

Excellence in Literature

Reading and Writing through the Classics

American Literature ***A Survey Course***

English 3

Janice Campbell

American Literature: A Survey Course

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Excellence in Literature: Reading and Writing through the Classics

Introduction to Literature (English I)

Literature and Composition (English II)

American Literature: A Survey Course (English III)

British Literature: A Survey Course (English IV)

World Literature: A Survey Course (English V)

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1. Literature—Explication. 2. Literature—History and Criticism. 3. Books and reading. I. Title.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them...

Proverbs 11:3a

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Introduction

Dear Student,

Do you know that very few people know how to read?

It's not that they can't decipher words on a page, but they simply don't know how to place what they read into its proper literary and historical context. They may understand WHAT happened in a story, but they don't know WHY. They may feel strongly about the story, yet they never stop to wonder WHY they feel as they do, or HOW the author made it happen.

If you're wondering why you should care about the HOW and WHY of literature, think about it like this: Reading without understanding is like walking onto a softball field and batting the ball, without any knowledge of what to do next. You may hit the ball out of the park, but if you don't run the bases and complete the play, you've missed the whole point of the activity.

It's the same with reading. In order to complete the process, it's necessary to think analytically about what you read. Reading is a conversation between a reader

and an author. The author creates a world, peoples it with characters, and presents a story. The reader enters the author's world, meets the characters, and follows the story line. When you write about literature, as you will this year, the conversation shifts. It becomes a dialogue between you, as an analytical reader and writer, and the reader of your essay.

In this literature series, I'll introduce you to what I will call "literary reading." As you work through each assigned story this year, you'll also learn about the context in which the story was written. I'll give you the opportunity and resources to discover more about the story, the author, and the various elements of the text, including plot, setting, characterization, and more. This will help you make sense of each great book and will make the story much more interesting to you.

You'll find that you like some books and authors better than others, just as I do. Each novel, poem, essay, or play in this literature series has been carefully chosen for its quality and its place in the panorama of literary history. Even if you find that you don't enjoy a particular work as much as others, it has been included because it has something important to convey. One thing you'll discover is that sometimes the stories you like least stick with you the longest and sometimes even teach you the most.

I love to read, and I'm happy to have the opportunity to share some of my favorite great books with you. Some will make you laugh, others may make you cry, but above all, I hope they make you think. When you finish your reading for the year, I know that your mind will be more richly furnished than when you began, and that is a very good thing.

Janice Campbell

<http://www.ExcellenceInLiterature.com>

P.S. As you read through this book, you will most likely encounter words you don't know. I'm sure you know what to do when this happens. Look it up and write down the word and its definition, and you'll be expanding your vocabulary without much effort at all!

Overview

Objectives for Excellence in Literature

Excellence in Literature (EIL) is a college-preparatory course of study. It is my goal to:

- Introduce students to great literature from the Western literary tradition.
- Teach students to read with discernment.
- Train independent, self-motivated learners.
- Provide tools that students can use to strengthen their writing skills.
- Introduce students to sources for high-quality online and offline research.
- Prepare students for college classes by expecting carefully researched, well-thought-out material to be presented in standard format, with preliminary proofreading completed.

In the five levels of this literature series, you will be reading some of the greatest works of literature ever written. They are great not just because they are technically well done, though that certainly is a factor, but they are great because they reveal truth through the power of story.

EIL uses great literature, studied in its historic and literary contexts, to help you learn to think and write analytically. This book is designed for you to use independently, so it contains specific instructions for each assignment, and a suggested schedule, as well as the references you need in order to do the background reading and research for each unit.

You may be surprised to find that I haven't provided a lengthy introduction and a lot of background material for each book and author. This is because you have reached the age when you need to begin assuming responsibility for learning. Rather than spoon-feeding you basic, easily researched information (and having you zone out in the middle of paragraph two), I have provided resources and links that will enable you to perform the contextual research you'll need to fully understand the novel, play, essay, or poem. This is the kind of research you'll find yourself doing for college courses, so if you learn how to do it now, you should be quite good at it by the time you graduate!

