

American Literature: The Westward Journey Teacher Manual



Oak Meadow

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Introduction

This teacher manual is designed to help you guide your student through Oak Meadow's high school English course, *American Literature: The Westward Journey*. The teacher manual provides detailed answers to comprehension questions as well as tips on how to assess student responses to more open-ended assignments. You will find many suggestions for supporting learning in different ways depending on the student's unique approach to each assignment.

You may want to look over the teacher manual answers before your student begins work on a lesson. There are notes on how to support your student while in the process of learning. For lessons that include projects, you will also find suggestions on helping students develop organizational skills in project management and time management.

In this teacher manual, you will find the full text for all assignments. Teacher manual answers are seen in **orange**. For the full content of the course, please refer to the student coursebook.

For obvious reasons, it is best not to share this teacher manual with your student. Each student is expected to produce original work, and any incidence of plagiarism should be taken very seriously. If you notice a student's answers matching those of the teacher manual word for word, a discussion about plagiarism and the importance of doing original work is necessary. While students in high school are expected to be well aware of academic honesty, any discussion about it should be approached as a learning opportunity. Make sure your student is familiar with when and how to properly attribute sources.

We encourage you to join your student in discussing (and, if possible, reading) the literature in this course. Taking a special interest in your student's work can result in greater engagement and effort. We hope this course introduces your student to new perspectives on early American literature and the diverse experiences of those living in North America in the 19th century.

A Note About the Workload

Please note that there are a wide variety of assignments included in this course to give many options for engaging with the material. Students vary greatly in terms of reading speed, reading comprehension, and writing ability. Some may find the reading in this course takes longer than expected; others may find the writing assignments take a great deal of time. In general, students can expect to spend about five hours on each lesson (or ten hours for double lessons). Students who need more time to

complete the work might modify some lessons to focus on fewer assignments or opt to complete some of the written assignments orally. Modifications like these can allow students to produce work that is of a higher quality than if they were rushing to get everything done. Each lesson in this course can be customized to suit your student's needs.

Keep an eye on the workload as your student progresses through the course, and make adjustments so they have time for meaningful learning experiences. If your student is enrolled in Oak Meadow School, please consult with your teacher when making adjustments to the workload.

Lesson

1

Reflective Essay

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Write a reflective essay.
- Demonstrate skills in paragraph structure, revision, editing, and proofreading.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading assignment.
- Write a reflective essay.

Reading

This week, read the following sections:

- *River of Shadows*: Read Solnit's brief synopsis on pages 89–90.
- *My First Summer in the Sierra*: Read Biographical Note (v–ix) and Introduction (xv–xxvii).

Assignments

1. In what ways are the stories and histories of an earlier era of artists, naturalists, immigrants, and native people meaningful today? What do you imagine when you think of the growth and development, as well as the destruction and change, that took place throughout the 19th century in North America? Do you think about the Gold Rush, wagon trains, pioneers, or wars? What words, phrases, images, or stories come to mind?

Now think about your own family's history. Do you know the story of your own family's journey to the land where you live today?

With these questions in mind, please write a short reflective essay of one or two pages.

For all essays you write in this course, follow the steps of the writing process:

Organize your ideas, and write a rough draft. Identify your main ideas, and then organize your paragraphs around these main ideas. Use supporting details and relevant examples to elaborate on each main idea.

Revise your rough draft to improve the clarity and flow. Read your rough draft aloud or share it with someone else for feedback. Do the ideas flow in a logical sequence? Is there enough elaboration on each main point to explain it fully? Does the information address the assignment prompt? Revise your work as needed.

Edit your revised draft to make the writing more effective. Read your essay again. Have you used careful word choices? Is there any awkward phrasing? Are there a variety of sentence types and lengths? Is your writing engaging and original? Make any necessary edits.

Proofread your final version. Eliminate any errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation with a final, careful reading.

Always strive to present your best work.

