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THE FRONTIER



The setting of *The Last of the Mohicans* is the **American frontier**. The theme of the frontier is present in much of American literature, not only as a narrative setting, but also as a mythological place. The frontier is seen by American authors as the symbol of a new living space. The space the settlers dreamed of as they moved west in the search of land and fortune. The frontier, with its wild natural beauty, is seen as the birthplace of freedom, democracy, individualism, and other high ideals of the American spirit. And Fenimore Cooper's adventure stories about the frontier are widely accepted as fundamental in creating the frontier myth in American literature.



Did you know?

When the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus arrived in the 'New World' in 1492, there were about 6 million Native Americans living in what is now known as the U.S. By 1900 there were less than 250,000.

WHAT IS A FRONTIER?

A frontier is a line or place or area which separates two different spaces. It is the place where differences come together and meet face to face. Therefore, the frontier is always formed by opposing forces, resulting in a conflict[•]. In Fenimore Cooper's novel, this opposition can be seen in the conflict between the French and the English for colonial control of the land. But more importantly, in the conflict between the so-called[•] 'civilized' culture of the white men and the 'savage' culture of the Native Americans. The Native Americans represented an alien and unfriendly world to civilized white culture, a threat[•] to the white race. The coexistence of these two cultures was becoming difficult, as the settlers who were moving west were forcing the Indian tribes from their lands. The result was inevitable: these two completely different worlds clashed.

- **clashed:** fought
- **conflict:** struggle; fight
- **fundamental:** essential; very important
- **ideals:** standards or ideas of perfection
- **narrative:** of a story
- **settlers:** (here) white Americans who moved west in search of land and riches
- **so-called:** you use so-called when you don't completely agree with the word or words that follow
- **threat:** (here) danger

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

Cora



Alice



Munro



Heyward



**General
Webb**





Gamut



Hawkeye



Magua



Uncas



Chingachgook



BEFORE READING

- 1 Look at these pictures of three characters from the book. Who do you think they are? Where are they from? What are they like? Write five words or phrases to describe their character.




Chingachgook



Hawkeye



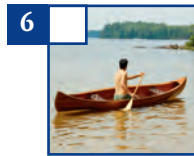
Magua

- 2  If you were going on a long journey, which of the men above would you choose to be your guide? Discuss your reasons with your partner.
- 3 Imagine you are travelling through the woods with your guide. Hostile Indians are trying to find you. Read the list below. Put a tick (✓) next to the things you should do and a cross (×) next to the things you should not do.
- a Use your rifle to kill animals for food.
 - b Sing, so you won't be bored on the trip.
 - c Use a bow and arrow.
 - d Hide your horses.
 - e Wear your walking boots.
 - f Leave behind any clothes you don't need.
 - g Take turns with your companions to keep watch at night.
 - h Leave the food you don't eat for the wolves.
 - i Make sure you walk on the grass, not on wood or stones.



4 Match the words from the story with the pictures.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a tomahawk | b wigwam |
| c moccasins | d cave |
| e canoe | f rifle |
| g knife | h hoofs |




5 Now use each of the words above to complete the sentences.

- a** They came across the water in a large
- b** Suddenly they heard the sound of horses'
- c** It's easier to walk in than in boots.
- d** A tall, powerful Huron ran towards him, waving his in the air.
- e** Hawkeye grabbed the and stabbed it through the Indian's heart.
- f** The of Magua is empty. He needs a wife and children of his own.
- g** He saw the bear sitting in a dark corner of the
- h** Hawkeye aimed his and fired.

6 Choose one of the sentences. Write what happens next.

CHAPTER 1

 Magua travelled for two hours from Fort William Henry. The Indian brave ran most of the way, through thick forests and along hidden paths, to reach Fort Edward. He had important news from Colonel Munro for General Webb, Fort Edward's British commander.

‘The French commander Montcalm is coming’, said Magua. ‘He is marching now towards Fort William Henry.’

Magua's words brought fear to the people who lived inside Fort Edward and to the British soldiers who were camped outside the fort.

‘Montcalm is a very great chief’, said the Indian. ‘He has many soldiers and many Indian braves. If Montcalm attacks Fort William Henry, everyone will die. Colonel Munro will die. Montcalm's braves will take many scalps from the British soldiers. Colonel Munro needs more men and supplies.’

The inhabitants of Fort Edward were terrified.

General Webb listened quietly to Magua's story. It was true that the war between the French and the British was savage and bloody. The two sides had fought each other for three years to win this wild and hostile country.

