept of commander in chief, could apply to any leader of spiritual, political, or military matters. Unlike the self-important Montcalm or the dilatory General Webb, Chingachgook reflects humility and a sense of dignity and service, as does his Delaware counterpart, Tamunund. To both men, the tie with tradition, as symbolized by past leaders, is more important than future conquests. Ironically, Chingachgook is well served by his longing to commune with dead leaders because his future is limited by the encroachment of white settlers and the death of his son Uncas.)

7. "The pale-faces make themselves dogs to their women," muttered the Indian, in his native language, "and when they want to eat, their warriors must lay aside the tomahawk to feed their laziness." (Chapter 4, pp. 35-36)

(In reply to Heyward's comment that they should stop quarreling like women and wait for Cora and Alice to rest, Magua notes a major difference between Indian and white attitudes toward the sexes. Whereas Heyward shows disdain for womanish ways, he demonstrates chivalric manners by allowing for the weakness he perceives in women. Magua, on the other hand, blames white men for catering to females and for weakening the male role as warriors by wasting time on womanly needs. To Magua, a woman is a necessary factotum, a slave to see to his needs, to bear his children, and to manage the affairs of his teepee. It is significant that the woman he chooses is Cora, born of an enslaved race, yet fearless in facing a brutal and chauvinistic male. Had he chosen Alice, he

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might have had less difficulty quelling her independence.)

8. The ingenuous Alice gazed at his free air and proud carriage, as she would have looked upon some precious relic of the Grecian chisel, to which life had been imparted by the intervention of a miracle; while Heyward, though accustomed to see the perfection of form which abounds among the uncorrupted natives, openly expressed his admiration at such an unblemished specimen of the noble proportions of man. (Chapter 6, p. 48)
(Cooper pushes Rousseau's philosophy of the noble savage, a popular seventeenth-century concept based on a romanticized ideal of the red man living free of society's encumbrances in the grandeur of nature. Alice seems drawn to the classic grace of Uncas's pose, while Heyward, agreeing with Alice's trust, notes that Christians are capable of the same nobility but are less likely to produce it. Cora, whose name suggests her nearness to the core or heart of the matter, chimes in with her own bias by adding that skin color has little influence on a person's inner qualities. The forthrightness of her opinion leads to "an embarrassed silence.")
9. Well, friend, I suppose it is your gift, and mustn't be denied any more than if 'twas shooting, or some other better inclination. (Chapter 6, p. 53)
(Hawkeye, who expresses misgivings about a man who can neither shoot, read a compass, nor serve the military as messenger, reluctantly accords David Gamut his place in the scheme of vocations. Claiming that music pedagogy is "a strange calling," Hawkeye calls on the stranger to perform. The name of the music teacher provides some clue to Cooper's reasons for creating the character. He bears the name of Israel's first king and the creator of the Psalms, which the teacher chooses as the focus of his life's work. His last name derives from the Greek letter gamma and refers to the scale, from beginning to end. As the latter-day David pours out verses of a hymn, gradually he softens Hawkeye's macho reserve and moves him to tears.)
10. "France!" cried Heyward, advancing from the shadow of the trees to the shore of the pond, within a few yards of the sentinel. (Chapter 14, p. 139)
(Heyward's multilingualism proves useful in that he can negotiate with French and Indian. To the French sentinel, he makes up a hasty string of lies about why he happens to be in the forest with two young Englishwomen, whom he claims to have captured. The French sentinel is so taken with Heyward's explanation that he sympathizes with them, noting that capture is the fortune of war. Cora, also fluent in French, agrees with his philosophy and hopes that he draws duty more "agréable" than walking the picket line. The soldier, completely charmed, wishes his "comrade" good night. As they move out of earshot, Hawkeye expresses gratitude that he didn't have to kill the "Frencher.")

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. List and explain sobriquets from the novel.
(Cooper relies on numerous alternate names or nick-

names, some in foreign languages. The most important are these:

- *Dutchers*—Dutch settlers of the New York area
 - *Elsie*—General Munro's pet name for Alice
 - *fire-water*—alcoholic drink
 - *Five Nations*—Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, and Senecas, before the addition of the Tuscaroras made them the Six Nations
 - *Gray Head*—General Munro
 - *Hawkeye*—Nathaniel "Natty" Bumppo or "Long Rifle"
 - *Iroquois*—French name for the Five Nations
 - *Killdeer*—Hawkeye's rifle
 - *Le Cerf Agile*—Uncas, the "leaping stag" or "nimble deer"
 - *Le Coeur-dur*—Hard Heart
 - *Le Gros Serpent*—Chingachgook, the "big snake"
 - *La Longue Carabine*—Hawkeye, the "long rifle"
 - *Lenni Lenape*—Delaware
 - *Le Renard Subtil*—Magua, the "sly fox"
 - *Maquas*—Dutch name for the Five Nations
 - *manes*—Latin for "spirit"
 - *Manitou*—the Great Spirit
 - *Mingo*—Delaware name for the Five Nations
 - *Minquon*—William Penn
 - *non-composser*—David Gamut, who pretends to be non compos mentis or mentally unsound
 - *Open Hand*—General Montcalm
 - *pride of the Wapanachki*—Uncas
 - *Sagamore*—Chingachgook
 - *Six Nations*—Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras
 - *Sons of Unamis*—Mohicans
 - *Virginian boy*—George Washington
 - *Yengeese*—the Indian term for English, an Algonquin word which developed into "Yankee.")
2. Give proof of Cooper's familiarity with eastern woodlands tribes.
(Cooper, who grew up in frontier New York, knew well the territory around Lake George and the history of the French and Indian Wars. In his Leatherstocking Tales, he bases intertribal animosities on long-standing antipathy between the Five Nations and the Hurons, the despised tribes who sided with the French. Cooper's knowledge of lifestyle, attitudes, and behaviors is obvious through the use of detail. Uncas, the consummate brave, dresses simply in a fringed deerskin hunting shirt dyed green as a means of camouflage. Chingachgook, of an older generation, prefers the bare-chested look, marked by a "terrific emblem of death, drawn in intermingled colors of white and black." He wears moccasins on his feet; his hair is styled in a side-shaved roach decorated by one eagle feather, which hangs over his left shoulder. In the funeral scene, the characters reverse their roles, with Uncas decked out in armbands, gorgets, and finery while Chingachgook, the lone Mohican, wears only brilliant blue paint as an adornment.
Other significant details involve social customs, which depict Uncas running the gauntlet among jeering Huron women, who mock him for lack of masculinity, their supreme insult. During the council, Delawares defer to Tamemund, a revered elder statesman whose wisdom marks him as sagamore and prophet. Likewise, the tribe gives place to the conjuror, who is really Hawkeye dressed

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In a bear suit. In a subsequent scene, Heyward claims that evils of disease inhabit the sick woman's room. His chicanery is effective because, to the Indians, animism confers an anthropomorphic shape and dangerous intent on disease and other evil spirits.

The philosophical details of the story display Cooper's thorough knowledge of Indian lore, particularly belief in Manitou and an afterlife. To the Delaware maidens who prepare the dead for their long journey, Uncas is already escorting Cora in happy lands. The Mohican brave's noble death contrasts the ignoble demise of Reed-That-Bends, whose father not only murders his disreputable son but also denies that the miscreant ever existed.

Various other realistic touches render verisimilitude to the novel. Chingachgook and Uncas both weather dangers impassively. They are capable of sitting or standing immobile while absorbing the sounds and smells of the forest. Their eyes see what white sentinels overlook. They hold off physical needs, such as sleep and warmth, while remaining alert to approaching danger. As Cooper describes their knowledge of the eastern woodlands, they survive because they understand the human role in nature.)

3. Explain the dramatic situation at the beginning of the novel. (Colonel Munro, commander of twenty-three hundred English troops at Fort William Henry on the shores of Lake George, awaits reunion with his daughters, Cora and her younger sister Alice, whom Major Duncan Heyward is escorting from Fort Edward with the assistance of the Huron scout Magua. Danger lurks in two forms: the Marquis de Montcalm, heading a force of ten thousand French soldiers, has besieged Fort William Henry. Magua, ostensibly sympathetic to the English cause, nurtures hatred toward Munro for earlier mistreatment and contemplates misdirecting Heyward toward the Hurons. In the opening scenes, Hawkeye, a well schooled woodsman, in the company of his friends Uncas and Uncas's father Chingachgook, prevents Magua from leading Heyward astray and guides the party toward temporary safety at Fort William Henry.

Adding to the drama of this tense wartime scenario is Heyward's romantic interest in Alice, Magua's desire to injure Munro by taking Cora as a wife, and General Webb's failure to help Munro ward off the French. The addition of the bumbling stranger, David Gamut, as comic relief, and the melodramatic situation of Uncas as last of the Mohicans layers texture on the story, which turns on the interrelation of different nationalities and races. The unspoken danger to two white virgins in a forest rife with hostile Indians of various tribes results in numerous scenes of treachery and rescue, the psychological forces which undergird the novel.)

4. What are the roles of Chingachgook and Hawkeye in the story?
(Hawkeye, Cooper's mythic frontiersman, is peripherally identified as Nathaniel Bumppo, a white man who has absorbed the training and discipline of the Delaware and who chooses the companionship of Uncas and his father. Before Hawkeye and Chingachgook assist Heyward in rescuing the two women, they sit unsuspectingly in the forest, Chingachgook on a mossy log, debating with words and expressive gestures, Hawkeye, standing nearby. The

latter is so intent and alert a character that he is capable of listening to Chingachgook and of observing the woods for signs of game and "lurking enemy." The two friends discuss the warlike nature of both whites and Indians.

Hawkeye, who makes no pretensions of scholarship, indicates that his relationship with the Mohican dates to the friendship of their fathers. Chingachgook, Cooper's spokesman for the native American, emphasizes that Indians "were one people and . . . were happy" until Dutch settlers invaded their lands and distributed "fire-water." Hawkeye presses the wise chief for an explanation of how the Mohicans have died out. Chingachgook, as though speaking for the entire native American dilemma, comments that the Mohicans departed one by one, leaving him the father of "the last of the Mohicans.")

