

Summer Reading: The Last of the Mohicans Audio/Video Reflection Assignment

Overview: Over the summer, you'll read (or listen to) The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper. Each week, you'll spend about 2-3 hours reading/listening and then record a 3-5 minute audio or video reflection responding to a specific prompt. You'll also engage with classmates' reflections to deepen your thinking. These reflections help you engage deeply with the text and prepare you for our course on the American Dream.

Important note: Throughout the year, we'll return to The Last of the Mohicans and ask: How do other texts confirm, complicate, or contradict Cooper's vision of America? Your summer reflections are the foundation for that conversation.

Submission: Post each week's reflection as a comment in Google Classroom by [DATE].

Respond to at least one classmate's reflection each week.

Weekly Prompts (Scaffolded)

Week 1: Character Motivations

"Choose a character whose actions surprised you or confused you this week. What do you think motivates them? What does their behavior reveal about how they see America or what they want from it? How is their vision different from other characters'? Cite a specific moment or passage."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Ask a follow-up question: "You mentioned [character]. What do you think would happen if...?" or "How does that character's motivation compare to...?"

Week 2: Plot Events

"Describe a pivotal or surprising event from this week's reading. Why do you think Cooper included this moment? How does it challenge or reinforce what you thought the American Dream was before you started reading? Reference the specific scene or passage."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Respond with an observation: "I noticed something similar when..." or "That event made me think about..."

Week 3: Figurative Language

"Find a moment where Cooper uses figurative language—metaphor, simile, personification, or symbolism. What is he comparing or describing? What does this figurative language reveal about his view of America, the wilderness, or the characters? Quote or describe the specific passage."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Ask: "What do you think Cooper is trying to make us feel with that image?" or "How does that figurative language connect to the American Dream?"

Week 4: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

"Identify a moment where Cooper appeals to the reader's trust (ethos), emotions (pathos), or logic (logos). How does this appeal shape your understanding of the characters or the conflict? Which appeal is most effective, and why? Provide a specific example from the text."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Respond: "I think that appeal works because..." or "I noticed a different appeal when..."

Week 5: Paradox and Antithesis

"Cooper often presents contradictions—characters or ideas that seem to oppose each other. Find an example of paradox (a contradiction that reveals truth) or antithesis (opposing ideas placed side by side). What truth does this contradiction reveal about the American Dream or American identity? Cite the specific moment."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Ask: "What does that contradiction tell us about what Cooper believes?" or "How does that paradox challenge the American Dream?"

Week 6: Juxtaposition

"Cooper places characters, settings, or ideas side by side to highlight their differences. Find an example of juxtaposition. What does Cooper want us to notice by putting these things together? What does this reveal about power, belonging, or the American Dream? Reference the specific juxtaposition."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Respond: "That juxtaposition is powerful because..." or "I see a similar contrast when..."

Week 7: Irony

"Find a moment of irony—where something unexpected happens, or where what's said differs from what's meant, or where reality contradicts expectations. What is Cooper suggesting through this irony? How does it complicate the American Dream? Describe the specific ironic moment."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Ask: "Why do you think Cooper chose to show us that irony?" or "What does that irony reveal about the characters' beliefs?"

Week 8: Style & Tone

"How does Cooper's language, sentence structure, and the way he tells the story shape the way you feel about the characters and their conflicts? Give a specific example—a passage, a description, or a moment—and explain how it affected you as a reader. Quote or describe the specific stylistic choice."

Record: 3-5 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to a classmate's reflection. Respond: "That stylistic choice affected me because..." or "I noticed Cooper's tone shift when..."

Week 9: Synthesis Reflection

"Looking back at all your reflections from the summer, what's one thing your understanding of the American Dream has changed because of reading *The Last of the Mohicans*? How do all these literary techniques—figurative language, appeals, paradox, juxtaposition, irony—work together to shape Cooper's vision of America? What surprised you most? Reference at least two specific moments from the novel."

Record: 5-7 minutes

Peer Response: Listen to 2-3 classmates' final reflections. Respond to at least one: "Your insight about [theme] connects to what I noticed when..." or "I'm curious about your point regarding..."

How to Record & Submit

Option A: Google Classroom Built-in

1. Click "Add" → "File" → "Record video" (if using Chromebook/mobile)
2. Or record on your phone/device, then upload the file to Classroom

Option B: External Recording

1. Record on your phone (Voice Memos app, or built-in camera)
2. Upload the file directly to Classroom

Tips for strong reflections:

- Speak naturally—this isn't a formal presentation
 - Reference specific moments, characters, passages, or scenes from the text
 - Be honest about what confused you or surprised you
 - Connect your observations back to the American Dream theme
 - Use the literary terms correctly, but focus on what they reveal rather than just naming them
 - Always ground your analysis in textual evidence
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Grading Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Developing
Textual Evidence	Consistently cites specific passages, scenes, or moments; grounds analysis in text	Provides some textual references; mostly grounded	Vague references or minimal textual grounding
Literary Analysis	Accurately identifies and analyzes literary techniques; explains their effect and significance	Identifies techniques; explains with some depth	Identifies techniques but minimal analysis
Connection to American Dream	Consistently connects observations to American Dream theme; shows sophisticated thematic thinking	Makes some connections to theme	Minimal or no thematic connection
Clarity & Articulation	Clear, articulate speech; easy to follow; well-organized thinking	Generally clear; minor unclear moments	Difficult to follow; unclear thinking
Peer Engagement	Thoughtful responses to classmates; asks probing questions or makes meaningful connections	Responds to classmates; shows engagement	Minimal or surface-level peer responses
Completion	Meets time requirement; addresses prompt fully; consistent peer engagement	Meets most requirements	Incomplete or significantly under time
