

James Fenimore Cooper

Background

1. What type of novels did Cooper write?
2. How many did he write?
3. Why did Cooper get expelled from Yale?
4. What are the Leatherstocking Tales?
5. What does Natty Bumppo's life parallel? What does this mean?
6. What did Cooper know about the wilderness and its effect on human nature?
7. What does Cooper's "primeval wilderness" offer America?
8. Describe Natty Bumppo (at least three details).
9. What has he learned from nature?
10. What has he learned from being a hunter/warrior?
11. How is Leatherstocking described as the "original wilderness hero" in literature?
12. What is the "course" of Cooper's books?
13. What theme is expressed by this "strange pattern"?

From *The Deerslayer*

1. What part of Natty's life is represented in the last of the five Leatherstocking Tales?
2. What two different ideas does Natty struggle with in this tale?
3. Just hours before the scene in this passage, what has Natty done?
4. What new name is given to the Deerslayer and why?
5. Why does Natty refuse to marry the widow of the Huron?
6. Why did the Hurons release Natty on a "brief parole"?
7. Once he has fulfilled this parole, what does he believe can happen?
8. * Describe the scene as Natty walks into the camp.
9. Describe the two chiefs. Include their names and characteristics.
10. After Deerslayer speaks to the group, what do many of the Hurons want to do?
Which two Hurons do not agree?
11. Who is le Sumac?
12. Summarize Rivenoak's remarks to Deerslayer.
13. What does Deerslayer say about the warrior he killed?
14. What precautions did the Hurons make to try to prevent Deerslayer from escaping?
15. How do the old Huron women seem to react to Deerslayer? How do the young ones react to him?
16. What would Deerslayer have preferred to waiting for the council's decision?
17. What does Rivenoak offer Deerslayer? What reasons does he give for making this offer?
18. How does Deerslayer respond?
19. How do the Hurons react to Natty's refusal?
20. What does Panther do?
21. How does Deerslayer react to Panther's actions?
22. What weapons did the Hurons have as they chased Deerslayer through the woods?
Did they work?
23. List two ways Deerslayer avoided being captured.
24. What is the problem with the canoe he finds?
25. Why is Natty concerned about the silence as he drifts out on the lake?
26. What allows Deerslayer to see out of the canoe as he lies on the bottom of the boat?

27. Describe what happened that let Natty know he had "underrated the intelligence of his enemies.
28. What did Deerslayer use as an oar? What happened to it?
29. In the end, what did Deerslayer have to do to escape?

Discussion: Read the Connecting Cultures and Making Connections on the back page of the Cooper packet. With a partner, come up with a list of films, television shows, short stories, and novels that depict Native Americans. Answer the following questions (they are also on the handout) with your list in mind.

1. Are the depictions of Native Americans stereotypical?
2. If so, in what way?
3. What motives might the writers, producers, or directors have had in creating the characters? (Did they want to heighten, contrast, or draw an explicit moral? Did they want to present myths – or debunk them?)