

Lesson 4: The Plains Native 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 were white men dependent on Native Americans and vice versa?



Facts and Definitions

- Sitting Bull was a famous Sioux Chief.
- Quanah Parker was a famous Comanche Chief who fought for the Native American way of life.

⦿ Skills

- Compare how people in different communities adapt to or modify the physical environment to meet their needs. (SS)
- Analyze changes that have occurred in communities past and present. (SS)
- Describe how individuals, events, and ideas change over time. (SS)
- Identify Native American groups in the Western Hemisphere before European exploration and describe the regions in which they lived. (SS)

✂ Materials

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • <i>The Very First Americans</i> by Cara Ashrose | • manila folder |
| • 8 small sticks for poles for the tipi | • map of the U.S. |
| • 8 small sticks for poles for the tipi, 12-14" long | • paint |
| • Age 8-10 Timeline | • paintbrush |
| • cardboard | • scissors |
| • fabric hole or screw punch | • string or yarn |
| • journal | • white or off-white fabric |

Introduction

Tell your child that today she will learn about a different group of Native Americans called the Plains Indians. Read about the Plains Indians in the book *The Very First Americans*. On a map of the U.S., locate the states where the Plains tribes lived. Help your child locate additional information online about the Plains tribes, including the Sioux and Comanche. If you are using the Beyond the Page social studies program, you will have an Age 8-10 Timeline. Let your child record the deaths of Sitting Bull (1890) and Quanah Parker (1911) on her timeline.

Activities

Activity 1: The Buffalo

Tell your child that when the Plains people killed a buffalo, they used every part of it and wasted nothing. They used the hide for tipi coverings, bedding, clothes, moccasins, and robes. The buffalo hair was used for rope and halters. The hoofs were used for rattles. The horns were used to make dishes, spoons, and ladles. From various parts, they made whips, saddle pads, glue, toys, drums, belts, stirrups, shields, knife cases, boats, thread, and, of course, food.

On the page "The Buffalo," your child can list all the ways the Plains tribes were dependent on the buffalo. When she has finished filling in the uses of the buffalo, she can cut the squares apart and sort them into the following groups: food, clothing, shelter, entertainment, tools, and other.

Activity 2: The Life of a Nomad

Review the different uses the Plains tribes had for the buffalo. Tell your child that most Plains tribes were nomadic. Explain that a nomad is someone who moves from place to place, rather than living in the same place year-round. Ask your child to think of some reasons why these Native Americans were nomads.

Tell your child that because they were so dependent on the buffalo, the Plains tribes had to follow the buffalo herds wherever they went. Nomads need portable shelter, so the Plains people had tipis that were lightweight and easy to move. Pottery is heavy and easily broken, so they did not use much pottery. They used leather and baskets for containers. They used packs on dogs and travois to carry their things. A travois is a wooden frame made of two poles that would be put across the body of a dog or horse. Supplies would be set on the frame and pulled by the animal.

Ask your child to make a list of possible positives and negatives of a nomadic lifestyle in her journal. She can fold a piece of paper in half and use one column to write the advantages and one column to record the disadvantages of this lifestyle. Ask your child if she thinks she would enjoy being a nomad. Why or why not?

Activity 3: A Model Tipi

This activity will help your child to create a model of a tipi, following the directions on the page "A Model Tipi." Let your child paint markings on the tipi that were symbols of the Plains people.

Day 2

Activity 4: Sitting Bull and Quanah Parker

Ask your child if she would describe the Native Americans as peaceful and passive or evil and wild. Discuss that, while some Native Americans did terrible things to European settlers, many settlers did terrible things to the native people. Ask your child why the Native Americans and the settlers had so many wars. Explain that they fought over rights to the land. The settlers wanted to live on the land they had discovered, but the native people were not going to give up their land and way of life.

However, there were many settlers and colonists who lived peacefully with the Native Americans. When the first settlers came to North America, they were dependent on the native people to show them how to survive in their new environment.

Read aloud the accounts of people's interaction with the Sioux Chief Sitting Bull. They are included in the segment that follows called "In Memory." After you read the section, ask your child the questions that follow.

In Memory

by Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner

Mrs. Fanny Kelly was taken captive in July 1864 by a war party of Hunkpapa Sioux in Wyoming. During most of the five months she was held prisoner, Mrs. Kelly stayed in the lodgings of Sitting Bull, the famous leader "as a guest," of his family, "and I was treated as a guest," she wrote.

"He was uniformly gentle, and kind to his wife and children and courteous and considerate in his [interactions] with others. During my stay with them food was scarce more than once, and both Sitting Bull and his wife often suffered with hunger to supply me with food. They both have a very warm place in my heart." This surprising warm friendship with a woman who had every reason to hate and fear him, characterized Sitting Bull's interactions with whites. A teacher and missionary among Sitting Bull's people, Catherine Weldon, once described him,

"As a friend...sincere and true, as a patriot devoted and incorruptible. As a husband and father, affectionate and considerate. As a host, courteous and hospitable to the last degree."

The Ashcroft family, white settlers who lived nearby, valued Sitting Bull as "one of their oldest friends." They often told the story of how, on one of his frequent trips to buy produce and chickens from Grandmother, he stopped for potatoes.

"Grandfather was busy and did not want to take the time to dig them, so his daughter Ethel, ten years old, slipped away and dug a half-sack of potatoes and dragged them up to the house for Sitting Bull. He was so pleased that he promised her a pony, and soon a little bay horse was delivered to her. He was named 'Two-John' and she had him until she was married to Jack Jacobs in 1896."

- How would you describe Sitting Bull's relationships with other people?
- How do these accounts differ from your impressions of Native Americans based on movies you have seen?
- Why do you think the Native Americans have a reputation for being evil murderers?

Now tell your child about Quanah Parker, who was one of the most famous Native Americans who ever lived. He was the last Chief of the Comanche, and he never lost a battle with a European settler. Something very interesting about Quanah is that his mother was European. She was kidnapped as a girl and lived among the Comanche Indians for 24 years. She became one of them and chose not to return to her family.

Quanah refused to accept an agreement, or treaty, created to confine the Plains Indians to a reservation. Explain that a reservation is a designated area that the U.S. Government set up where Native Americans could live, and they were not allowed to leave the area. He continued to lead his army to fight against the European settlers.

Eventually Quanah did surrender, but he never stopped fighting for the Native-American way of life and never stopped leading his people. He became a reservation judge and lobbied the government to plead the cause of the Comanche nation.

Activity 5: The Horse

Explain to your child that when explorers and settlers came to North America, they introduced Native Americans to many new ideas. One of the most important things they brought to North America was the horse. The horse changed the lives of many Native American tribes. Ask your child to list examples of this change on the sheet "The Horse." Two examples of life before the horse are provided, and your child can write three more. Then, she can write how life would have been different after the horse.

Answer Key:

Before the Horse (answers will vary but may include:)

- **Travel: On Foot:** Native Americans primarily traveled on foot, which limited the distances they could cover in a day.
- **Hunting: Spears and Bows:** Hunting was done using spears, bows, and arrows. It required getting close to the animals.
- **Transportation of Goods: Carrying Loads:** People carried goods on their backs or used dogs to pull small sleds called travois. They could only carry limited amounts over shorter distances.
- **Lifestyle: Sedentary or Semi-Nomadic:** Many tribes lived in permanent or semi-permanent villages and moved only when necessary.

After the Horse (answers will vary but may include:)

- **Travel: Horseback Riding:** Horses allowed for faster and more efficient travel over long distances. **Expanded Territory:** Tribes could explore and utilize much larger areas.
- **Hunting: Horseback Hunts:** Hunting, especially for buffalo, became much easier and more efficient on horseback.
- **Transportation of Goods: Larger Loads:** Horses could carry much heavier loads than people or dogs. **Longer Distances:** Goods could be transported over longer distances, facilitating trade.
- **Lifestyle: Nomadic Lifestyle:** Many tribes, especially in the Great Plains, adopted a more nomadic lifestyle following the buffalo herds. **Increased Mobility:** They could move their villages more frequently and follow resources more easily.

Activity 6: Songs and Prayers

On the page "Songs and Prayers," your child will find examples of Plains Indians songs and prayers. Let her read through each one and discuss the meanings. Then, encourage her to write her own song in her journal, pretending she is a member of the Sioux or Comanche tribe living in the Great Plains. Discuss the

important role of nature in the songs and prayers of the Native Americans. Before she begins, tell her to select a theme for the song or prayer.

Wrapping Up

Ask your child what she learned about the Plains Indians. Ask her to describe ways they were dependent on animals in their environment and to give some examples of how their lives changed when white men came to North America.

Life Application

Discuss ways people have depended on horses and other animals to live in their environments.

The Buffalo

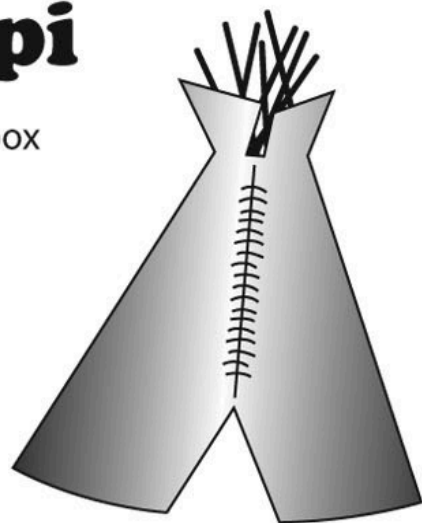
Directions: List the ways that the Plains Indians were dependent on the buffalo. Then cut the squares apart and sort them into groups according to type of use.



A Model Tipi

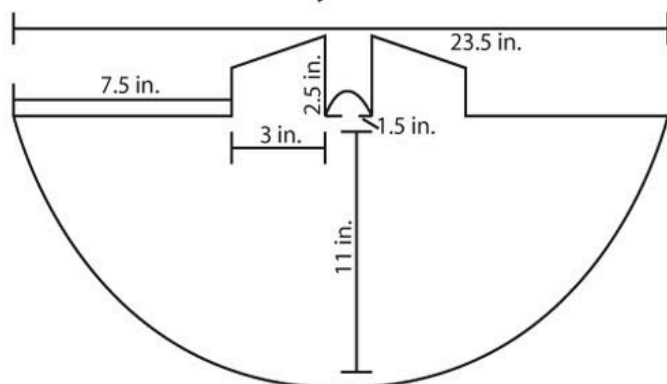
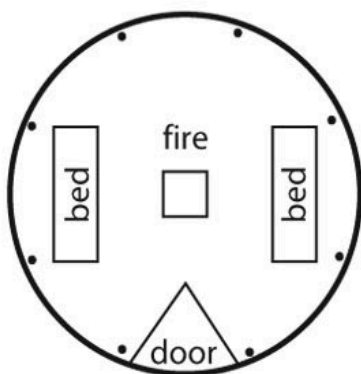
Materials:

a 12-inch diameter circle cut from a cardboard box
8 small sticks, 12-14" long
a hole punch
white fabric
string
a manila folder
a pencil



Instructions:

1. With a pencil, punch eight holes around the cardboard circle about 1/2 inch from the edge of the circle. Make sure the holes are evenly spaced. If you want to decorate the inside of your tipi with the floorplan shown below, do so now.
2. Place each stick into one of the holes in the cardboard circle. Cross them together near the top and tie with a piece of string.
3. Cut out a pattern for the tipi cover on the manila folder or another type of stiff paper. Trace the pattern onto the white (or off-white) fabric and cut it out.
4. Wrap the cover around the poles and close the edges at the front. Punch holes along the edge and use string to sew the edges together but make sure you leave room at the bottom for a doorway and at the top for the smoke flaps.
5. You can decorate your tipi with Native American symbols.



The Horse

Directions: List the ways of life that may have been changed because of the horse. Then write how life would have been different after the horse.

before the horse

1. Native Americans hunted the buffalo on foot.

2. Dogs pulled the travois.

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

after the horse

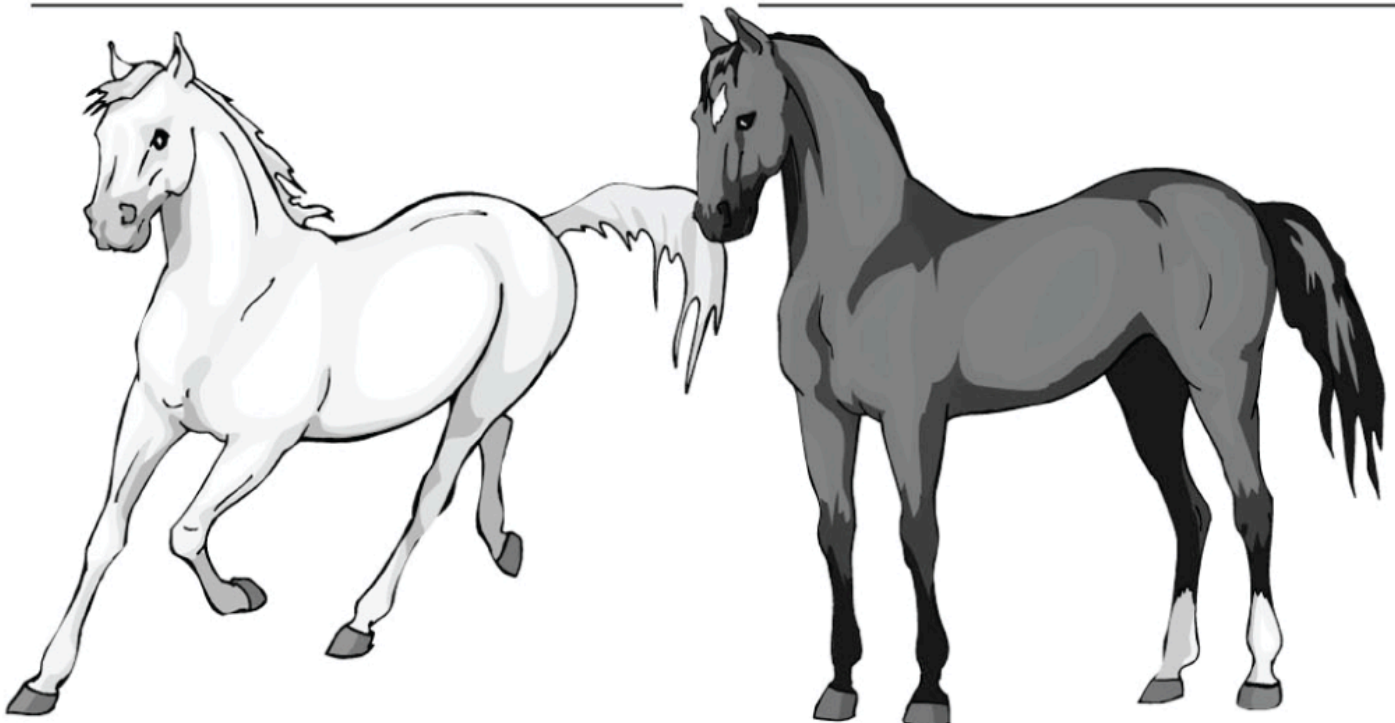
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



Songs and Prayers

Directions: Read through each of the songs and prayers below and discuss their meanings. Then write your own song pretending you are a member of a Great Plains Indian tribe. Think about the importance of the role of nature in the songs and prayers.



A Sioux Prayer

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds
Whose breath gives life to the world, hear me
I come to you as one of your many children
I am small and weak
I need your strength and wisdom
May I walk in beauty
Make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made
And my ears sharp to your voice.
Make me wise so that I may know the things you have taught your children.
The lessons you have written in every leaf and rock
Make me strong!
Not to be superior to my brothers, but to fight my greatest enemy... myself
Make me ever ready to come to you with straight eyes,
So that when life fades as the fading sunset,
May my spirit come to you without shame.

Cherokee Prayer Blessing

May the Warm Winds of Heaven
Blow softly upon your house.
May the Great Spirit
Bless all who enter there.
May your Moccasins
Make happy tracks
in many snows,
and may the Rainbow
Always touch your shoulder.



A Sioux War Song

"Long Hair has never returned,
So his woman is crying, crying.
Looking over here, she cries."
"Long Hair, horses I had none.
You brought me many. I thank you!
You make me laugh!"
"Long Hair, guns I had none.
You brought me many. I thank you!
You make me laugh!"
Long Hair, where he lies nobody
knows.
Crying, they seek him
He lies over here.