

Summer Reading 2020-2021 English III (American Literature)

Welcome to English III where we will be looking through American literature. In this year, we will hit on some sensitive topics that have dwelt in our nation's history as well as are relevant even today. This course focuses on writing, literary analysis, and critical thinking.

This summer you will be reading *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper. It is an older book, and it will be a challenging read primarily because of the density of the language that is used. Try to think of the book as being written in such a way which understates the actions of the characters meaning: it can read dryly but there is quite a bit of action and adventure throughout the novel. When reading, take into consideration what the characters do, how they behave towards one another, how they are described both by the narrator and the other characters. What was the status of the United States when this book is set? What nation are the main characters loyal to? Given the nature of this book, I would recommend giving yourself some time to read the whole thing. I do not recommend beginning the book with only a week or two left before school. You will be writing a dialectical journal (see description below) and to do it well, you should focus on completing it as you read, and not waiting until you have read the whole book to begin.

1. Secure a copy of *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper (ISBN: 978-0120000302)
2. As you closely read the novel, you will complete **thirty-five (35)** dialectical journal entries; there are thirty-three chapters, so you will need **one (1)** entry from each chapter and an **additional two (2)** entries from chapters of your choice. The dialectical journal is due on the first day of school: **August 12, 2020.**
 - a. **You are required to type your journals. Please format your journals after the sample below.**
3. You will also take a quiz over the novel during the **1st week of school.** We will only briefly review the novel, so make sure you are closely reading to prepare yourself for the exam.
4. We will work as a class to discuss themes of the novel and prepare for a timed writing regarding this topic.
5. A Timed Writing will also occur in the first two weeks of school relating to this book.

2. Dialectical Journals

The term "Dialectic" means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the texts we read during this course. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you're reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for your literary analysis assignments.

Procedure:

- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart (ALWAYS include page numbers).
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage)
- Label each of your responses using the following codes:
 - **(Q)** Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear (limit to only two) - *be sure to respond to/reflect upon your question if/when you find an answer.*
 - **(C)** Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
 - **(CL)** Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
 - **(R)** Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
 - **(E)** Evaluate - make a judgment about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say
- Provide at least **thirty-five (35) entries.** **Each entry must be at least two (2) sentences long.**

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien

Passages from the text	Pg#s	Comments & Questions
<p>“-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry”.</p>	Pg 2	<p>(R) O'brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty - things they had to carry - in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.</p>

Choosing Passages from the Text:

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

Responding To the Text:

You can respond to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be *specific and detailed*.

Basic Responses

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- Give your personal reactions to the passage
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Agree or disagree with a character or the author

Higher Level Responses

- Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole

REMINDERS:

- Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas **while you read** or **immediately after reading a section of the book** so the information is fresh. Each response must be at least 2 complete sentences.
- As you take notes, you should regularly re-read your previous pages of notes and comments.

- First person writing (using the pronoun “I”) is acceptable in the RESPONSE column.
- Remember the quotations in the TEXT column do not have to be dialogue!
- Your dialectical journal is due on the first day of school

2. Quiz over *The Last of the Mohicans*

This is a large point value quiz that will assess your reading of *The Last of the Mohicans*. Questions over the book will range from details about character and plot to broader literary questions. Please keep in mind that the quiz is not intended to trick you or place you in a grade deficit. If you have solely read online summaries of the book, please do not expect a good grade.

3. Theme Graphic Organizer

We will go over this in class on the first day. Once completed it will be a resource for the timed writing.

4. Timed Writing

There will be a timed writing over *The Last of the Mohicans* and you will be able to use your book and the Theme Graphic Organizer as a resources. This timed writing is to assess where you are and prepare for instruction moving forward.

In this process, there is to be NO collaboration with other students. Any assistance from the Internet, movies, or secondary sources such as Sparknotes, Shmoop, or Wikipedia will be viewed as cheating. If you have questions about formatting, email bpiech@lexingtonchristian.org.

Assignment Point breakdown:

Dialectical Journal	50 points (Homework)
Quiz	50 points (Quiz)
Theme Graphic Organizer	10 points (Homework)
Timed Writing	50 points (Writing)