Because you are preparing for adulthood, you are responsible for reading through this entire book, so that you can gain the greatest possible benefit from your literature study. In the first section, you'll find an explanation of how EIL works and suggestions for how to create a study routine and organize your study materials. Following this you'll find the syllabus section, with a study outline for each unit. In the final section you'll find instructions for writing various types of papers, fundamentals of essay composition, information on the evaluation rubric, and sample papers that demonstrate correct MLA format (if you don't know what that is, be patient—it's explained in the samples and the glossary). Be sure to read it all so that you can be successful as you work through the assignments!

Each level of EIL has nine units that are to be completed in four relatively brief, but intense, weeks. You may choose to group the units into a traditional school year sequence, or to take a break after each one and work through the year. I believe this intense, focused, college-style format is a much more efficient way to learn than the traditional drop-a-day-for-eighteen-weeks high-school format. In addition when you do English with a college-style schedule, you will be better prepared for the challenges of college and the workplace. The beauty of being homeschooled is that you are free to do what works best rather than what is traditional!

The assignments have been carefully chosen and scheduled so that knowledge and skills can build sequentially. It's important that you learn the time management skills that will help you complete assignments with minimal stress. If you are working with a writing mentor such as your parent, a writing evaluator, a coach, or a co-op, be sure to agree in advance on a schedule, so that you can plan your work efficiently. Above all, don't spend three weeks procrastinating, then try to cram all the assigned reading and writing into one week. It doesn't work.

Course Format

Excellence in Literature courses are designed to focus in depth on selected great authors or literary movements, while exploring the context of their lives and works with additional reading and writing. This offers opportunity for writing practice in a number of different styles, as well as the opportunity to grow thoroughly familiar with some of the greatest writers and literary works of all time.

Audio Books

Although many students are visual learners and will do very well reading each novel, if you are an auditory or kinesthetic learner,* you may benefit from listening to unabridged versions of the longer books. It's important that you thoroughly understand the material we cover, so use the learning tools that work best for you. *An auditory learner is one who learns best by hearing; a kinesthetic learner learns by doing.

Context Materials

For each unit there will be additional material to read, listen to, or watch. These resources are designed to provide context for the focus work. I will provide links to interesting and informative websites, and recommendations for additional readings. But don't feel limited by these citations; I encourage you to find and include other resources, such as videos, field trips, or other useful books. The more rich and varied the context materials, the more vivid and interesting the novel will seem. And if you find a book or author you particularly enjoy, feel free to broaden your research, to satisfy your desire to know more. You may want to do additional research or read more of the author's works. Please do so!

The Honors Track

In each unit, you will find additional reading suggestions under the “Honors” heading. If you would like to earn an honors-level grade (.5 weighted grade points), or take an AP or CLEP test at the end of the year, you need to read these extra books and do an approach paper on each. At the end of the school year, you will also write an additional research paper, which is assigned in the “Honors Unit.” This will complete the honors track. To earn advanced placement or college credit for the class, you will also need to take an AP or CLEP exam. You can find complete details on how to assign weighted grades and record advanced classes in my book, *Transcripts Made Easy* (www.TranscriptsMadeEasy.com), and more information about how and why to earn college credits in *Get a Jump Start on College!* (www.GetAJumpStartOnCollege.com).

Prerequisites For Success

Excellence in Literature is intended for use by students in grades 8–12. For each level of the English classes you are expected to have age-appropriate skills in grammar, spelling, and language mechanics. Students should grammar- and spell-check all papers before turning them in, as learning to self-edit is part of the writing process. If you are not sure of your skills in literary analysis or essay writing, there are two resources I strongly recommend. If you need to learn the basics of literary analysis, *Teaching the Classics with Worldview Supplement* by Adam Andrews is a DVD-based course that teaches literary analysis using children’s books to illustrate the principles and methods. For essay writing, *The Elegant Essay Writing Lessons* by Lesha Myers is the best resource I’ve seen. Both are published by the Institute for Excellence in Writing, and both can be used concurrently with *Excellence in Literature*.