In this reflective essay, students will write about their impressions of the 19th century, which will give them a starting place for what they will study during the semester. Look for a meaningful reflection comprising a structured review of the impact of the 19th century on the development of the United States, as well as a thoughtful look at how the experience of the student’s family may factor into this history. Look for an understanding that history is vital to how we evolve individually and as a people, and a recognition that history is passed along through the stories of many different people; this both expands the scope of the past and gives us more perspective on the world as it is now.

Students may see a parallel between these impressions and their understanding of the country today. For instance, the questing sense of adventure and desire to forge new pathways may be seen as both the nation’s character and a description of its past.

Student essays might include historical and political events (such as the American Revolution, the Louisiana Purchase, the Homestead Act, the Civil War, and the abolition of slavery), the discovery of natural resources (leading to the mass migration of the Gold Rush), new technology (such as the transcontinental railroad), and the desire to leave the cities of the East and live more independently, with fewer economic and social constrictions. Students might reflect on the promise, beauty, and violence of 19th century America—the pioneers and wagon trains, the slaughtered bison, the Trail of Tears, and the waves of immigration.

For the second part of this assignment, answers will vary. Students who reference their family’s experience of coming to America might address the power and pull of the American dream. Those who aren’t familiar with the story of their ancestors might choose the story of a close friend to learn about and relate. Students are also encouraged to put themselves in the place of earlier generations and imagine what it might have been like.

As the first writing assignment, this essay can be used as a baseline of the student’s writing skills. Take note of the student’s strengths and challenges, and use this information in guiding your student forward.

Lesson

2

Impressions

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Identify key passages in a text.
- Compare contrasting relationships between groups of humans and the environment.

Reading

Read the following sections:

- *My First Summer in the Sierra*: Read pages 3–112 (to the breaking of the first camp).
- *River of Shadows*: Read chapters 1 and 2 (1–55).

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading assignment.
- Write reading notes and daily observations in a journal.
- Reflect on differing attitudes toward the environment.



Reading Journal

As you read, keep your journal and pen next to you. Stop to write down notes as they occur to you. Write down any thoughts and questions you have, and note the following:

Reading journals are intended to help students improve reading comprehension, retain what they've read, and explore literary techniques and themes more fully. They can also be used as the basis for discussions about the literature and the student's experience. This reading journal will be submitted at the end of the unit (after lesson 4/5).

1. Record the passages or ideas that make an impression on you.
2. Try to discover what Muir and Muybridge did and did not have in common. Write down specific thoughts and passages that highlight their similarities and differences.
3. Record your own personal impressions in journal form. Choose a specific place or object to focus on, such as a tree, the sky, the moon, a time of day (such as morning, sunset, or night), or a pet you are close to—or combine all of these—and write a few sentences each day recording your thoughts and observations. You might want to keep these impressions and reflections in another part of your journal, or on separate pages than your notes on the readings. (An easy way to use a blank journal for dual purposes is to have one section start at the beginning and the other section start at the end; just turn the journal upside down, and begin from the back.)

This is an experiential assignment that students may benefit from on a personal level; it may also help them become more understanding and interested in Muir's journal writing. Students might begin each journal entry with an account of the weather (a very 19th century approach!) in order to link the way time passes, day by day, with specific conditions of experience on Earth. Another approach would be to observe a cat, dog, or other pet, and write about them on a daily basis.

You will be sharing your journal with your teacher at the end of lesson 5.



Think About It

While you are reading *My First Summer in the Sierra*, notice the way Muir refers to Native Americans, using phrases such as:

“ . . . saying never a word, as if he belonged to another species.” (13)

“ . . . the white hunter whom they had learned to respect, and to whom they looked for guidance and protection against their enemies the Pah Utes, who sometimes made raids . . . to plunder the stores of the comparatively feeble Diggers . . . ” (41)

“The wild Indian power of escaping observation . . . ” (72)

“In every way, she seemed sadly unlike Nature’s neat well-dressed animals . . . ” (78)

Like all writers, Muir was a product of his time; his views toward people native to the land (or native in the sense of their ancestors having been there for thousands of years) show both inherent racism and general acceptance. Do you think his way of speaking of Native Americans might have been different if he had been writing today?