5. Describe Magua's position in the novel.
(Magua, who bears a load of malice against Munro, is an outcast. Having succumbed to the white man's evil of alcohol, he has shamed himself, been ostracized from his tribe, and forfeited his wife to another brave. Childless, wifeless, and tribeless, Magua is alone. By way of rationalization, he blames Munro for stripping the last of his pride by having him whipped in public like a dog. To avenge himself, Magua transfers his humiliation and hatred onto the person of Munro, who has survived two wives and been left with two daughters, over twenty years apart in age.

Magua acquires the task of scouting for Major Duncan Heyward, who escorts the women to Fort William Henry. Aware that hostile tribes lurk in the forest, Magua leads the party from their destination toward certain capture for the group. After Hawkeye's unforeseen interference, Magua continues to foment evil by leading the women away from the massacre at the fort and placing them into neighboring Indian villages. He musters his powers of speech and persuasion against Tamenund as he makes his claim on Cora. By marrying her, Magua can vent his hatred for Munro, the gray-haired old man who grieves for his children.

In his final moments, Magua offers Cora the choice of death or marriage. To Cora, the choices are the same. In a dramatic gesture, Cora, garbed in a white robe, rejects Magua's wigwam as the ultimate dishonor. The final action is wrested from Magua's hands as his follower knifes the girl and Hawkeye shoots him as he flees. As he clings to a rock, he demonstrates the tenacious courage and monomania that has kept him in pursuit of the white women, whose capture almost brought him the ultimate hold over his tormentor, Colonel Munro.)

Questions 6-8 Interpretive Level

6. Discuss the importance of literary foils to the novel. (Many of the characters in this novel demonstrate opposing characteristics. Magua, the rabid malcontent, contrasts with Uncas and his noble father, who face the extinction of their tribe, a far greater burden than Magua's humiliation from strong drink or public flogging. Hawkeye, the consummate rescuer, contrasts David Gamut, the "non-composer" who does not hesitate to lift his voice in psalm-singing as a means of warding off danger. Whereas Hawkeye clings to Killdeer, the symbol of the woodsman's strength, David, a contemplative man armed only with a pitch pipe, relies on godly strengths as old as King David's reliance on Jehovah.)

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More intriguing than the male behaviors is the relationship of the disparate Munro girls. Cora, over twenty years older than Alice and far wiser and stronger, demonstrates a pragmatic understanding and acceptance of the wilderness dangers that threaten to make her Magua's wife. Although her frail sister gives way to frequent fainting spells, Cora neither despises nor deserts her younger sister. She grasps the fair-haired girl in her arms at every crucial passage and protects her from harm. When situations demand a cool head, Cora is quick to speak up, even breaking the unspoken ban on racial commentary by voicing her own disaffection for discrimination.

Other contrasts, such as General Munro and the Marquis de Montcalm, Tamenund and Hard Heart, and Heyward and David, exemplify Cooper's skill with characterization and with the creation of plots which demonstrate the talents of the individuals he devises. As Hawkeye comments, David, for all his lack of martial skill, has a talent which proves fulfilling to his life and, at times, is useful, even to much doughtier characters. So, too, does Heyward prove vital when there is a demand for foreign language, as does Uncas when tracking skills are required or Chingachgook when a quick jab of the knife is necessary. Overall, the individualism of Cooper's characters delineates the various requirements of frontier life, which pit survivor against nature and human violence.)

7. Give examples of violence in the novel.

(Early in Chapter 3, shortly after Uncas joins Chingachgook and Hawkeye, the chief throws himself on the ground, creeps toward a deer, and shoots it with an arrow. Uncas slits the animal's throat. Later, Chingachgook performs a parallel operation on Miriam, David's colt, and on an Oneida, whom he skillfully scalps as a natural part of his role as warrior. The killing of the French sentinel also results in scalping, which Indian military behavior accepts as one of the dangers of war. Later scenes depict violence as acts of self-defense, which enable the fleeing party to rejoin Colonel Munro and later to rescue the girls from the evil Magua.

Other violent scenes are more protracted, more terrifying. Uncas, who is forced to run the gauntlet in the Huron village, stoically accepts the humiliation of squaws, who taunt him with the most severe insult: he acts like a woman. Uncas gives no indication of terror and faces possible torture over flame as his fate. The final battle, which depicts the stabbing of Cora, the death of her attacker, and the shooting of Magua, takes only a few paragraphs to describe, but moves in a kind of slow motion play of interracial tensions, especially in Magua's final moments as he swings over the abyss and lets himself fall to certain death.)