A Word About Resources

There is one major thing I’ve discovered about having books in the home: if they are present, they will be used. I don’t expect you to purchase all the resources I’ve recommended, but I hope you’ll consider having a few of the most important on hand. You can find them used at online retailers such as Amazon.com or Alibris.com, or you may even be able to get them free through PaperbackSwap.com (you may use my referral, “readbx”). I’ve purchased many books quite cheaply from library sales, thrift shops, and yard sales. I encourage you to especially consider purchasing nice,

annotated editions of the classics we read, because those books will become part of your student's mental furniture, and in many cases they'll be read and re-read many times.

How to Organize for Success

I suggest getting a three-ring binder to use as an English Notebook for this course. You may choose to use plastic page protectors, which hold two sheets back-to-back, or you may punch holes in each page to fit them in. It's nice to have tabbed dividers for each unit, but not absolutely necessary. For each unit, place in the binder your research notes; a copy of each draft of the papers you write, followed by a copy of your evaluation rubric; and the feedback letter or other comments you receive from your evaluator. This keeps all your work in one place, organized chronologically, and enables you to refer back to comments and instructions that will help you improve your writing skills.

Learning Philosophy

Learn (lûrn) v. 1 To acquire knowledge of or skill in by observation, study, instruction, etc. 2 To find out; ascertain: to learn the facts. 3 To memorize. 4 To acquire by or as by practice: to learn good habits.
—Webster Illustrated Contemporary Dictionary: Encyclopedic Edition 1971

The foundation of the *Excellence in Literature* philosophy is the verb “learn.” I believe the acquisition of knowledge and skills is an active endeavor. The process of learning is focused within one person—the learner. Just as an infant makes the transition from being fed to feeding himself, a student who wants to be successful will begin to take an active role in absorbing and understanding information that will help him interpret his world. Although many students wait until college to make this transition, high school is actually an ideal time to learn how to learn.

As a writer, my goal is to impart not only knowledge, but also the tools and skills you need to take an active part in the learning process. I have always been a reader and an active learner, and I know from experience that the process is fascinating and invigorating. If you are an active learner you'll rarely be bored, and you can be confident in your ability to learn and do almost anything. There is great joy in learning, and this, above all, is what I want to communicate.

The Learning Process: the Roles of *Excellence in Literature*, the Student, and the Writing Mentor

This book will:

- Establish the scope and sequence for the class.
- Assign appropriate readings.
- Provide a suggested schedule for assignments.
- Provide time management and organization tips.
- Provide a rubric for objectively evaluating completed assignments.

The Student will:

- Study this book and understand the sequence and timing of assignments.
- Ask questions of the writing mentor when something is not clearly understood.
- Actively seek to learn from each assignment.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Make no excuses.
- Enjoy fine literature!

The Writing Mentor (usually the parent) will:

- Help the student obtain required books and reference materials.
- Verify that assignments are completed on schedule.
- Use the rubric or select a qualified writing evaluator to provide feedback for the student.
- Provide an evaluation summary for the year, using the form found at the end of this book.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have questions about any aspect of the curriculum, you may find the answers in this chapter.

Is everything I need to know about my assignments contained in this book?

Your EIL book contains the outline of your course, assignment schedules for each unit, models of the papers you will be writing, and evaluation information. It is helpful, but not necessary, to own copies of each of the novel-length focus works, and to have old editions of the *Norton Anthologies* for reference, as suggested in the Resources section. In addition, you will need standard study and reference tools that you probably already have, such as the items listed in the next question.

What should be in my study area?

A comfortable chair, bright light, good dictionary, thesaurus, *Write for College* or *Writers Inc.*, or other writer's handbook, English notebook, reading log, pens, pencils, paper, sticky notes such as Post-it® notes, computer...

What do I do with all this stuff?

- **Chair and light:** Read here (see the chapter on “How to Read a Book”).

- **Dictionary:** Look up unfamiliar words as you read, even if you can guess their meaning from the context. Looking them up not only helps to fix them in your mind, but also reveals the nuances in meaning that set the word apart from its synonyms. My favorite is the *Oxford Shorter English Dictionary*, but most college dictionaries are acceptable.