Think About It sections provide prompts and passages for discussion and reflection. Many students benefit from the opportunity to discuss what they are reading. This helps them identify and analyze the deeper literary themes underlying the story. Students can be encouraged to discuss these topics with family, friends, peers, teachers, and other adults.

Assignments

1. Reread the passage in Muir’s journal on pages 73 and 74, from the entry of June 16, beginning with “How many centuries Indians have roamed these woods nobody knows . . . ” and ending with the sentence about nature “patiently trying to heal every raw scar.” This passage compares the ways in which native peoples and immigrants have influenced the landscape. What are your thoughts on this? Why do you think natives and immigrants of the 1800s were so different in the way they viewed and treated the land? Organize your response in one or two paragraphs.

This passage describes the native people having little or no lasting impact on the natural world, with their traces quickly erased by the passage of time, while the white settlers changed the landscape so dramatically through mining, dams, railroads, etc., that it seemed likely never to recover. Students are asked to give their own thoughts on this

marked difference in how the land was viewed and treated. Some might note that Native Americans had already lived in the area for generations, so they had a sense of caring for the land while newcomers didn't have the same sense of responsibility; others might point out that native people were far outnumbered by white settlers, so it made sense that the immigrants would have a more noticeable effect on the land.



Up for a Challenge?

All Challenge activities are optional. They provide additional ways for students to explore the lesson topics. Students may be given extra credit for these activities, or, with teacher permission, may use them as a substitution for another assignment. Challenge activities can often be used as discussion points or for group collaboration.

Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman beings or objects, a technique that Muir makes frequent use of. Muir talks of “bossy” clouds, “thoughtful” trees, and “happy” plants. Note the lyric anthropomorphic phrasing in the following passages:

“. . . many a charming flower leans confidently upon [poison oak] for protection and shade.” (35)

Flowers are “glad children of light.” (43)

“. . . the young river sings and shines like a happy living creature.” (46)

Choose a natural creature, object, or element in your local environment (a plant or animal, rock formation, sunset, etc.) and create an anthropomorphic description by identifying a human trait that somehow matches it.

Some students will find it easy to attribute human characteristics to nonhuman things, while others may struggle. To help students become familiar with this literary device, it can be useful to first name a human trait and then brainstorm nonhuman things that might be similar. For instance, the trait “moody” might apply to the way the sky looks when a storm is gathering; the trait “greedy” might apply to dry soil rapidly absorbing the rain. The anthropomorphic phrase should be easy to understand; if not, ask the student to explain the implied connection.

Lesson

6

Book I: The Shimerdas

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Structure a six-paragraph essay.
- Use text references to support your ideas.
- Describe the tone and style of a literary passage.

Reading

Read the following in *My Ántonia*:

- Introduction (1–2)
- Book I: The Shimerdas (5–90)

Whenever you come across a description, picture the scene in your mind as clearly as you can. Pay attention to how the characters and their relationships with one another develop and change over time.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading assignment.
- List setting details.
- Write an essay on the main character's perception of the seasons.
- Describe the author's writing style.



Reading Journal

There are no reading journal assignments for this book, but you might find it helpful to use your journal to keep track of key scenes and passages, characters, and the chronology of events.



Think About It

In chapter VIII, Jim senses a connecting thread between himself and others who have come from different places:

Up there the stars grew magnificently bright. Though we had come from such different parts of the world, in both of us there was some dusky superstition that those shining groups have their influence upon what is and what is not to be. Perhaps Russian Peter, come from farther away than any of us, had brought from his land, too, some such belief. (36)

The impulse to seek connections with those around us seems universal. Shared experiences, beliefs, goals, values, and interests all provide ways for us to feel connected to others.