8. Discuss the purpose of the final chapter.

(Countering the violence and loss of two significant characters is the final chapter, a kind of ritual or tableau intended to honor a brave warrior and a courageous woman. The chapter makes a gesture toward resolving the unspoken sexual tensions of the novel, which place two women in the hands of an evil-hearted Huron. Although Uncas has spared no effort to rescue Cora and Alice and demonstrates a response to Cora's interest in him, Cooper chooses to slay both characters, possibly as

a means of avoiding the taboo subject of miscegenation. Hawkeye, who remains aloof from interest in females of any color, must resolve his inner turmoil over religious and racial matters, particularly as they apply to Uncas, a pagan, a red man, and his best friend.

Also crucial to the final chapter is a smoothing over of worries shared by the older generation. As Tamenund and Chingachgook look toward coming problems with white settlers and the abatement of Indian domination of eastern woodlands, they leave the frontier in the capable hands of good men such as Hawkeye.

Thus, the novel ends with a nod toward the older generation, toward worthy white settlers, and toward the demise of the idealized noble savage. As Uncas and Cora go to noble graves, their praises are sung by Delaware maidens and by David, whose reliance on the psalmody of Old Testament times links the New World with an ancient Mediterranean culture.)

Questions 9 and 10—Critical Level

9. What European conventions affect *The Last of the Mohicans*?

(The classically educated Cooper, who lived in France during part of his career and travelled extensively in England, Switzerland, and Italy over a seven-year period, reflects the influence of European novelists. In stilted continental style, he opens his chapters with epigraphs, the short mottoes or quotations which precede each chapter. These bits of poetry, prose, or drama, which Cooper draws from familiar sources such as Byron's *Childe Harold*, poems by Gray, Burns, and Bryant, and Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, and *Merchant of Venice* as well as less obvious works, particularly by Haskell and Parnell, serve as peripheral commentary, although their obliqueness and truncation render little assistance to modern readers seeking illumination of theme. Another unsettling touch is Cora's use of the archaic second person, for example in her final refusal of Magua: "I am thine! do with me as thou seest best!" Stiffness of language, particularly the oratory of Chingachgook and Tamenund, reflect literary traditions dating to Greek theater where even dying characters found strength and opportunity to mouth cumbrous philosophical farewells.

Probably the most criticized of Cooper's literary offenses, as revealed in Mark Twain's noteworthy essay lambasting *The Deerslayer*, are his frequent digressions. As tension mounts and action hangs incomplete, Cooper regularly diverts his audience's attention to some minor historical or technical point. For example, after Uncas rescues the Munro girls and places them in Heyward's care, Cooper appends:

We shall not attempt to describe the gratitude to the Almighty Disposer of events which glowed in the bosoms of the sisters, who were thus unexpectedly restored to life and to each other. Their thanksgivings were deep and silent; the offerings of their gentle spirits, burning brightest and purest on the secret altars of their hearts; and their renovated and more earthly feelings exhibiting themselves in long and fervent, though speechless caresses. Such cerebral interruption of an essentially physical scene is particularly disruptive to the modern reader's train of thought, which is more at home with the rough-and-tumble

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of Indiana Jones movies, Zane Grey novels, or television westerns.)

10. Compare the relationship of Hawkeye and Uncas to that of David and Jonathan.

(The theme of David's kingship and his role in the creation of the Psalms is essential to the novel. At difficult moments, such as during a Huron attack, David Gamut, who lacks the frontiersman's skills, bursts into song, charming the Indians and convincing them that he deserves sanctuary from combat by virtue of his inexplicable behavior. During these episodes, David frequently reflects on the Psalms and on his namesake, the ancient Hebrew king of Israel.)

The importance of David lore to the story extends to Hawkeye and Uncas, the unlikely pair of soulmates. In biblical accounts from I Samuel 20, Jonathan, the heir to King Saul, forms a pact with David, a likely usurper who has already been anointed by Samuel as future leader of Jehovah's people. Although Jonathan is older than David and has reason to envy the young singer, he forms a strong bond with the boy, helping him escape the anger of Saul, which threatens David's life. After Saul and Jonathan lie cold and stiff on the battlefield, David creates one of his most moving poems in honor of the dead prince. In II Samuel 1:17-27, David cries out, "thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

A parallel scene ends Chapter 25 of The Last of the Mohicans. As Heyward departs from the Huron village, Hawkeye hangs back, intent on rescuing Uncas from torture at the stake. Hawkeye stills all argument by declaring: "I have heard . . . that there is a feeling in youth which binds man to woman closer than the father is tied to the son. It may be so. I have seldom been where women of my color dwell; but such may be the gifts of nature in the settlements . . . before the Mohican boy shall perish for the want of a friend, good faith shall depart the 'arth, and 'Killdeer' become as harmless as the tooting we'pon of the singer!"

The motif of blood brothers sharing mortal danger fills the next events. Hawkeye, fully cognizant of "all the difficulties and dangers he was about to incur," ponders the fact that he has been brought up Christian and that Uncas remains true to "the nature of an Indian, utterly unworthy of one who boasted a descent from men that knew no cross of blood." At Uncas's funeral, Hawkeye, who had placed himself in mortal danger to rescue him, is incapable of taking comfort in Delaware ritual and shakes his head at the romanticized vision of Uncas and Cora reunited in the afterlife.