- **Thesaurus:** Use this when you find yourself repeating the same descriptive words over and over. I use *Roget A to Z*, which is organized alphabetically. The English language is fascinating, and there's a perfect word for almost any occasion—please find it and use it!

- **Write for College** or other handbook: Can't remember when to use a comma or a semicolon? Here's where you go to find out. Need instructions for how to write an expository essay, along with a sample? You'll find it in here. Converting fractions to decimals? Ditto. If you need to know, check your handbook—chances are, you'll find it.

- **English notebook:** As mentioned in the “How to Organize for Success” paragraph, I suggest that you organize all your stuff related to English in a three-ring binder. You can use page protectors that hold two sheets back-to-back, or you can punch holes and put everything directly into the binder. The first thing you should see when you open the cover is the list of units and assignments. After that put in a copy of each assignment you do, along with the evaluation rubrics you receive. You may want to have a glossary section at the end with lists of new words you've learned, so that you can review them easily.

- **Reading log:** List everything you read—not just the stuff you read for English, but everything. Write the title, author, a one- or two-sentence summary of the book, and a comment or rating. A blank journal is handy for this, or you may prefer to keep the record in a database on your computer. There is even a form in my book, *Transcripts Made Easy*, that you can reproduce and use.

- **Pens:** Rough drafts, illustrations, mind maps, Venn diagrams, and more.

- **Pencils:** These are for writing in your books. Yes, I mean it—I want you to underline key passages, talk back to the characters, note thoughts that occur to you

as you read, and so forth. This is called active reading, and it will help you get the most out of a story. Of course, you can't do this if it's a library book.

- **Sticky notes:** One of the first things I'll ask you to do is to make sticky-note tabs for your writer's handbook. This helps you turn quickly to key pages. For classes using an anthology, I recommend that at the beginning of the semester you look at the syllabus and go through the anthology and place a sticky-note tab with the author's last name and the title of the work beside each assigned piece. This saves time and helps remind you of what you have covered, and what remains.

- **Computer:** Type and e-mail your work here. All work should be submitted to your writing evaluator typed, in Times New Roman or similar font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around (see the sample paper in the back of this book). Be sure to have the grammar- and spell-check turned on in your word processing program (in Microsoft® Word, you can do this in the "Tools" menu). Don't rely too heavily on these checking tools, because they are quite often wrong.

You don't tell me how many pages to read each day. How will I know?

Time management! This is a college-prep class, so you will be learning to look ahead and pace yourself. For units based upon a novel-length work, you have a couple of options: 1) Sit down the first day and read the whole book in several hours, then use the rest of the time to gather supporting information, read another book by the author, and write your essay; or 2) Divide the book into three equal parts and read one part per week, leaving the last week to write and polish your essay. I prefer the first method, as the story is usually more interesting if it is not read in tiny fragments over a long period of time, and I prefer to have plenty of time to draft, revise, and polish my essay. Whatever you do, start reading the first day of the unit, and read every day until the book is finished. Don't procrastinate! And don't forget your contextual reading!

How much time will this take each day?

I anticipate you will spend a minimum of one hour per day reading and/or responding to the literature. Your vocabulary work may add an additional 20-45 minutes per day.

Can I use library books, or do I have to buy them?

I encourage active reading, especially of the focus works. This means underlining and making notes in the margin, and librarians really hate that. So I recommend you buy the focus books. You can probably find used copies quite cheaply.

Do you recommend a particular edition of each book?

My favorite editions are the Modern Library Paperback Classics. They are nicely designed, with insightful introductions and good discussion questions at the end. Norton, Penguin, and Oxford also offer good editions. It's important to have books that are pleasant to hold and to read, so that you enjoy the process and don't suffer from eyestrain. I do not recommend mass-market paperbacks, since they usually have too-small type and no scholarly introduction or discussion questions.

The assignment said to write a 500-word essay. I accidentally wrote 603 words. What shall I do?