Imagine that you are moving to a new land, and think about the experiences or beliefs that you might bring with you. What connections might you find with others? Consider how you might view others in your new land, and how they might view you. Then contemplate this passage from chapter IX where Jim tells of people making assumptions about those they don't know:

. . . there was, faintly marked in the grass, a great circle where the Indians used to ride. Jake and Otto were sure that when they galloped round that ring the Indians tortured prisoners, bound to a stake in the center; but grandfather thought they merely ran races or trained horses there. (42)

Imagine how differently people would feel upon hearing (or spreading) one version of the story or the other. How might this relate to the assumptions we make about people we don't know?

Assignments

1. The book begins with this line:

I first heard of Antonia on what seemed to me an interminable journey across the great midland plain of North America. (5)

Discover the prairie through the eyes of the narrator, Jim Burden. As you read, keep a list of animals, birds, plants, and fruits that are mentioned in the story. Write down any passages and scenes that strike you as heightened or extraordinary.

Making lists of what Jim discovers in his new home will help the student become aware of the beauty and magnificence of the prairie. Through noting heightened passages, students

will begin to explore the nature of Cather's prose and the way she brings the landscape and her characters to life. Students can reflect on how these passages are meaningful.

2. What is the quality and essence of each season as Jim remembers it from his first year on the prairie? Describe the seasons that give structure to Book 1 in a one-page essay. Write one paragraph for each season as well as an introductory paragraph and a concluding paragraph. For each season, include a direct quotation (describing that season) that strikes you as significant or beautiful.

The observations in the essay can build from the lists created in assignment #1 and the passages and scenes noted. Students may find in this assignment an appreciation for how the natural world provides a structure for the human story as well as noting the link between the seasons and the characters' emotions.

3. Read this passage from Book I aloud, or read it to someone else:

Years afterward, when the open-grazing days were over, and the red grass had been ploughed under and under until it had almost disappeared from the prairie; when all the fields were under fence, and the roads no longer ran about like wild things, but followed the surveyed section lines, Mr. Shimerda's grave was still there, with a sagging wire fence around it, and an unpainted wooden cross. As grandfather had predicted, Mrs. Shimerda never saw the road going over his head. The road from the north curved a little to the east just there, and the road from the west swung out a little to the south, so that the grave, with its tall red grass that was never mowed, was like a little island; and at twilight, under a new moon or the clear evening star, the dusty roads used to look like soft grey rivers flowing past it. I never came upon the place without emotion, and in all that country it was the spot most dear to me. I loved the dim superstition, the proprietary intent, that had put the grave there; and still more I loved the spirit that could not carry out the sentence—the error from the surveyed lines, the clemency of the soft earth roads along which the home-coming wagons rattled after sunset. Never a tired driver passed the wooden cross, I am sure, without wishing well to the sleeper. (Cather 77)

How would you describe Cather's writing style here? Write a paragraph defining the tone of the narrative in this passage. What feelings are evoked from these words?

This passage of writing exemplifies the genius and beauty of Cather's writing. It is a kind of elegy, looking back to a previous time, to a landscape that once was, but has been changed by human occupation. It is also a memorial to the immigrants who once lived there, speaking of human error and tragedy, and of what changes and what endures. It is as much a testament to the beauty of the land as to the endurance of the human spirit; regardless of how the land changes or the spirit is challenged, each will endure.

Students might explore these themes or write about the language of the passage; they might write about how the first-person narrator brings the reader into the story and expresses something about the world and life that we all share and cherish.



Up for a Challenge?

Cather's work includes vivid descriptions. Challenge your writing skills with one of these optional activities:

Option 1: Describe a Place

The description of Jim's first glimpse of grandmother's kitchen (9) includes sensory details such as white-washed walls and a hard cement floor, flowers in windows hung with white curtains, the smell of gingerbread baking, and bright nickel trimmings on the stove. Write a description of a room in your home or elsewhere using vivid sensory details.

Option 2: Describe a Phenomenon

Consider this expressive imagery from chapter VIII:

The wind shook the doors and windows impatiently, then swept on again, singing through the big spaces. Each gust, as it bore down, rattled the panes, and swelled off like the others. They made me think of defeated armies, retreating; or of ghosts who were trying desperately to get in for shelter, and then went moaning on. (36)

Using lively imagery, describe a natural phenomenon, such as a thunderstorm, blizzard, or pouring rain.

Lesson

7

Book II: The Hired Girls

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Identify key scenes in a story.
- Make comparisons between your life and the lives of story characters.
- Draw parallels between literary themes in different books.

Reading

Read the following in *My Ántonia*:

- Book II: The Hired Girls (93–161)

Continue to pay attention to how the characters and their relationships change over time.

Assignments

1. In *Black Hawk*, Jim finds a new kind of social stratification, a hierarchy that places the new immigrants on a lower level than those whose ancestors immigrated in earlier generations. There are a number of depictions of prejudice and class differences that are really striking in this section of the novel.

Choose two episodes that stand out for you, and explore the meaning of these scenes or events in terms of how they tie into or reveal the larger theme of discrimination against foreigners.

In Cather's story, the Nebraskans are the American-born people—from Virginia or Pennsylvania, for example—who moved to Nebraska as part of the Westward Expansion, and the immigrants are the foreign-born: the Bohemians, Russians, Norwegians, and Swedes.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading assignment.
- Identify and provide examples of scenes that portray prejudice and class differences.
- Explore story issues and experiences, and compare them with your own life.
- Describe emotions portrayed by story characters.
- Explore literary themes of time and timelessness.

Students are asked to identify scenes where discrimination is evident. One example comes in chapter XVIII: Ambrosch acts dishonestly by trying to return a worn-out horse collar instead of the good one lent to him. Jake gets into a fistfight with Ambrosch, who kicks Jake. Afterward, Jake and Jim are angry, and their anger and contempt quickly spreads from Ambrosch to others who had nothing to do with the incident.

Jake says,

“These foreigners ain’t the same. You can’t trust ’em to be fair. It’s dirty to kick a feller . . . They ain’t to be trusted.”

Jim agrees:

“I’ll never be friends with them again . . . I believe they are all like Krajiek and Ambrosch underneath.” (84)

This is an excellent portrayal of how prejudice can begin when someone judges another based solely on their ethnicity or on the actions of others who share their ethnicity. In the example above, students may note that the characters are justified in saying Ambrosch wasn’t to be trusted but wrong to extend that distrust to other Bohemians.

The author depicts the immigrants’ lives in the Nebraskan town through Jim’s voice, and students can find passages that indicate the kind of prejudice they experience while living in town and how their struggles are also what make them stand apart from others.

2. Jim, Ántonia, and “the country girls” move into town just as they are becoming teenagers. A new interweaving of social relationships is happening at the same time they are all coming of age, becoming teenagers (and then adults) in a changing world. The social situation in Black Hawk is being experienced along with all the changes inherent in growing up—this is seen in the dissatisfaction felt and expressed by Jim—and their discoveries about the life of the town. Some of their new experiences center on the dancing pavilion (set up by the Italian immigrants), which brings delight and joy (dancing!) in equal measure to all, as any who could pay were welcome.

With these ideas in mind, answer the following questions:

- a. How does this move into town, which happens during adolescence, bring out the town’s prejudice against the hired girls?

Many of the townsfolk consider the youth and beauty of the young women a threat. The hired girls are often vibrantly healthy and strong, as noted in this passage: “*The country girls were considered a menace to the social order. Their beauty shone out too boldly against a conventional background.*” (129)

- b. In what way is the Vannis’ tent neutral ground?

The Vannis’ tent provides a place where the different “classes” mingle and anyone who can pay is welcome to attend the dances.

- c. Is there anything in your own experience as a teenager that is comparable? Have you had an experience of discovery, perhaps of a place or a new interest, that has coincided with this particular time of transformation in your life?

Students are asked to note similarities between their own experiences and the lives of the characters who are coming of age.

3. The cultural values in *Black Hawk* differ from those Jim and *Ántonia* experienced in rural country life. This is eloquently expressed in chapter XVI when they all go to the countryside for an outing and open up to their hopes and dreams and memories (150–155). What are the feelings they share with each other?

In the country, neighbors help one another freely: lending a hand with farm work, sharing food and clothing, visiting when someone was sick or hurt. Life in town is conducted along lines of social stratification, with *Ántonia* and other immigrants often relegated to service roles and judged against a different set of standards in terms of behavior and expectations. In the scene on pages 150–155, the friends talk about missing the Old Country with its familiar culture and way of life, which in many ways is like their experiences when living in the country before moving to town. They talk about the kind of life they'd like for themselves and the people they love.

4. After opening up to one another, Jim and *Ántonia* experience a heightened moment where the landscape seems to resonate with their feelings and openness, as if their revelations with each other can be seen in the land around them, in the details they witness, almost as a symbol:

Presently we saw a curious thing: There were no clouds, the sun was going down in a limpid, gold-washed sky. Just as the lower edge of the red disc rested on the high fields against the horizon, a great black figure appeared on the face of the sun. We sprang to our feet, straining our eyes toward it. In a moment we realized what it was. On some upland farm, a plough had been left standing in the field. The sun was sinking just behind it. Magnified across the distance by the horizontal light, it stood out against the sun, was exactly contained within the circle of the disc: the handles, the tongue, the share—black against the molten red. There it was, heroic in size, a picture writing on the sun.

Even while we whispered about it, our vision disappeared: the ball dropped and dropped until the red tip went beneath the earth. The fields below us were dark, the sky growing pale, and that forgotten plough had sunk back to its own littleness somewhere on the prairie. (156)

How are the themes of time and timelessness found in the works of Muir and Muybridge conveyed in this passage? Write your thoughts in one or two paragraphs.

This assignment asks students to make connections between the three works of literature they've read so far. Some students will easily identify how time is portrayed in each book—the passage of time, the perspective of looking backward or forward in time, the sense of timelessness felt when one is with loved ones or doing something they love. Other students may need guidance in recognizing how this theme plays out in different ways.

Discussing related passages or asking students to summarize the events in each book might help them gain a sense of the connecting threads.



Up for a Challenge?

When the Burdens move to town, Jim meets many new people. His description of their neighbor Mrs. Harling is beautifully vibrant and revealing:

Mrs. Harling was short and square and sturdy-looking, like her house. Every inch of her was charged with an energy that made itself felt the moment she entered a room. Her face was rosy and solid, with bright, twinkling eyes and a stubborn little chin. She was quick to anger, quick to laughter, and jolly from the depths of her soul. How well I remember her laugh; it had in it the same sudden recognition that flashed into her eyes, was a burst of humor, short and intelligent. Her rapid footsteps shook her own floors, and she routed lassitude and indifference wherever she came. She could not be negative or perfunctory about anything. Her enthusiasm, and her violent likes and dislikes, asserted themselves in all the every-day occupations of life.
(96)

This description is so clear and specific that we feel like we know Mrs. Harling well, or we know someone like her. Write a description of someone you know. Use all your writing skills to bring this person vividly to life.

Students will give a detailed description of someone. Look for varied language and sentence structure, and a description that encompasses personality traits as well as physical characteristics.

Lesson

10

Exploration and Expansion

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Create a comparison chart.
- Identify purpose and effectiveness of different literary techniques.
- Describe an experience from multiple viewpoints.

Reading

Read *Sacajawea* by Joseph Bruchac, described as a story “of how the worlds of the white men and the Indians came together” (1).

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading assignment.
- Identify benefits and drawbacks of different literary techniques.
- Explore different perspectives regarding attitudes toward immigrants.



Reading Journal

There are no specific reading journal assignments for this book, but you may want to use your journal to keep notes as you read.



