

## Theme :James Fenimore Cooper

1789-1851

### Task1

#### Read the biography

Fenimore Cooper was a prolific and popular American writer of the early 19th century. His historical romances of frontier and Indian life in the early American days created a unique form of American literature.

The readers of the whole world first of all connect his name with his books about Indians, though he wrote over 30 novels, some of them historical and some of them about traveling.

Fenimore Cooper was born in a family of a well-to-do landlord. He entered the University but failed his third year, and then he served in the US navy. After that he settled down in his family estate.

His first novel "The Spy" was a great success. Then he wrote "The Pioneers", the first of the five romances of the «Leather-Stocking Tales" which include "The Last of Mohicans", "The Prairie", "The Pathfinder", "The Deerslayer". The cycle was named after its main hero Natty Bumppo, Leather Stocking.

The novels bring to life frontier America from 1740 to 1804. Cooper's novels portray the successive waves of the frontier settlement: the original wilderness inhabited by Indians; the arrival of the first whites as scouts, soldiers, traders, and frontiersmen; the coming of the poor, rough settler families; and the final arrival of the middle class, bringing the first professionals-the judge, the physician, and the banker. Each incoming wave displaced the earlier: Whites displaced the Indians, who retreated westward; the "civilized" middle classes who erected schools, churches, and jails displaced the lower-class individualistic frontier folk, who moved further west, in turn displacing the Indians who had preceded them. Cooper evokes the endless, inevitable wave of settlers, seeing not only the gains but the losses.

#### Questions:

1. What is Fenimore Cooper famous for?

- A. Writing about traveling.
- B. Writing over 30 novels.
- C. Writing historical romances of frontier and Indian life.
- D. Being a well-to-do landlord.

2. What is the name of the cycle of novels that Fenimore Cooper wrote?

- A. The Leather-Stocking Tales.
- B. The Spy.
- C. The Pioneers.
- D. The Deerslayer.

3. What is the main hero's name in the cycle of novels?

- A. The Spy.
- B. The Pioneers.
- C. Natty Bumppo.
- D. The Deerslayer.

4. What do Cooper's novels portray?

- A. The successive waves of the frontier settlement.
- B. The history of America from 1740 to 1804.
- C. The life of Indians in early American days.
- D. The arrival of the first whites as scouts, soldiers, traders, and frontiersmen.

5. What did each incoming wave of settlers do?

- A. Displaced the earlier wave.
- B. Lived in harmony with the earlier wave.
- C. Merged with the earlier wave.

D. Ignored the earlier wave.

6. What did the middle class bring to frontier America?

A. The first professionals.

B. The first schools.

C. The first churches.

D. The first jails.

7. What does Cooper evoke in his novels?

A. The endless, inevitable wave of settlers.

B. The losses of the settlers.

C. The gains of the settlers.

D. The harmony among the settlers.

## Task 2

### Fenimore Cooper's literary works

**The “Leatherstocking” tales** are Cooper’s great imperfect masterpiece.

The unifying thread of the five novels collectively known as the *Leather-Stocking Tales* is the life of Natty Bumppo. Natty Bumppo, the child of white parents, grew up among Delaware Indians. In adulthood, he is "six feet tall in his moccasins, thin and wiry, with grey eyes, sandy hair, a large mouth and rather heavy eyebrows, a fearless warrior skilled in many weapons, chiefly the long rifle. He is most often shown alongside his Mohican foster brother Chingachgook. He is just kind-hearted, adroit and resourceful. He says that all men are brothers irrespective of the colour of their skin. He regrets the instruction of civilization. Protesting against it he prefers to live far from the cities, in the woods or prairies. The Indians with whom he is on friendly terms are spiritually closer to him than the white civilized Americans. When he became an old man he joined one of the Indian tribes and died there.

**"The Last of Mohicans"** is considered to be Fenimore Cooper's best novel.

The book truthfully reproduces the historical events and the spirit of the time, tells much about the Indians.

It is a historical and philosophic narrative reflecting the problems and conflict which touched Cooper's contemporaries.

The title of the novel gives quite a definite understanding as to the fate of the Indians. *The Last of the Mohicans* became one of the most widely read American novels of the 19th century.

The story tells of brutal battles with the [Iroquois](#) and their French allies, cruel captures, narrow escapes, and revenge. The beauty of the unspoiled wilderness and sorrow at its disappearance, symbolized in Hawkeye's [Mohican](#) friends, the last of their tribe, are important themes of the novel.

On the whole, *The Last of the Mohicans* is an unadulterated adventure story, with heroes attempting to chase down a dastardly villain with a penchant for kidnapping. What set the novel apart from many other novels featuring a similar kind of an adventure story are its historical backdrop and its characters.

Statements:

1. The Leather-Stocking Tales are Cooper's perfect masterpiece.
2. Natty Bumppo grew up among Cherokee Indians.
3. Natty Bumppo is a fearless warrior skilled in many weapons, including the sword.
4. Natty Bumppo prefers to live in the cities rather than in the woods or prairies.
5. *The Last of the Mohicans* is a historical and philosophic narrative reflecting the problems and conflict of the 21st century.
6. *The Last of the Mohicans* is Fenimore Cooper's least popular novel.
7. *The Last of the Mohicans* is a story of brutal battles with the Iroquois and their French allies.
8. The beauty of the unspoiled wilderness is not an important theme of *The Last of the Mohicans*.
9. *The Last of the Mohicans* is an adventure story with a historical backdrop and interesting characters.
10. *The Last of the Mohicans* is a story of a hero who saves a damsel in distress.

**Do the tasks and send me your answers.**