Don't worry about it! The word count is a minimum requirement, and it's stated as a number of words rather than a number of pages, to eliminate those annoying essays that are turned in with 16-point type and 2" margins, because someone wanted to fill three pages and didn't have any ideas. Word count allows no fudging!

How do I download and print items from the Internet?

If you have done some Internet research, or if I have provided a link or URL to a resource you need to download and print, you can follow these steps:

1. Copy (control+ c) the entire underlined URL, and paste (control + v) it into the address window of your browser, and click "enter."
2. If the page that appears offers a link to a printable copy, click on the link and print directly from the screen.
3. If there is no link to a printable copy, hold down the left button of your mouse and drag your mouse to select the text you want to copy.
4. Copy and paste the text into a blank TextEdit or Notepad file and save it to your English folder.
5. Go back to the web page where you found the information and select the URL in the address line, and copy and paste it at the end of your text. Type in the date you accessed the website and any other information you think may be important. You may need some of this information for your "Works Cited" page. Remember that it is never okay to copy material from anywhere and turn it in as your own work.

Why are there a lot of Internet resources?

First, they are free and universally available. If you don't have a computer with Internet access, chances are that you can use one at your local library or at a friend's house. Second, you need to know how to use a computer responsibly, and how to find the kind of resources you will need for the future, whether that future involves college, business, or teaching your own children. My goal is to introduce you to a lot of useful sites and resources, and to make you aware of what is available.

What happens if a link doesn't work?

The Internet is an ever-changing place, so there's always a chance that a link will change. I've tried to choose very stable resources that have been up for years, so that should not be a major problem. If you type in a link and don't get to where you want to go, double-check each character you've typed and make sure it exactly matches the link provided. If you are using an e-book and you copy and paste the link, be sure you don't pick up any punctuation that is near the link, because that will keep it from working.

Finally, if you're sure you've typed the right link, and you're not getting the right page, try doing a Google search for some of the keywords in the resource. For example, if you can't get to the link for the Mark Twain House and Museum, type "mark twain house museum" into the Google search box, and the correct link should come up in the results. If it doesn't, you can try different combinations of keywords that you find in the link descriptions that I've provided.

Do I have to read everything?

There are two things you absolutely must read, and they are this book and each of the focus texts. I would like for you to read most of the context materials, but in some cases there are more than you need. I have often included more than one suggested biography, simply because there are several good ones to choose from, and you may pick whichever one is easily available. The goal is for you to learn what you need to know in order to understand the author and the text and to write a good essay, not just to check off a random bunch of stuff.

I thought this was English. Why do I have to look at art and listen to music?

Literature is something very special. It is always written within a cultural context, and the things that are going on in the literary, artistic, creative, and political realms influence each author. In order to think intelligently about a poem, play, or story, you need to understand a bit about the author and the context. There's no easier or better way to do it than by viewing art, seeing photographs of significant people or places, and listening to music that will help to build your contextual understanding. I've made it as simple as possible by directing to specific, usually free, resources. You can think of it as a virtual field trip!

Our family is different—do we have to follow the schedule exactly as it's written?

The schedule I've provided is the one my students followed when I taught these courses online (which I no longer do). It works efficiently and will help you cover a lot of material over the course of the school year. However, I completely understand that every family is unique. You may change the schedule, drop a unit, take two years to cover the book, or alter it in any way that will help it better serve your family. If you are teaching EIL in a co-op or school, you have the same liberty, though students who are following along in the book can probably be counted on to remind you that "That's not what Mrs. Campbell said to do!" Whatever you do, I promise that the EIL Enforcement Department will *not* stop by to rap your knuckles. The curriculum is here to serve you, and I want you to enjoy using it.

Unit 3

***The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851)**

On the human imagination events produce the effects of time. Thus, he who has travelled far and seen much is apt to fancy that he has lived long; and the history that most abounds in important incidents soonest assumes the aspect of antiquity.

—James Fenimore Cooper

Focus Text

The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper

Honors Text

The Pioneers by James Fenimore Cooper

Literary Context

American Romanticism

Unit Focus

We will use a historic approach paper and essay to look at this very early American novel in the light of its place in literary and American history.