Think About It

In life, it's important to avoid making assumptions about what "everyone" thinks or feels. For example, while the Shoshone and WallaWalla were welcoming to the white travelers, perhaps others did not want them there; likewise, while some Blackfeet and Sioux may have not wanted peace with other nations, others may have. Some of the established families in *My Ántonia* were welcoming to the immigrants, and others were not. Some immigrants were eager to learn the language and customs of their new land and take on a new identity; others held fast to their traditional ways.

Imagine yourself as someone whose generations of ancestors have lived in one place for hundreds of years. How might you feel about newcomers arriving? Would you feel one way if these newcomers wanted to adopt your culture and differently if they wanted to maintain their own traditional ways? Now imagine yourself as a newly arrived immigrant in a country far away. Would you want to become part of the established culture, or would you rather maintain your own cultural identity? Would you automatically trust the established population, or would you be wary of their motives and ways? Think about your response, and ask someone you know for their thoughts.

Assignments

1. This story is told using alternating viewpoints with each chapter switching between Sacajawea and Captain Clark. It also uses the story-within-a-story technique: it is narrated as though being told to Sacajawea's son many years later. The author also includes Native American folktales at the beginning of each chapter narrated by Sacajawea (another type of story within a story). Why do you think the author chose these literary devices to tell this story? Does each technique enhance the story's effectiveness? Does it detract from your experience as a reader? Make a chart listing the benefits and drawbacks of each of these three techniques:
 - Alternating viewpoints between Sacajawea and Clark
 - Using the story-within-a-story technique of narration
 - Including Native American folktales within the story

When creating your chart, you do not have to write in complete sentences. List at least one benefit and one drawback for each technique based on your experience as a reader.

Answers will vary as students relate, in chart form, how the different literary techniques used in the novel affected their experience as a reader. Possible responses are included below.

Technique	Benefits	Drawbacks
Alternating viewpoints	Story is seen from two very different perspectives, so we get the whole story instead of just one side	It can be hard to remember who is narrating the story
Story-within-a-story	Nonlinear storytelling provides interest and a sense of time	Movements back and forth in time interrupt the forward momentum of the story
Native American folktales	Gives the sense of how important storytelling is to Sacajawea's culture	Can be hard to see the connection between the folktale and the unfolding story

2. Many people view Lewis and Clark as explorers paving the way for others to migrate westward. However, what if you looked at Lewis and Clark's party as migrants—newcomers to a land already inhabited? How do these “migrants” differ in their behavior and attitude than the immigrants in *My Ántonia*? Think of how the families already established on the Nebraska prairie treated the new immigrants, and then consider how their behavior compares to the way the Native Americans treated the newly arrived white men. As we've seen in *My Ántonia* and *Sacajawea*, often newcomers are given very practical, essential help, without which the newcomers wouldn't have survived. Other times, the newcomers are not welcomed or treated well.

With these thoughts in mind, answer the following questions:

- a. What kind of help was offered to the Bohemian immigrants in *My Ántonia*? What help was given to the members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition by some of the native tribes they encountered?

In *My Ántonia*, the neighbors bring the Shimerda family food at their first visit—when the Shimerdas arrived, they have no garden, chicken house, or plowed land—and Jim's grandmother sends them food several times during the winter. The immigrants are also lent tools and household items. Perhaps the biggest help offered is teaching Ántonia to read.

In *Sacajawea*, native people act as guides for the expedition (since they know the land so well), provide information about hazards of the trail or neighboring tribes, and make trades that help the explorers. The greatest help received is from Sacajawea herself, who provides information about the geography, local tribes, food sources, history, and culture, as well as translation services.

- b. At times, the newcomers were seen as a threat or looked down upon. What evidence is there of this kind of tension in *Sacajawea*? What difference did it make that Sacajawea was traveling with them?

The book conveys a mix of trust and wariness in how the expedition is met; many native people embrace the change and new ideas brought by Lewis and Clark while others fear it. Various tribes react in different ways to the white explorers, and often Sacajawea's presence smooths relations between the expedition and the local residents.