

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS: STUDY GUIDE



Film posters for the 1936 film (left) and the 1992 film (right).

#### Directions:

**Note:** You will hinge and glue each page separately in your **Notebook** (films count as Lecture Notes in my class.) We are viewing the film *The Last of the Mohicans*, based on the novel by James Fenimore Cooper. It is a story set during the French and Indian War (Seven Years War) (1754-1763). While it is a story containing action and drama, you can also watch it to better understand Colonial America. When watching this film, consider the following:

1. How does living in North America cause the colonists to develop a new view of the world – that they are very independent?
2. How are the British / English portrayed in the film? How does their attitude contribute to friction between the mother country (Britain) and her colonies?
3. Why do the Indians take sides?
4. How are the French portrayed in the film?

**Remember this:** the British/English and the American colonists will WIN the French and Indian War (1754-1763), not the French. In the film it appears that the French are winning, but in the end Britain and her colonies will dominate France by the end of the war.

#### Synopsis (Summary):

The *LAST OF THE MOHICANS* takes place during the French and Indian War (1754-1763), a war to determine who would dominate and control North America – the British or the French? It became part of a larger war- the Seven Years' War (1754-1763), arguably the World's First World War. In fighting each other in America the French and British employed, some would say "used" Indian allies.

Based loosely on the James Fennimore Cooper novel of the same name (from 1826), “The Last of the Mohicans” tells the story of Hawk-eye, a colonial settler adopted by a Mohican (Indian) family after the death of his parents, as he aids a British military party through the forests of upstate New York during the French and Indian War. In the war for control of the American colonies, the British, with Colonial militia and Mohican allies, take on the French, allied with the Huron Indians. A budding romance between Hawk-eye and Cora Munro, the daughter of a British colonel, is interwoven into this political story of war and colonialism on the early American frontier.

**IMPORTANT:** You need to be aware that the war is part of the reason for the American Revolution.

Compounding the issues of the Navigation Acts, the war and its aftermath bring to light the question of who will pay for the war. The British believe they have the right to tax the colonists to help pay for the French and Indian War, but the colonists are resentful that they are told they must pay without representation in Parliament (British lawmaking body). This leads to cries in the colonies of, “NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!”

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

- 1) Hawkeye (aka Long Rifle, Natty or Nathaniel) – played by Daniel Day Lewis
- 2) Chingachgook- father of Uncas, adoptive father of Hawkeye
- 3) Uncas- son of Chingachgook
- 4) Colonel Munro- (aka Grey Hair) British commander at Fort William Henry
- 5) Cora Munro- brown-haired, older daughter of Munro, love interest of Major Duncan Heyward
- 6) Alice Munro- blonde, younger daughter of Munro
- 7) Major Duncan Heyward- British officer newly arrived to frontier and in love with Cora Munro. He is a firm believer in British colonial policy – colonists are subjects of the crown (king).
- 8) Magua- a Huron Indian. Wants revenge upon Colonel Munro and his daughters for the death of his children and loss of his wife. Magua blames the British, but most of all, Colonel Munro,
- 9) General Montcalm- commander of French army
- 10) General Webb- British commander of the frontier, directs Magua to lead/accompany Heyward to Fort William Henry
- 11) Sachem- an Indian wise man and chieftain in the Huron tribe
- 12) Hurons- Indians allied with the French, enemies of British and Colonists
- 13) Mohicans- Indians allied with the British

**Questions:** Answer these using complete sentences.

1. What is the significance of this scene with regards to how Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas value the animal they killed? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Why were the settlers reluctant to join the militia (and fight for the British cause)?

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3. Who is the British soldier arriving in Albany where the settlers are negotiating with General Webb? **Why is he so surprised at what he finds?** \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What happens on the way to Fort William Henry? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Why would the white settlers try to live in the wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. What is happening when Hawkeye and his party arrive at Fort William Henry?  
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\_\_\_\_\_
7. What discovery do you make about Magua – who is he working for?  
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8. What is the attitude of the Indians, as evidenced by Magua, towards the British?  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the attitude of the Indians, as evidenced by Magua, towards the French?  
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10. What is the conflict between Colonel Munro and the frontiersmen? What do the frontiersmen want to do but Munro will not approve of? \_\_\_\_\_  
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11. What are the experiences of the colonial frontier settlers – what are their lives like? Why might they not see it as in their interests to ally themselves with Britain (even though the colonists are technically Englishmen/British subjects)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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12. What is the final decision of the old Huron chief, Sachem, with regards to the prisoners and Hawkeye?  
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13. What is the significance of the final scene of the film? What is the significance of Chingachgook’s words? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Short answer question:** 3 paragraph minimum (Introduction restating the questions, at least one body paragraph, and conclusion). Based on the film, and with specific references to scenes in the film, describe the rising tensions between American colonists and the British. How does *The Last of the Mohicans* show that the American colonist may be on the “road to revolution?” (Meaning the Revolutionary War or American Revolution) – Reminder... at least 3 paragraphs!

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**Doodles:** Create 3 doodles relating to the film...this isn’t “art” in the traditional sense, so don’t stress over it!