Introduction

America was still a young country when James Fenimore Cooper began to write. He is considered the first fully American novelist; someone who achieved literary success writing about American issues, characters, and settings. He was influenced in his writing by the adventure novels of Sir Walter Scott and succeeded in transferring the major characteristics of the eighteenth-century novel to the entirely different setting of the New World. You'll notice that concepts, words, and phrases from the Bible are a natural part of the characters' dialogue. This reflects the fact that the Bible was the single most widely known book for people of this era.

The Last of the Mohicans is set during the French and Indian War (1755–1760), a conflict that tested and ultimately strengthened the young country. Cooper doubtless had heard stories about this war from veterans and he uses some of the details as a backdrop for his drama just as Sir Walter Scott used the Crusades as a backdrop for his tale of *Ivanhoe*. How does this historical element increase the drama of this story?

Something to think about...

Cooper wrote as though the gradual extinction of Native American tribes was inevitable. According to Stanford University professor Paul Reuben this was an accepted “fact” at the time Cooper was writing. He suggests that people believed this for four basic reasons. They observed that the “Indians seemed unwilling or unable to adapt” to the new culture; the natives exhibited symptoms of social degradation, such as alcoholism; the native population noticeably decreased when settlers arrived; and many people held “persistent beliefs in White and/or European superiority.” Cooper's views reflected the understanding and beliefs of his era, and must be considered accordingly when weighed against contemporary beliefs about race and class.

(Source: Reuben, Paul P. “Chapter 3: James Fenimore Cooper.” *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature—A Research and Reference Guide*. <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap3/cooper.html> accessed 09/13/08)

Be sure to notice...

Each chapter begins with an epigraph which is a quote that appears at the beginning of a book or chapter. Cooper has chosen quotes from several of Shakespeare's plays as well as from popular poets. Read each quote carefully and as you finish each chapter consider the purpose and function of the quote and how it relates to the events of the chapter.

Context Resources

Readings

Hugh MacDougall, secretary of the James Fenimore Cooper Society, offers some indispensable suggestions on "Reading Cooper for Pleasure." Be sure to read this before you begin the novel as it will help you know what to expect so that you can better enjoy Cooper's early American style. The rest of this site is both interesting and helpful so browse through and enjoy!

<http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/introduction/reading.html>

Who were the Mohicans? Are they really extinct? Here is an online history that will answer questions you didn't know you had! The second site is slow-loading, but it belongs to the tribe and has a few interesting photos.

<http://www.dickshovel.com/Mahican.html>

<http://www.mohican.com/>

Mohican Indian fact sheet: http://www.bigorrin.org/mohican_kids.htm

In "Cooper's Indians," Adriana Risetto, a University of Virginia professor, briefly assesses the way in which Cooper portrays Indians in *Last of the Mohicans* and *Notions of the Americans*. Read these three short pages in order to understand whether Cooper could be considered a reliable narrator on this subject.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/HNS/Indians/main.html>

Mark Twain wrote a sharply satirical essay attacking Cooper's literary ability. As you read his humorous list of what he considers to be the flaws of Cooper's novel, *The Deerslayer*, consider whether any of these "flaws" can be seen in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/writings_fenimore.html

The Author's Life

You may find a short biography of Cooper at your library, but if your library doesn't have one, *James Fenimore Cooper* by Mary E. Phillips is a full-length biography that can be read online or printed.

<http://www.fullbooks.com/James-Fenimore-Cooper.html>

In the *Cambridge History of American Literature* you will find a concise and interesting overview of Cooper's life and works. This book may be found at the library or accessed online. Read sections 12–27 of Book II, Chapter VI.

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Cambridge_History_of_American_Literature/Book_II/Chapter_VI

There is a good online encyclopedia article from the University of North Carolina. It offers a biography and thorough chronology of Cooper's life as well as other resources listed under Works Cited at the bottom of the page.

<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/17841865/lit/cooper/>

Professor James Wallace of Boston College has created an excellent short biography of Cooper. He offers other useful links from his home page.

