

Lesson 1: The Very First Americans (2 Days)

Getting Started

? Questions to Explore

- How were people in the past dependent on plants and animals in the environment?
- How do resources from the environment help meet people's needs?
- How has people's dependence on the environment changed over time?



Facts and Definitions

- Native Americans were the first people to live on the continent of North America.
- The different regions of Native American tribes included the Southwest, Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Plains.

• Skills

- Locate and describe Native Americans in North America, past and present. (SS)
- Compare the ways of life of Native-American groups in the Western Hemisphere. (SS)
- Use vocabulary related to chronology. (SS)
- Use maps to locate communities. (SS)
- Compare how people in different communities adapt to or modify the physical environment to meet their needs. (SS)

✂ Materials

- *The Very First Americans* by Cara Ashrose
- journal
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- plain paper

Introduction

Ask your child if he knows who the first people to live on our continent were. If he doesn't know, tell him that the American Indians, or Native Americans, were the first people who lived in North America.

Divide a sheet of paper into three parts length-wise to create a "KWL" chart. Write "Native Americans" at the top of the page. Write "Know" in the first column, write "Want to Know" in the second column, and write "Learned" in the last column. Ask your child what he already knows about Native Americans and record the information in the first column. Then, in the second column, record what he says he would like to learn about them. Tell him that, at the end of the unit, he will use the third column to record new information he has learned about the Native American people.

Usage Note

It is often difficult to know how to refer to the groups of indigenous peoples that populated the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans in the fifteenth century. Much has been written about the merits of terms such as "American Indian," "Native American," "First Peoples," and others. Surveys of indigenous peoples in the United States have shown a preference for the terms "American Indian" and "Native American" by a vast majority of respondents.

Our goal when referring to people outside of our own cultural heritage is always to be both respectful and accurate. Through most of our curriculum, we use the terms "American Indian" and "Native American" interchangeably, and we view both of these terms as acceptable to and respectful of these groups. Our task is complicated, however, by our status as a literature-based curriculum. We use a number of books, reference materials, and novels that simply use the term "Indian." We realize that this term, when used by itself, is often viewed as a pejorative. In our curriculum, however, when we are using or referring to a resource that uses this term, we will sometimes use the same term. Our intention in doing this is to maintain accuracy and consistency in the usage, and is in no way intended to be disrespectful of these groups.

Reading and Questions

Give your child the book *The Very First Americans* by Cara Ashrose. Ask your child the following questions when he finishes reading.

1. How did the first Americans get the name "Indians"?

When Columbus landed in America he thought he was in India, so he called the people Indians.

2. What groups of Native Americans does the book talk about?

The Northwest Coast, the Southwest, the Plains, and the Woodlands.

3. What is something unique about each group?

Answers will vary.

4. Which group do you think is the most interesting? Why?

Answers will vary.

5. Were you surprised by anything you learned in the book? If so what?

Answers will vary.

Activities

Activity 1: Journal Entry

Give your child the book *The Very First Americans*. Encourage him to record the names of the different groups of Native Americans he reads about on a page in his journal.

Answer Key:

- Chinook, Makah, Salish, Haida, Hopi, Navajo, Zuni, Cheyenne, Pawnee, Sioux, Comanche, Delaware, Iroquois, Penobscot, Wampanoag, Seminole

Activity 2: Dependence on the Natural World

Discuss with your child how Native Americans were dependent on natural resources and had a unique relationship with the natural world. Then choose an option for your child to complete.

Option 1

Ask your child to skim through the book and record ways the various tribes depended on natural resources. He can record this information on the page "Dependence on the Natural World" (Option 1).

Answer Key:

- Liquids: water from rivers and streams
- Food: berries, buffalo meat, grew crops, deer, fish from the sea, whale meat from the sea, salmon from rivers
- Shelter: built big wooden houses from trees, built houses out of clay, used buffalo skins for tents, built longhouses from trees and bark, built chickees with roofs made out of palm leaves
- Clothing: buffalo skin for clothing, deerskin for clothing, wolfskin for capes

Option 2 (Advanced)

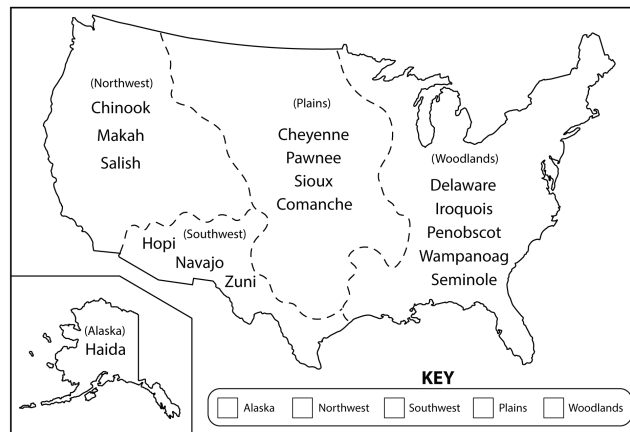
Give your child the page "Dependence on the Natural World" (Option 2). Encourage him to skim through the book to look for ways that Native Americans depended on natural resources. On the chart, he will list one way that the Native Americans met their needs with natural resources, and then he will list one way in each area that we meet our needs without natural resources. For example, we use processed foods, sodas, polyester clothing, and plastic items in our homes.