The healing gesture of the final scene offers some answer to Cooper's inability to blend races in his novel. As Chingachgook sits unadorned except for his gorgeous blue chest paint, he speaks the existential truth, that his race is extinct and that, deprived of his only son, he is alone. Hawkeye, also without family, reaches across the racial chasm to grasp the red man's hand, accepts him as surrogate father, and joins him in shedding tears "like drops of falling rain." Like a benediction, Tamenund's words conclude the tableau. "It is enough," he says. "I have lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.")

Questions 11-13 Creative Level

11. Lead a panel discussion of why Magua is unable to overcome his discontent. Decide whether he is a victim of fate or of his own nature.
12. Explain in a short oral presentation the significance of each of these scenes:
 - a. David Gamut's portrayal of a "non-composer"
 - b. Cora's death scene
 - c. the truce talks of Munro and Montcalm
 - d. Hawkeye's presence at the funeral
 - e. Munro's revelation of his two marriages
 - f. the hostile Indians' behavior at the burial mound
 - g. Hawkeye's decision to execute a dying Indian
 - h. the shooting match
 - i. Alice's admiration for Uncas
 - j. Tamenund's reverence for the "last of the Mohicans."
13. In a theme, discuss how the story would change if Cora and Uncas had survived.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Math

1. Using the scale of miles on a map of New York state, determine the distances from Lake George to Lake Champlain and to the Canadian border.
2. Collect lines from the novel which disclose the relative ages of the characters. For example, note that Hawkeye has had thirty years' experience in woods lore. Also note that Munro was married twenty years to his West Indian wife before her death. Apply this knowledge to the relationship of the Munro daughters. Comment on Cora's maternal role toward Alice.
3. Determine the odds against Fort William Henry by creating a ratio of French soldiers to English.

Social Studies and Geography

1. Draw a map delineating the territories of the eastern woodlands Indians. Point out the changes that occurred after the coming of white settlers, such as the deaths of whole tribes from illnesses, particularly influenza, yellow fever, smallpox, measles, and pneumonia.
2. Make a report on laws governing miscegenation. Determine when and why such laws were overturned.
3. Using historical atlases and census figures, contrast north-eastern Native American populations during the French and Indian Wars and currently. Note tribes like the Beothuk that ceased to exist or the Mohicans, who were absorbed into other tribes.
4. Compose a brief report on the importance of the Marquis de Montcalm to Canadian history.
5. On a map of North America, point out the position of major French and English fortifications guarding the Hudson River, St. Lawrence Seaway, Great Lakes, and other bodies of water.

Cinema

1. Contrast the lives of Indian women in *The Last of the Mohicans* with stereotypical native Americans in movies such as *Dances with Wolves*, *Little Big Man*, *Medicine Man*, *Black Robe*, *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*, and the movie version of *The Last of the Mohicans*.

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2. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the novel which would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly the rescue of Cora from the village.

Science

1. Discuss the novel's emphasis on the gait of the Narragansett pacer, which, in the seventeenth century, was essentially a lady's mount. Draw a diagram illustrating the tracking patterns of bear, elk, deer, squirrels, foxes, and domesticated animals, such as other types of horses, dogs, and cats.
2. Use a chart to explain why slitting the throat of a wounded person or animal quickly and humanely ends its suffering.
3. Explain how the author connects the time of the story to nature, such as the color of sumac and other types of leaves.

Foreign Language

1. Translate and discuss the Latin legal term *non compos mentis*. Explain how the term applies to senility, brain damage, retardation, and mental illness.
2. Using a French dictionary, translate French dialogue from the story. Discuss why Heyward chooses the familiar tu rather than the more formal vous in his deception of the French sentinel.
3. Compose in French a handbill offering work as a guide, scout, soldier, or messenger for Montcalm's forces.
4. Explain the significance of the Latin motto "Nemo me impune lacessit."

Art

1. Create a standard for Colonel Munro's 60th Regiment as well as for General Webb's troops and those of the Marquis de Montcalm. Design battle ribbons or medals for survivors of the massacre of Fort William Henry.
2. Join with a group to design a mural depicting life among Delaware women and children. Depict scenes in which women display their influence over tribal decisions.
3. Draw several views of the Mohican roach or ruff, which is included in descriptions of Chingachgook. Include the placement of the feather.

Health

Make a list of the most serious hazards to European troops encamped in the American wilderness during the French and Indian Wars. Comment on poisonous snakes, insects, cold, disease, drowning, falls, broken bones, gunshot wounds, malnutrition, and other hazards.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Compose a theme in which you compare the turbulent life of Cora Munro to that of other tragic heroines of literature, opera, stage, and screen, such as Emma in *Madame Bovary*, Camille in *The Lady of the Camellias*, the title characters in *Anna Karenina*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Lucia de Lammermoor*, Eliza in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Mattie Silver in *Ethan Frome*, Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Desdemona in *Othello*, Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and Bathsheba in *Far from the Madding Crowd*.
2. Write a series of letters between Duncan Heyward and

Alice Munro. Discuss the deaths of Cora and Uncas. Compose realistic suggestions for a marriage between the two characters. Suggest date, place, and style of ceremony suitable to frontier life.

3. Lead a discussion of Cooper's use of the disguise motif, such as Heyward's application of paint, Uncas's bird calls, Chingachgook's appearance behind the mask, and Hawkeye's donning the bear costume. Determine how disguise enhances dramatic scenes and advances the plot.
4. Create a glossary for the novel in which you explain difficult and crucial terms, such as gorget, breech, sallyport, levy, chivalry, blockhouse, sachem, sagamore, truce, and psalmody.
5. Compare the novel to a drama by separating its crucial scenes into exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Stress the pictorial nature of various events, such as Hawkeye's shooting of the dying Indian, Alice's collapse near the burning fort, the snatching of the shawl, the slaughter of Miriam, the funeral ritual honoring Cora and Uncas, and Colonel Munro's tearful reunion with his daughters at Fort William Henry. Explain how Cooper involves the reader through sense impressions.
6. Compose an extended definition of literary foil, calling upon pairings from the novel, such as Hawkeye and Uncas, Cora and Alice, Tamenund and Chingachgook, Reed-That-Bends and Magua, Major Heyward and David Gamut, and Colonel Munro and the Marquis de Montcalm.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Compose a list of every death described in detail in the novel. Give justification or explanation for each killing, including the slaughter of Miriam, Cora's stabbing, and Magua's execution. Decide whether Cooper relies too heavily on violence as a mode of expression.
2. Make a list of scenes from the novel which express contrasting attitudes toward worship, friendship, national pride, manhood, womanhood, individuality, loyalty, and mercy. Next to each, indicate what you think is the author's personal philosophy.
3. Compose an extended characterization of Hawkeye. Express how he relates to the classic concept of hero by comparing him to historic male figures, such as Lewis and Clark, Sequoyah, Sitting Bull, Daniel Boone, Cochise, Jim Bridger, Davy Crockett, Nat Love, Simon Bolivar, Bill Pickett, Christopher Columbus, Magellan, Jean Baptiste Du Sable, Matthew Henson, Chief Joseph, Chief Seattle, Pizarro, Black Elk, and Jim Beckwith.

RELATED READING

Borland, Hal. *When the Legends Die*.
Kroeber, Theodora. *Ishi*.
O'Dell, Scott. *Sarah Bishop*.
———. *Sing Down the Moon*.
Richter, Conrad. *The Light in the Forest*.
Speare, Elizabeth George. *Sign of the Beaver*.
Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Kidnapped*.
Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee*.

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VOCABULARY

In this passage from the last chapter, pair the underlined words with synonyms from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

admonished	emblems	imperfections	resolution
allusions	endowments	intervened	sensitiveness
assemblage	equivalent	lamentation	strain
bade	excellence	lineaments	succeeded
commemoration	exultation	manifest	supplanted
commenced	forebearance	Manitou	taint
congeal	fortitude	matchless	vault
deceased	gorgets	predilection	vicinity
embellishing	images	render	winsome

A girl, selected for the task by her rank and qualifications, began (1) _____ by modest references (2) _____ to the qualities of the dead (3) _____ warrior, decorating (4) _____ her expressions with those oriental word pictures (5) _____ that the Indians have probably brought with them from the extremes of the other continent, and which form of themselves a link to connect the ancient histories of the two worlds. She called him the "panther of his tribe"; and described him as one whose moccasin left no trail on the dews; whose bound was like the leap of the young fawn; whose eye was brighter than a star in the dark night; and whose voice, in battle, was loud as the thunder of the supreme deity (6) _____. She reminded him of the mother who bore him, and dwelt forcibly on the happiness she must feel in possessing such a son. She urged (7) _____ him [to] tell her, when they met in the world of spirits, that the Delaware girls had shed tears above the grave of her child, and had called her blessed.

They, they who followed (8) _____, changing their tones to a milder and still more tender tone (9) _____, alluded, with the delicacy and gentleness (10) _____ of woman, to the stranger maiden, who had left the upper earth at a time so near his own departure, as to depict (11) _____ the will of the Great Spirit too obvious (12) _____ to be disregarded. They encouraged (13) _____ him to be kind to her, and to have consideration for her ignorance of those arts which were so necessary to the comfort of a warrior like himself. They dwelt upon her unrivalled (14) _____ beauty, on her noble determination (15) _____, without the corruption (16) _____ of envy, and as angels may be thought to delight in a superior quality (17) _____; adding, that these gifts (18) _____ should prove more than equal (19) _____ for any little faults (20) _____ in her education.

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

Identify the character who is described below. Choose from the list of names that follows. You may use some names more than once.

Alice Graham	Effingham	Magua	paralyzed woman
Alice Munro	General Webb	Magua's wife	Reed-That-Bends
Chingachgook	Hard Heart	Manitou	Scottish laird
Colonel Munro	Hawkeye	Miriam	sentinel
Cora	Heyward	Montcalm	Tamenund
David Gamut	Killdeer	Oneida brave	Uncas

- _____ 1. holds Alice in the saddle as Magua leads the horses from the burning fort.
- _____ 2. disarms a French sentinel by pretending to convey captured women to Montcalm's camp.
- _____ 3. refuses to choose between being Magua's wife or death.
- _____ 4. weeps as Cora and Alice are safely ushered into the fort.
- _____ 5. contends against Hawkeye in a shooting match with a gourd as target.
- _____ 6. prays to the Great Spirit, then attacks a sapling as though it were the enemy.
- _____ 7. impresses the Delaware with a tortoise tattoo on his chest.
- _____ 8. is revered among the Delaware as a stately prophet and elder statesman.
- _____ 9. fails to send reinforcements to Colonel Munro at Fort William Henry.
- _____ 10. plays on Indian superstitions by pretending to carry a sick woman away from her bed.
- _____ 11. ridicules David's pitch pipe, then weeps when he plays a psalm.
- _____ 12. stops Magua from shooting Munro.
- _____ 13. is prevented by her father from marrying Munro.
- _____ 14. describes being whipped like a dog for his alcoholic behavior.
- _____ 15. considers King David his hero.

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Part II: Completion (20 points)

Fill in each blank with a setting from the story. Choose from the list that follows.

abandoned earthworks	crag	Hard Heart's council room	portage
beaver dam	Delaware village	Horican	salt spring
Boston	Fort Du Quesne	Hudson River	Scotland
Canadian frontier	Fort Edward	Iroquois	Tamenund's lodge
cave	Fort William Henry	Mohawk burial mound	West Indies
Champlain	Glenn's Falls		

1. Thwarted in an effort to steal a shawl, an Indian murders a mother and infant and initiates the slaughter at _____.
2. Munro married Cora's mother in the _____.
3. Much of the action occurs near the _____ or "Tail of the Lake."
4. Hawkeye is captured while trying to get a message to General Webb at _____.
5. The sound of _____ obscures David Gamut's hymn singing for the two Munro girls, Heyward, Hawkeye, and the two Mohicans.
6. David prefers the twenty-sixth edition of the psalter, which was distributed from _____ in 1744.
7. The widower returned to _____ to marry Alice Graham.
8. In the recesses of the _____, Hawkeye, dressed in a bear suit, alarms Heyward, who has agreed to treat a paralyzed woman.
9. Heyward learns from the music teacher that Alice is with the Hurons, but Cora has been taken to a _____.
10. After Uncas and Cora lie dead, Magua falls to his death from a _____.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F for false.

- _____ 1. David alarms Chingachgook by appearing in a beaver head.
- _____ 2. At the funeral, Chingachgook prefers to think of Uncas as united forever with Cora in the afterlife.
- _____ 3. Hawkeye offers himself as a son to Chingachgook in place of Uncas.
- _____ 4. Magua uses the last of his strength to stab Cora in the chest.
- _____ 5. At the council, Magua justifies his claim on Cora.
- _____ 6. Heyward serves Colonel Munro as messenger, translator, and escort for his daughters.
- _____ 7. The terms of the surrender allow the English to keep their flag and weapons.
- _____ 8. From the precipice, Heyward and Hawkeye can see the white flag of truce flying from Fort William Henry.
- _____ 9. David Gamut grieves over the loss of Miriam, whose throat is slit.
- _____ 10. After the surrender of Fort Edward, Magua leads the band that burns the fort.

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Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answer any TWO in complete sentences.

1. Discuss why Hawkeye chooses nature over books.

2. Describe Cora's relationship with Alice.

3. Describe David Gamut's role in the novel.

4. Analyze Delaware relations with outsiders.

5. Contrast the values of Magua and Heyward.

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply an answer to each of the following questions.

- _____ 1. What is David's musical instrument?
- _____ 2. Who substitutes Alice for the paralyzed woman and sneaks out of the Indian camp?
- _____ 3. Toward what lake are Heyward, Cora, and Alice traveling?
- _____ 4. Who refuses to allow Munro to marry Alice Graham?
- _____ 5. Whose reunion in the afterlife do the Delaware women celebrate?
- _____ 6. What poet is David Gamut's favorite?
- _____ 7. What garment precipitates the assault that leads to the massacre of Fort William Henry's garrison?
- _____ 8. By what conveyance do Hawkeye and Heyward escape Magua's band?
- _____ 9. What item does Hawkeye offer in exchange for Cora?
- _____ 10. Whom does Magua blame for his hatred and lust for vengeance?

Part II: Description (30 points)

Place an X by every statement that is true of Hawkeye.

- _____ 1. prefers nature to books.
- _____ 2. loves Uncas like a brother.
- _____ 3. prefers Alice's fair complexion to Cora's dark skin.
- _____ 4. pretends to be a French soldier leading two English prisoners.
- _____ 5. shoots an Indian who is suffering.
- _____ 6. remains in camp after Heyward escapes so that he can free Uncas.
- _____ 7. hides behind a beaver mask so that the Delawares will think he is a conjuror.
- _____ 8. receives the trust and respect of Heyward and Chingachgook.
- _____ 9. urges Heyward to kill Mingos rather than pray for their souls.
- _____ 10. rescues Heyward's party from Magua and leads them toward an overlook above Fort William Henry.
- _____ 11. convinces the Marquis de Montcalm to accept a truce.
- _____ 12. prefers to travel in the day rather than at night.
- _____ 13. relies on Killdeer rather than on a tomahawk.
- _____ 14. dresses in camouflage colors.
- _____ 15. accepts Tamenund's offer of a place among the Delaware.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Choose an answer to complete each statement below.

- _____ 1. Uncas is so keen a tracker that he locates
 - a. the sound of Iroquois horsemen riding toward the Delaware village.
 - b. a footprint in a streambed.
 - c. the Mohawk burial mound outside the ruins of Fort Edward.
 - d. Cora's voice among the pursuing Huron women.

- _____ 2. Heyward disturbs Munro by
 - a. carrying a message to General Webb.
 - b. scalping an Oneida brave.
 - c. preferring Alice to Cora.
 - d. shooting a hole in the gourd.

- _____ 3. During a tense moment, a tomahawk shears away
 - a. one of Alice's curls.
 - b. a fragment of Cora's green riding cloak.
 - c. a sapling which Uncas dances around during his prayer to Manitou.
 - d. the rope that fastens Hawkeye's canoe.

- _____ 4. Most of the novel's action takes place near
 - a. the Canadian border.
 - b. Mingo burial grounds.
 - c. Montcalm's headquarters.
 - d. Cooper's home.

- _____ 5. Gamut is at first frightened by
 - a. Chingachgook's murder of Miriam.
 - b. the conjuror's bear suit.
 - c. wampum.
 - d. Hawkeye's insistence on truce talks with Montcalm.

- _____ 6. Tamenund receives more esteem
 - a. after he slaughters Reed-That-Bends.
 - b. during his council with Hawkeye, Munro, and the hostile Hurons.
 - c. than Hard Heart.
 - d. after he adopts Hawkeye as a foster son.

- _____ 7. Gamut and Heyward witness the humiliation of
 - a. Uncas, whom Huron women ridicule.
 - b. Killdeer.
 - c. Miriam.
 - d. General Webb, who is too cowardly to venture out of Fort Edward.

- _____ 8. Heyward claims to be
 - a. Le Renard Subtil.
 - b. the gray head.
 - c. a Mohican sagamore.
 - d. "Long Rifle."

- _____ 9. The restful night at Glenn's Falls is interrupted by
 - a. the theft of Killdeer.
 - b. ten thousand French soldiers.
 - c. Mingos visiting the Mohawk burial mound.
 - d. the cry of a terrified horse.

- _____ 10. The symbol of the tortoise
 - a. is tattooed on the chest of the "last of the Mohicans."
 - b. dangles from Chingachgook's scalp belt.
 - c. marks the entrance to the Huron village.
 - d. protects the paralyzed woman.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answer any TWO in complete sentences.

1. Describe how Hawkeye and Chingachgook respond to the funeral service.
2. Give evidence that Cooper did not want to depict romance between people of different races.
3. Explain how Magua manipulates and deceives.
4. Describe Cora's bravery.
5. Discuss why Hawkeye prefers Indian ways to those of the white community.

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Test

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. commenced | 11. render |
| 2. allusions | 12. manifest |
| 3. deceased | 13. admonished |
| 4. embellishing | 14. matchless |
| 5. images | 15. resolution |
| 6. Manitou | 16. taint |
| 7. bade | 17. excellence |
| 8. succeeded | 18. endowments |
| 9. strain | 19. equivalent |
| 10. sensitiveness | 20. imperfections |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Cora | 9. General Webb |
| 2. Heyward | 10. Heyward |
| 3. Cora | 11. Hawkeye |
| 4. Colonel Munro | 12. Montcalm |
| 5. Heyward | 13. Alice Graham |
| 6. Uncas | 14. Magua |
| 7. Uncas | 15. David Gamut |
| 8. Tamenund | |

Part II: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Fort William Henry | 6. Boston |
| 2. West Indies | 7. Scotland |
| 3. Horican | 8. cave |
| 4. Fort Edward | 9. Delaware village |
| 5. Glenn's Falls | 10. crag |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. pitch pipe | 6. David the psalmist |
| 2. Heyward | 7. shawl |
| 3. Lake George | 8. canoe |
| 4. Alice Graham's father | 9. Killdeer |
| 5. Uncas and Cora | 10. Colonel Munro |

Part II: Description (30 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. X | 9. |
| 2. X | 10. X |
| 3. | 11. |
| 4. | 12. |
| 5. X | 13. X |
| 6. X | 14. X |
| 7. | 15. |
| 8. X | |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. c | 7. a |
| 3. a | 8. d |
| 4. d | 9. d |
| 5. b | 10. a |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Answers will vary.

TEACHER'S NOTES



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