Biography: <http://www2.bc.edu/~wallacej/jfc/jfcbio.html>

Other study links: <http://www2.bc.edu/~wallacej/>

Poetry

Cooper focused on novels but wrote a few poems as well. You may read “My Brigantine” at <http://www.bartleby.com/248/55.html>.

The epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter of the novel offer a glimpse of the poets and writers Cooper read. Use your anthology or visit <http://www.Bartleby.com>, and read at least one poem from each of the writers Cooper quoted.

- William Cullen Bryant
- Robert Burns
- Thomas Gray
- Fitz-Greene Halleck

- Childe Harold
- Alexander Pope
- Sir Walter Scott
- William Shakespeare
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson
- Audio

Auditory learners may enjoy listening to the unabridged audio version of *The Last of the Mohicans*. You can request it on CD at your local library, download it free at Librivox, or purchase it through Audible.com or any bookstore.

<http://librivox.org/the-last-of-the-mohicans-a-narrative-of-1757/>

Video

Your library may have a good video biography of James Fenimore Cooper but if not, then visit the Cooper page of C-SPAN's American Writers site and find the link at the top of the page that says, "Watch the Program." Click on this and watch the online video about Cooper's life and works.

You may enjoy watching the 1920 silent version of *The Last of the Mohicans* online at the Internet Archive.

<http://www.archive.org/details/PublicdomainTheLastoftheMohicans>

There is a 1992 movie version of the story. I haven't seen this but here is the link to its complete description so that you can decide whether to view it.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104691/>

Historic Context

The Last of the Mohicans is set during the French and Indian War so it's important that you have an idea of what it was about, where it was fought, and who was involved. There was more to it than just the French and Indians! You may consult your encyclopedia or library or visit the links below.

<http://www.militaryheritage.com/7yrswar.htm>

http://www.strategypage.com/strategypagegamestore/the_french_and_indian_war.asp

This site offers a concise, well-organized overview of the war as well as a timeline and the opportunity to receive free e-mailed reports from an “Embedded Journalist.” These are designed to give you the perspective of one who was living through the war.

http://www.frenchandindianwar250.org/relive/the_history.aspx

As a bit of personal history; I’ll include the story of the Hochstetler Massacre of 1757, a small incident in the war but a large incident in my own family history. You can read all about it in a 1912 account at the Historical Society of Berks County.

<http://www.berkshistory.org/articles/hoch.html>

Visual Arts

The Fenimore Art Museum offers some images online. It is focused on American art with an emphasis on Cooperstown and the art and history collections of the New York Historical Association. Browsing through some of the online exhibits will give you a good mental picture of Cooper’s world.

<http://www.fenimoreartmuseum.org/fenimore/collections>

The Last of the Mohicans has been illustrated by N.C. Wyeth, Thomas Cole, and others. Stephen Railton, a professor at the University of Virginia, has created a page with links to many of the illustrations. It’s interesting to note the contrast in styles and the differing moods that each artist captures.

<http://people.virginia.edu/~sfr/enam854/lompix.html>

You may view a portrait of Cooper, his signature, illustration from *The Pioneers*, and some links gathered by Donna Campbell of Washington State University.

<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/cooper.htm>

A German university library website has a beautifully presented collection of engravings from Cooper’s works. You may browse through them sequentially or pick and choose from the list in the left column of the page.

<http://www.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/diglib/KarlMay/cooper/>

The Mohican Press offers a good selection of press kit photos from the 1992 movie version of *The Last of the Mohicans*.

<http://www.mohicanpress.com/moo6030.html>

Music

Americans of Cooper's era listened mostly to folk music and hymns such as "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Most of these were either written in America or adapted from European sources. Any classical music they would have heard would have been European. At the turn of the nineteenth century Americans would be acquainted with the music of Handel and Scarlatti (mostly keyboard music) and some of the music of Salieri, Mozart, Haydn, and Weber. They would become familiar with Beethoven, John Field, and Johann Nepomuk Hummel. They may also have encountered the keyboard music of the Couperins and Johann Christian Bach. (Schubert, Vivaldi, and J.S. Bach would remain obscure for a while). To hear some of this music go to www.pandora.com, and search for the "Domenico Scarlatti" radio station.

