



# LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **11th Grade | Unit 8**

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# LANGUAGE ARTS 1108

## STUDIES IN THE AMERICAN NOVEL

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**LIFEPAC Test is located in the center of the booklet.** Please remove before starting the unit.

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# Studies in the American Novel

## Introduction

The American novel began to develop at the same time as the English novel. The American novel, however, drew from the English developments as well as from the varied types of literature that led to a novel form.

In this LIFE PAC® you will study briefly the history of the American novel and some of the American novelists who contributed to this history. You will read an American novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*, by Ernest Hemingway. This novel will be purchased by you or provided by your teacher. You will study figures of speech, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, and so forth and their application to the novel.

You will also write a critical essay on the novel in which you will display your understanding of the novel, the principles of criticism, and the methods of evaluating literature according to God's standards.

## Objectives

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you will be able to:

1. Outline the history of the American novel.
2. Name some of the major American novelists.
3. Identify some types of novels written by American novelists.
4. Identify images and figures of speech and their function in *The Old Man and the Sea*.
5. Define a critical essay.
6. Explain interpretation as a critical approach.
7. Evaluate a particular interpretation of *The Old Man and the Sea* according to God's Word.

Survey the LIFE PAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

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# 1. THE AMERICAN NOVEL

The history of the American novel is not as clear cut as that of the English novel. No one novel holds sole claim to being the first as did Richardson's *Pamela*. As with the English novel, several types of novels were tried. The eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries formed a period of development with few memorable works among the many that were written.

The nineteenth century brought the first great American novelists and prepared the way for the twentieth-century novelists.

## Section Objectives

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Outline the history of the American novel.
2. Name some of the major American novelists.
3. Identify some types of novels written by American novelists.

## Vocabulary

**Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.**

**allusive**  
**burlesqued**

**chicanery**  
**gothic**

**picaresque**  
**romancer**

**Note:** All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The novel form was first used by American writers in the eighteenth century. Dispute continues over which novel was the *first*. Several forms were tried at this time, many paralleling developments in English. The epistolary novel, historical novel, sentimental novel, **gothic** novel, and others were written in this early period of development.

**The first American novel.** The argument still continues about which novel has the honor of being the first American novel. Some award the honor to Gilbert Imlay's *The Emigrants* (1793) and reach that conclusion by simply denying the novelistic writing which preceded it. A variety of novels have lost their claim to that title for one reason or another. In 1751 Charlotte Lennox used American scenes and characters in *The Life of Harriot Stuart*, but her literary training and home were in England. A book called *The Female American: or, The Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield* was thought to have been written by an American and published in London in 1767. In 1775

*Adventures of Alonso*, probably by Thomas Atwood Digges, was claimed to be by a native of Maryland. The book, however, was not published in America and deals with nothing American. An Indian story, *The History of Maria Kittle*, was written in 1781 but did not appear as a book until 1793. *Miss McRae* by Hilliard d'Auberteuil in 1784 lost its claim because it was written in French by a Frenchman.

*The History of the Kingdom of Basaruah*, thought to be by Joseph Morgan, was written in 1715. It was a chronicle-history of an imaginary kingdom used as an allegorical form to explain Calvinist covenant theology, but the mood and method of the work simply did not fit the understanding of the novel techniques.

A book, first attributed to Sarah Wentworth Morton and then to William Hill Brown, was written in 1789 and titled *The Power of Sympathy*. It is generally conceded to be the first American novel. All critics,

and people of sense, agree that *The Power of Sympathy* is a morbid and nasty book. Murder, suicide, and sin seemed to be the pattern in these early novels. Although all of the wrongs were presented from a harsh moral point of view, such treatment still did not prevent some of these novels from being banned.

Another aspect of these early works was that they claimed to be based on “fact.” In some cases actual parallels were drawn with real families. *The Power of Sympathy* is written in the epistolary style, that is, a series of letters, following the example of Samuel Richardson in *Pamela*. This style gave immediacy to the reading of “real” parallels between the fictional characters and the persons of the real world.

**Novels of sentiment.** Many of the early American novels were sentimental and dealt with domestic situations. *Charlotte Temple* by Susanna Rawson has gone through 160 editions. The work appeals to women and to critics. It asks that women stay virtuous and that mercy be shown to the sinner.

Hannah Foster wrote *The Coquette* late in the eighteenth century. As literature it surpasses *The Power of Sympathy* especially in its forceful and sudden presentation of the ruin of the heroine Eliza Wharton.

Novels of the sentimental variety were not all novels of domestic life. Enos Hitchcock’s *Memoir’s of the Bloomergrove Family* is a novel about “education.” *Julia and the Illuminated Baron* (1800) by Sally Wood over uses the gothic elements of horror and terror. Tabitha Tenney satirized and **burlesqued** the gothic tradition in a book called *Female Quixotism* in 1801.

*Alonzo and Melissa* by Anne Radcliffe leans toward the melodramatic. In the story the father imprisons the daughter to save her from marrying a poor man. The prison, of course, is a gothic castle on Long Island built by ancestors for protection against Indians. The place is a pile of rubble with the exception of the cemetery. The heroine is in a “state of distraction” from ugly sights and sounds that, as it is later discovered, were produced by a band of smugglers. Mark Twain testifies to the popularity of *Alonzo and Melissa* when he mentions it in his *Life on the Mississippi*.

---

**Answer true or false.**

- 1.1 \_\_\_\_\_ *Pamela* was the first American novel.
- 1.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Many early American novels dealt with sentimental domestic situations.
- 1.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Critics cannot agree on the very first American novel.
- 1.4 \_\_\_\_\_ The novel *Charlotte Temple* was not popular.
- 1.5 \_\_\_\_\_ *The Power of Sympathy* was an epistolary novel form.
- 

**Historical novels.** American history, brief though it was at the time, was used by eighteenth century American writers. *The Female American* used colonial Virginia as a setting; *The Foresters* made an allegory out of the English adventure in the new world; *Maria Kittle* used the French and Indian War and the Revolution; *Constantius and Pulchra*, *The Female Review*, and *Amelia* were all set at the time of the Revolution; *The Champions of Freedom* was set during the War of 1812. These efforts anticipated Brockden Brown and James Fenimore Cooper.

**Other early novels.** *The Algerine Captives* by Royall Tyler was filled with social, educational, and political

satire. *The Emigrants* by Gilbert Imlay compared English and American civilizations by picturing an English family in the New World. America had the decided advantage. Through this book readers first began to realize that much of America lay west of the Allegheny Mountains. Imlay found Illinois remarkable. H.H. Brackenridge finished *Modern Chivalry* in 1815 and its 800 pages comprised the closest American approach to the **picaresque** novels of Europe. The book was full of common sense and reflective passages, and the style was quite realistic. Captain Farrago and his rascal of a servant, Teague O’Regan, fall into escapades that are not only

personal scrapes but that also cast light on political faults. The locale is backwoods and the frontier of America during the eighteenth century.

The novel *Weiland* by Charles Brockden Brown has been critically acclaimed for its intensity and its episodes. Somehow the work's serious faults were treated kindly or overlooked. Brown could not write dialogue; his work lacked unity; he built narratives within narratives that were nearly impossible to follow; the evil deeds of his characters had no motives;

and he put characters in situations where no sane person would put himself. Although Brown did not consider himself a gothic novelist, he fell into the pattern because he thought he needed sensation to get at the moral constitution of man and shake it awake. Thus, strange characters, places, and events abound in his writing. Sometimes his narrative method is clumsy and awkward, but he was original because he had no models to copy.

---

**Write the letter of the correct answer on the line.**

- 1.6 *The Female Review* and *Maria Kittle* are examples of the early American \_\_\_\_\_ novel.  
 a. picaresque                      b. historical                      c. sentimental
- 1.7 *Modern Chivalry* is an example of an early American \_\_\_\_\_ novel.  
 a. picaresque                      b. historical                      c. sentimental
- 1.8 Charles Brockden Brown might be called a \_\_\_\_\_ novelist.  
 a. picaresque                      b. gothic                      c. historical
- 1.9 *The Emigrants* was written by \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 a. Gilbert Imlay                      b. H.H. Brackenridge                      c. Royall Tyler
- 1.10 *The Algerine Captives* was filled with social, educational, and political \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 a. fiction                      b. history                      c. satire
- 

## NINETEENTH CENTURY

The novel began to take shape in the nineteenth century. Writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain created memorable characters and good stories. Some, such as Cooper, began to write simply because the novels of the time were so bad. Others, such as Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne, considered themselves storytellers. These nineteenth-century novelists provided the base for the twentieth-century novelists.

**James Fenimore Cooper.** When James Fenimore Cooper arrived on the scene, the American novel became a novel that belonged to the world. Strangely enough, Cooper did not start to write until he was thirty. In 1820 he wrote *Precaution* because he thought that he could write a better novel than the one he was reading. With *The Spy* (1821), *The*

*Pioneers* (1823), and *The Pilot* (1824), Cooper brought to American fiction three great fictional worlds: history, the forest, and the sea. Even at this time Cooper did not have a professional attitude toward fiction. Although his main interest in life was not fiction, Cooper knew what things made literature. Above all he brought American life into American fiction.

Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey in 1789. He went to grammar school, then to Yale. He sailed in the navy and in 1811 married Susan De Lancey. After a five-year stay in New York, he lived in Europe from 1827 to 1833. In the latter part of his life, Cooper produced eighteen novels over a period of eleven years and waged a constant battle against evil influences in American life. He died September 14, 1851.



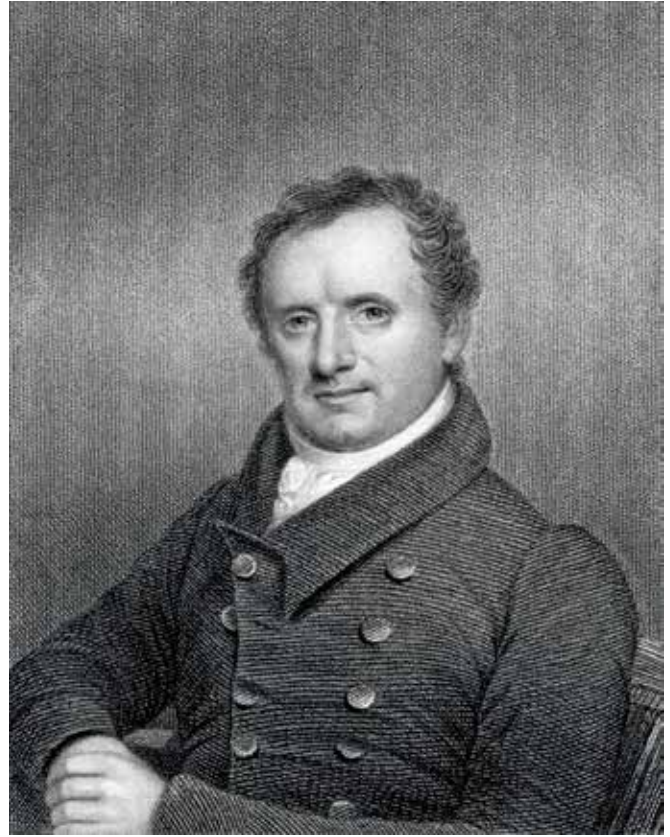
The novels known as the Leatherstocking Tales are Cooper's greatest achievement. They celebrate the hero Natty Bumppo: *The Deerslayer* (1841) is Natty's youth; *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and *The Pathfinders* (1840) deal with Natty in his prime; *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Prairie* (1827) describe the latter part of his life and his death. The novels are not all of the same quality. *The Deerslayer* and *The Prairie* are the best while *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Deerslayer* rank as the favorites. In any of the novels, the reader finds the American scene, the woods, the virgin land, the inland sea, the native American, the buffalo, or the prairie fire.

*The Pilot*, a novel of the sea, was about John Paul Jones. Other Cooper sea novels, *The Two Admirals* (1842), *The Red Rover* (1827), *The Water Witch* (1830), and *The Wing-and-Wing* (1842), strive to be authentic about the sea, whatever other matter they treat. The sea remained a love of Cooper through his life. A book of the sea that has been neglected is *Afloat and Ashore*, a novel continued in a second book, *Miles Wallingford* (both 1844). Both comprise a rather remarkable argument for a good life.

Cooper also wrote historical novels. Five of these novels can be classified as American. *The Spy*, the first of Cooper's American fiction, is little read. *Wyandotté* (1843) is about New York during the Revolution. *The Oak Openings* (1848) concern Michigan in the War of 1812. He wrote two novels about New England, *Lionel Lincoln* (1825) and *The Wept of Wiston-Wish* (1829). *Lionel Lincoln* is the better work and deals with New England and the Revolutionary War.

Some of Cooper's novels were on a theme dear to him, that is, social criticism. Two novels, *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found* (both 1838), are directed to Americans who cannot see American faults as well as to those Americans who find every century and country better than their own.

The Littlepage trilogy is about New York life from about 1750–1850. *Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1845), and *The Redskins* (1846) form the trilogy of which *Satanstoe*, a novel of manners, is the best. The novel still remains one of the most delightful in American fiction. Novels such as *The Monikins* (1835), *The Crater* (1847), and *The Ways of the Hour* are dedicated to Cooper's social criticism.



| James Fenimore Cooper

Cooper as a novelist opened new territories for fiction, but he added nothing new to technique. His descriptions often left out the one word that turns an ordinary description into a good or even great one. Cooper excelled, however, in describing the chase.

He has done more than anyone else to define the Indian character in the minds of Americans. Some of the things he said have been objected to, but by and large the objections have been cleared. His literary treatment of women was not too successful although some characterizations, such as that of Judith Hutter of *The Deerslayer*, are well developed. His best characterizations were of men, such as Natty Bumppo and Tom Coffin. The men, where they live and breathe, constitute the genuine contribution of Cooper. Cooper, in his attachment to his characters in nature, never made the mistake of substituting a mysticism about nature for religion. No writer makes greater use of Christian doctrine.

**Complete these activities.**

**1.11** List the Cooper novels included in the Leatherstocking Tales.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.12** List three of Cooper's sea novels.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.13** List the novels in Cooper's Littlepage trilogy.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer this question.**

**1.14** Why was James Fenimore Cooper important to the development of the American novel?

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