Answer Key:

- Liquids- Native Americans: water from rivers and streams. Today: answers will vary but could include soda, juice, carbonated water, sports drinks.
- Food- Native Americans: berries, buffalo meat, grew crops, deer, fish from the sea, whale meat from the sea, salmon from rivers. Today: processed food, fast food, fried food.
- Shelter- Native Americans: built big wooden houses from trees, built houses out of clay, used buffalo skins for tents, built longhouses from trees and bark, built chickees with roofs made out of palm leaves. Today: plastic in our homes (bottles, food containers, bags, etc.)
- Clothing- Native Americans: buffalo skin for clothing, deerskin for clothing, wolfskin for capes. Today: polyester or other synthetic clothing.

Activity 3: Map of Groups of Native Americans

On the "Maps of Groups of Native American" page, your child will find a map of the groups of Native Americans discussed in the book, along with some other groups. Encourage him to shade the sections of the map according to the groups found in each part of the U.S. He can fill in the key based on the colors he uses. Then, within the shaded regions, encourage him to select a symbol for each of the four groups he read about in *The Very First Americans*. Explain that the symbols he draws on the map should reflect something unique about that specific group of American Indians.

"Map of Groups of Native Americans" Answer Key**Day 2****Activity 4: Tribes within the Regions**

On the "Tribes within the Region" page, your child will find a list of some of the more popular tribes within the different regions. Ask your child to circle the name of any tribes he has heard of before. Then, let him tell you what he knows about the Native Americans in each region. He can list one fact about each region on the chart.

"Tribes within the Regions" Answer Key

Answers will vary but may include:

Region	Tribes	Information about the tribes
Southwest	Zuni Hopi Navajo	Hopi – the "peaceful" ones, built clay houses high on flat-topped mountains
Plains	Cheyenne Pawnee Sioux Comanche	Sioux – had tipi homes Comanche – best horsemen for buffalo hunting
Woodlands – Northeast	Delaware Iroquois Penobscot	Iroquois – made longhouses out of trees and bark Delaware – made longhouses out of trees and bark Penobscot – great hunters
Woodlands – Southeast	Seminole	Seminole – lived in houses called chickees with roofs made out of palm leaves
Northwest Coast	Chinook Makah Haida	Chinook – fine woodworkers, had feasts Makah – very good whale hunters Haida – built big wooden houses and totem poles

Activity 5: Types of Homes

On the page called "Types of Homes," your child will illustrate the types of homes of the different groups of Native Americans and list the materials used to build each home. Encourage him to use the illustrations in the book *The Very First Americans* as a guide for his drawings. He can also color the drawings so that they look authentic.

Answer Key:

- Northwest Coast- wood planks
- Plains- wood poles, buffalo hide
- Southwest- clay, ladders
- Woodland- trees, bark, palm leaves (south)

Activity 6: Local Tribes

For this activity, help your child locate information about Native American tribes that lived in your region. He can locate information online or in books about local tribes. Identify your state's region on the map from Activity 3. Let your child record the information he learns on the "Local Indian Tribes" page. He can illustrate and label his answers in the box.

To extend this activity, take your child to visit a local museum where he can learn more about local tribes. If possible, arrange a time for him to meet with someone who is a descendant of one of the local tribes or knows information about the tribe.

Wrapping Up

Ask your child what he has learned today about Native Americans. Ask him to describe how life was different for Native Americans than it is for people who live in the U.S. today.

Life Application

Take your child to visit local Native American exhibits in your community.

Dependence on the Natural World

Directions: List or illustrate the various ways the tribes used natural resources to meet their needs in the following areas.