You will find music for some typical folk songs at

<http://www.americanrevolution.org/songs.html>

Listen to a large number of folk tunes at <http://pdmusic.org/1800s.html>.

A good musical score will tell a story and on this Mohican Press site, created by a Cooper fan, you can hear clips and read about how the music for the 1992 version of *The Last of the Mohicans* was created and what the composers were trying to accomplish.

<http://www.mohicanpress.com/mo11100.html>

The character David Gamut enjoyed psalm singing. Laudemont Ministries has written an interesting history of psalmody which will help you understand the singing style of the era.

<http://www.laudemont.org/a-stp.htm>

Yale University offers links to online hymnody and psalmody resources where you can hear the music performed.

http://www.yale.edu/adhoc/research_resources/hymn4.htm

Cooper and music: Cooper appreciated great music and once stated in *The American Democrat* that "The Americans ... are almost ignorant of the art of music, one of the most elevating, innocent and refining of human tastes, whose influence

on the habits and morals of a people is of the most beneficial tendency.” His work was also appreciated by some of the great musicians such as Schubert and Berlioz. Composer Franz Schubert liked Cooper’s novels so well that as he was dying of typhus, he wrote to a friend to request the loan of a Cooper novel that he hadn’t yet read. Composer Hector Berlioz was a great admirer of Cooper and commemorated Cooper’s death by renaming one of his overtures “Le corsaire rouge,” the French translation of “Red Rover.”

Places to Go

The Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York, has a substantial collection of art and artifacts that brings Cooper’s world to life.

<http://www.fenimoreartmuseum.org/>

Fort William Henry Museum is located in Lake George, New York, and is worth a visit if you’re in the area. You may find complete information at the museum website.

<http://www.fwhmuseum.com/>

Assignment Schedule

Week 1

Begin reading the context resources and the novel and follow the model in the Formats and Models chapter to write an Author Profile.

Week 2

When you finish the novel, write a historical approach paper on the French and Indian War. You’ll find the format and a sample paper in the Formats and Models chapter. In addition to the context links I’ve provided, you may use other resources such as your encyclopedia, the library, and quality Internet resources to complete this assignment.

Week 3

Begin drafting a 750-word essay on the topic below.

Cooper’s novel deals with the issue of frontier as an area of boundary, change, and turmoil. He addresses not only the geographical frontier but also the boundaries of race and culture. Choose two of the characters in the book and discuss

whether contact with the frontier caused each one to grow and change or whether they resisted change. How did their choices reflect the values of American Romanticism?

Week 4

Edit your draft making sure that your thesis is clear to the reader and that your essay is well-organized and free of mechanical errors. Use the evaluation rubric in the Formats and Models chapter to check your work.

About the Author



Janice Campbell is a lifelong learner, writer, and conference speaker who has enjoyed homeschooling since the late 1980s. She and her husband, Donald, have seen the benefits of home education in the lives of their four sons, each of whom has enjoyed (and benefitted from) getting a jump start on college. Janice takes joy in sharing with others what she has learned. Through her home-based business, Everyday Education, LLC, Janice offers workshops on teaching literature, evaluating writing, and on homeschooling (and recordkeeping) through high school and beyond.

Janice graduated *cum laude* from Mary Baldwin College with a B.A. in English. She is author of *Transcripts Made Easy: The Homeschooler's Guide to High School Paperwork*; *Get a Jump Start on College! A Practical Guide for Teens*; *Evaluate Writing the Easy Way!* and the five-year *Excellence in Literature* series (www.ExcellenceInLiterature.com). She is also Director of the National Association of Independent Writers and Editors (www.NAIWE.com), and creator of the Beat-the-Clock Essay Workshop™. Janice blogs at www.Janice-Campbell.com, and her website, www.Everyday-Education.com, offers helpful information, resources, inspiration, and a free e-zine. Visit the website today to sign up for the e-zine!