- **brave:** (here) Native American
- **chief:** leader; commander
- **marching:** walking fast like a soldier
- **savage:** (here) terrible; cruel

- **scalps:** hair and skin cut from the heads of the enemy and kept as prizes
- **supplies:** what you need to survive (food, drink, arms, etc.)

‘How many men has Montcalm got?’ asked General Webb.

‘His soldiers are as numerous as the leaves on the trees,’ said Magua. ‘You must send many men.’

General Webb was calm.

‘You are a brave man,’ he said, ‘Thank you for this message. I will call you when I need you.’

The following morning fifteen hundred of General Webb’s men set off on the journey to Fort William Henry. Ahead of them was a march of one day.

JOURNEYS

What is the longest journey you have been on?

How did you travel? By car? By plane? By bus?

What preparations did you make before the journey?

Outside General Webb’s house, servants prepared some horses for a journey. People were curious and came to watch. Among them was David Gamut, a tall thin man with narrow shoulders and long arms.

‘These are not ordinary horses,’ said Gamut. ‘They belong to important people, probably two ladies and an army officer.’ The people in the crowd were very impressed.

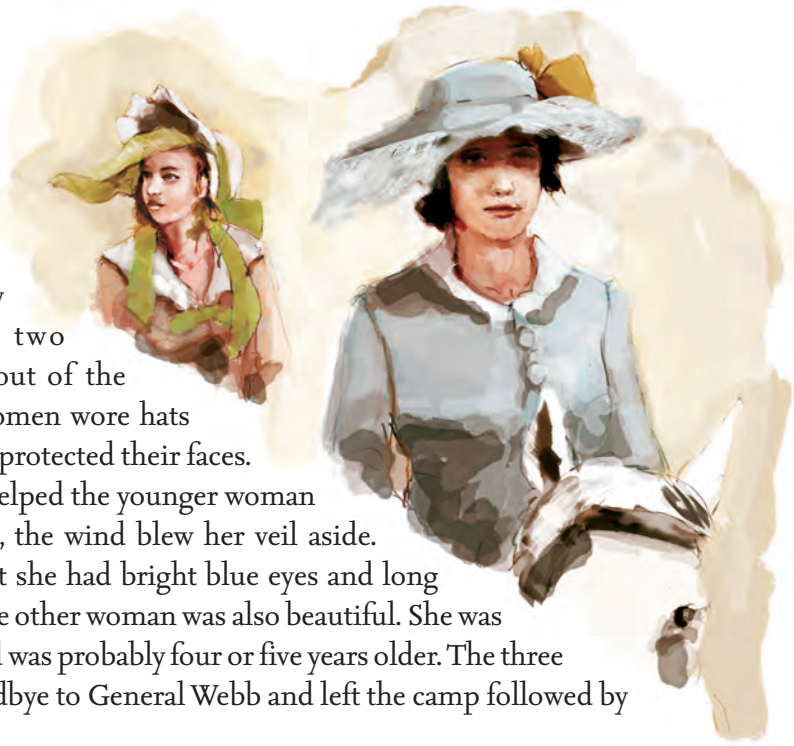
‘I’m a preacher but I also buy and sell horses, so I know about these things’, explained Gamut. He turned to look at his listeners, but instead he found himself looking into the wild and frightening face of Magua the Indian. Magua was still covered in his warpaint, and was armed with a tomahawk and a knife. The two men stared at each other.

- **set off:** started moving; went
- **tomahawk:** axe (see picture on page 18)

- **warpaint:** body paint Native Americans wear when fighting or during rituals.
- **were impressed:** admired him

At
that
moment
a young army
officer and two

women came out of the house. Both women wore hats with veils• that protected their faces. As the officer helped the younger woman onto her horse, the wind blew her veil aside. Gamut saw that she had bright blue eyes and long golden hair. The other woman was also beautiful. She was dark-haired and was probably four or five years older. The three riders said goodbye to General Webb and left the camp followed by their servants.



Magua ran behind them. He passed the younger woman's horse, and ran onto the path in front of the riders. The older woman looked at the Indian with a mixture of admiration and pity. The younger woman cried out in alarm• when the Indian ran past her horse.

'Don't worry, Alice', said the officer. 'The Indian is an army runner. His name is Magua. He's going to guide us to the lake so that we will reach Fort William Henry before the soldiers.'

'Do you trust• him, Heyward?' asked Alice.

'I do', said the officer. 'He used to fight with the Mohawks and once he was an enemy of your father, Colonel Munro, but that was a long time ago. Now he is our friend.'