Liquids



Shelter



Food



Clothing



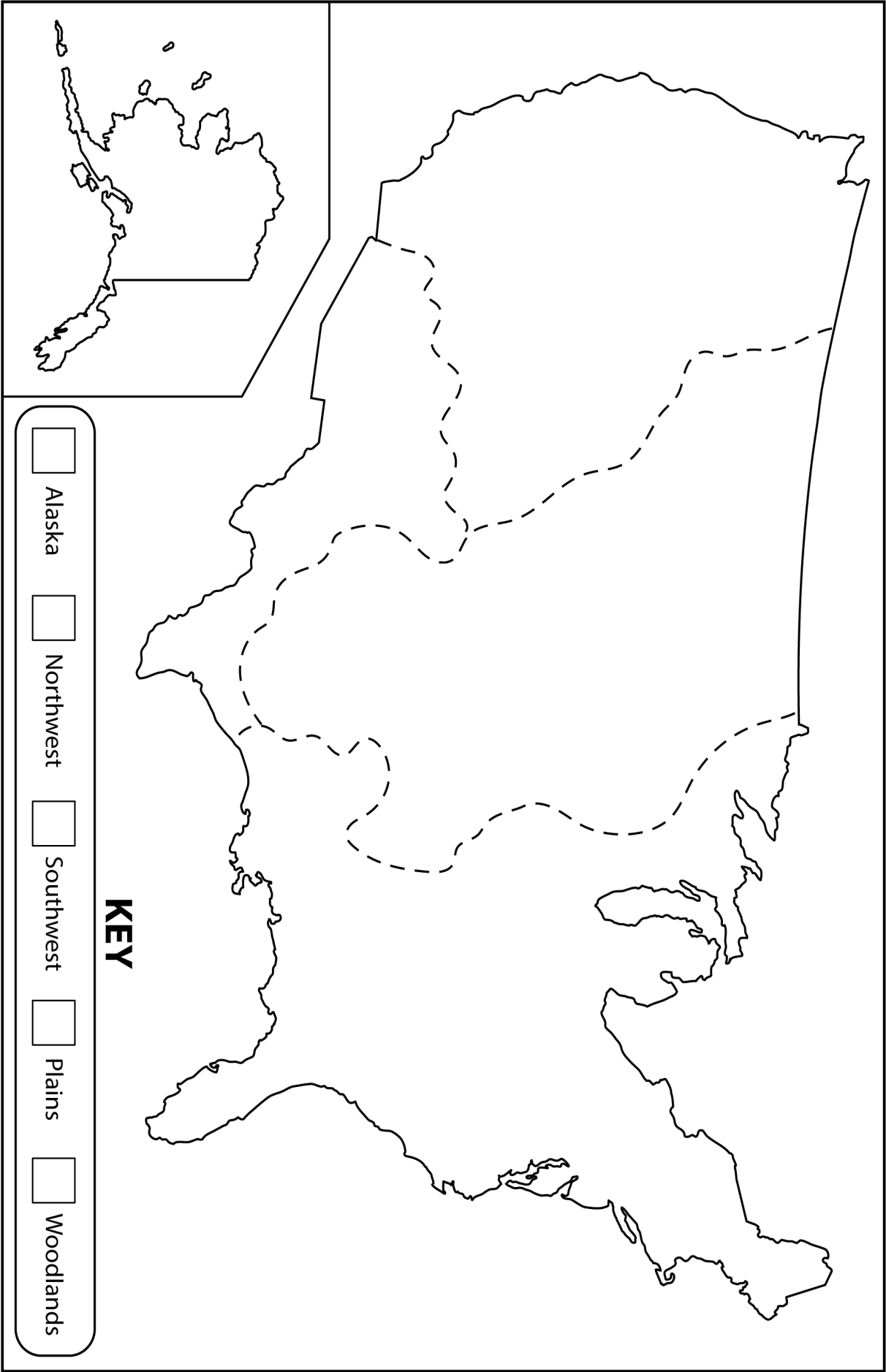
Dependence on the Natural World

Directions: Give examples of various ways that Native Americans were dependent on the resources in their environment to meet their needs. Then record ways that we meet our needs today using materials that do not come directly from nature. List two examples in each category.

Native Americans		Today	
1.	Liquids		
2.			
1.	Food		
2.			
1.	Shelter		
2.			
1.	Clothing		
2.			

Map of Groups of Native Americans

Directions: Label each section of the map with the names of the Native American Tribes found there. The Haida Nation was located in Alaska. Then, shade each section a different color, and fill in the key based on the colors you used.



Tribes Within the Regions



Directions: Record anything you know about the tribes in the regions of the United States. Write the names of the tribes in the correct region on the map from Activity 3.

Region	Tribes	Information about the tribes
Southwest	Zuni Hopi Navajo	
Plains	Cheyenne Pawnee Sioux Comanche	
Woodlands – Northeast	Delaware Iroquois Penobscot	
Woodlands – Southeast	Seminole	
Northwest Coast	Chinook Makah Haida	

Types of Homes

Directions: Illustrate the types of homes of the different groups of Native Americans and list the materials used to build each one.

Northwest Coast

materials:

Plains

materials:

Southwest

materials:

Woodland

materials:

Local Indian Tribes

Directions: Locate information online or in books about local tribes in your region of the country. Illustrate and label your answers below.

Names of local tribes:

Types of homes:

Resources used for survival:

Foods:

Traditions or celebrations:

Other interesting information: