American Literature

Unit 12—Realism and Local Color

The Hoosier Schoolmaster

* Have students relate parts of the story which were humorous or interesting to them
* Look at vocabulary: pedagogue, prophylactic, orthography
* Make a list of main characters and discuss each one’s personality/character
* Why did Ralph decide to stay and teach school in Flat Crick?
* What was the phrase inspired Ralph to “hang in there”?
* What were some of the stories that Ralph told the Meanses to impress them?
* The expectation here was that the teacher and the students would be in perpetual conflict…the teams were decided ahead of time—the teacher against the students and the students against the teacher. How did Ralph handle this expectation? How did he respond to the student when they tried to initiate the conflict? Important principle for relating to people in a way that dispels tension and conflict. Think of yourself as being on the same team.
* Notice Mrs. Means’ comment about the squire becoming as “civilized as the rest of us.” What is ironic about that? What does that show about a common characteristic of human nature? (we all tend to think that our way is “the way”)
* What does Mrs. Means say about women and education?
* How did Ralph feel about Hannah as he was competing against her?