- **in alarm:** frightened
- **trust:** have faith in

- **veils:** coverings for the face or the head

‘Does Magua speak English?’ said Alice. ‘Can you ask him to say something?’

Heyward laughed. ‘He pretends he doesn’t know any English. He only speaks it if he has to.’

Just then the Indian stopped and pointed to a dark path through the bushes. There was only space for one horse to pass.

‘Maybe we should travel with the soldiers,’ said Alice. ‘I don’t feel safe with Magua.’

‘Just because he has different manners from us and his skin is dark, it doesn’t mean we should distrust him,’ said the dark-haired woman.

Alice did not reply to her sister. She rode her horse through the bushes and followed Magua down the dark path between the trees.

PREJUDICE

Alice does not trust Magua. Is she judging him unfairly?

How do you judge people when you meet them for the first time?

By the clothes they wear? By the way they speak?

By the way they behave? By the colour of their skin?

The riders continued through the forest.

‘The servants must leave us now and change direction,’ said Magua. ‘Then it will be more difficult for Montcalm’s Indians to follow our tracks•?’

Heyward told the servants to ride in the direction of the soldiers. Then he and the two sisters rode on. Magua ran in front of them. Suddenly they heard the sound of horses’ hoofs. The riders held their breath and waited in the bushes to see who was following them. A tall thin man in a blue coat rode into view.

- **tracks:** marks or signs you leave when you walk or move

‘Who are you?’ asked Heyward.

‘My name is David Gamut. I am a preacher• and I sing hymns•’, said the man.

Alice was delighted• when she heard this.

‘Please let him travel with us, Heyward’, she said. ‘I saw him at Fort Edward. Mr Gamut can ride next to me and we will sing together.’

Gamut started singing. But Magua asked Heyward to stop Gamut immediately.

‘I’m sorry’, said Heyward, ‘you have a wonderful singing voice, Mr Gamut, but on this occasion I must ask you to travel in silence.’

‘Heyward, why do you have to spoil• everything? We were enjoying ourselves’, said Alice.

‘There will be plenty of opportunities for singing when we arrive at our destination’, said Heyward. ‘No one knows we are here. Let’s make sure it stays that way.’

The four riders passed through the woods, but they did not see the painted face of an Indian watching them from the bushes.



- **delighted:** very pleased
- **hymns:** religious songs

- **preacher:** man who teaches from the Bible
- **spoil:** ruin; destroy

1 Change the following sentences to the passive. Which words did you change? Note them in your book.

- a Heyward arranged the terms of the surrender and Munro signed the treaty.
- b General Webb was not going to send a single soldier to help Munro.
- c From the edge of the rocks they could see the shore of the lake.
- d The Indians dragged Heyward and the women from the cave and surrounded them.
- e You can always find footprints on grass, but not on wood or stone.
- f A warrior took Uncas by the arm and led him into the lodge.
- g The tribe placed the body of Uncas on a throne.

2 First unscramble the words in the box. Then use the words to complete the sentences.

UINATSREG NIINDGW DLBEA
VSAAEG GRETIGR LGWNIUNIL

- a The war between the French and the British was and bloody.
- b A rifle was resting in the man's arm and his finger was on the
- c Uncas was holding the knife. Blood dripped from its
- d 'The letter is genuine. This is Webb's
- e Magua led his men silently past a stream and along the side of a lake.
- f 'An wife makes an unhappy wigwam.'

P B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5

1 Read the sentences below and choose the best word (A, B, C, or D) for each space.

a Magua did not see Heyward and the others immediately. Then his eyes to the darkness inside the cave.

A looked **B** hesitated **C** inspected **D** adjusted

b 'When Cora's mother died, I returned to Scotland and I found my sweetheart unmarried.'

A was **B** yet **C** remained **D** still

c 'No one knows we are here. Let's make sure stays that way.'

A that **B** it **C** which **D** he

d across the Indian's knees was a rifle.

A High **B** Lying **C** Leaning **D** Shooting

e Halfway Gamut's song a terrible cry filled the air.

A at **B** with **C** through **D** across

f Hawkeye knew the woods as well as any Indian

A well **B** did **C** too **D** alike

g The riders their breath and waited in the bushes to see who was following them.

A held **B** had **C** retreated **D** swayed

h Magua knew that Hawkeye would not shoot as long as there was any chance that Cora be hit.

A to **B** can **C** may **D** might

i The Indians didn't kill Gamut because they thought he was a madman. With Hawkeye it would have been another story.

A yet **B** quite **C** all **D** like