

Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand that Native Americans were the first people to inhabit North America. Many believe that long ago people from Asia crossed the frozen Bering Straight into North America, while following animals that they were hunting. As time progressed, people broke off from the main group and settled in different areas. Soon, there were groups of people present in many parts of North America.
- 2) Realize that the Native Americans were called Indians because Columbus thought they were the inhabitants of the Indies instead of North America.
- 3) Know that North America was home to many groups of natives, including the Alaskan Natives, the Eastern Woodlands Indians, the Plains Indians, the Southwest Indians, and the Coastal Indians, and understand the characteristics of each group.
 - a) The Alaskan natives, including the Eskimos, lived in a very cold climate, which required them to have warm clothes and shelters in order to survive. Eskimos wore warm and watertight animal skins and they lived in igloos and sunken roundhouses. Eskimos obtained their food from the sea and hunted bear and caribou. They traveled in canoes in the summer and used sleds and snowshoes to get around in the winter.
 - b) The Eastern Woodland Indians included about thirty tribes located near the Atlantic coast of the United States and Canada and those living in the Great Lakes region. The eastern woodlands were rich in food and natural resources. The natives ate fish, nuts, and wild berries; they grew crops, and hunted for bears and beavers. Trees and other plants provided plenty of material to build shelters, tools, canoes, and snowshoes. The Eastern Woodland Indians made animals skin clothes and moccasins. Many natives made beads, called wampum, to decorate their clothing. These beads were used as money and were sewn onto belts to create symbols representing the natives' history. Women normally gathered and prepared the food, sewed clothing, and made baskets. Men normally made weapons, hunted for food, and farmed.
 - c) The Plains Indians lived on the flat land between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River. They relied mainly on buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter, in the form of teepees. Other tribes built dome-shaped lodges made of soil. The Plains Indians were skilled warriors,

who honored their leaders and brave warriors with feathers to wear.

- d) The Southwest Indians, who included the Navajo, Hopi, and Apache tribes, lived in the mostly desert region made up of present-day Arizona, Northern Mexico, Southern Colorado, and New Mexico. These tribes irrigated the land using arroyos to grow crops. The natives used cotton for clothing, leather to make boots and sandals, and clay, straw and stone to build adobe shelters. These buildings were strong, and very large. Unlike other tribes in the region, the Navajo and Apache tribes had herds of sheep, forcing them to move as the herds moved. Thus, these tribes built roundhouses and teepee-like structures. The Southwestern Indians were also known for their dances and excellent craftsmanship.
 - e) The Coastal Indians lived on and near the West Coast from California to Alaska. These Indians had the best of everything: fish, nuts, berries, fruits, land animals, trees, and plenty of water. Coastal Indians traveled in canoes and kayaks through the ocean, streams, and rivers. The people built many types of shelters, including cedar roundhouses, bark houses, and plank houses. Coastal Indian tribes made their clothes out of animal skins, reeds, or shredded bark. The natives were very good at creating art, such as totem poles. There was also plenty of trade on the North American coast.
- 4) Realize that customs varied from tribe to tribe. Not every tribe in Northeastern Woodlands, for example, did or ate the same things.
 - 5) Understand that Native Americans shared a common belief that everything, like clouds, animals, plants, and the sun, contains living spirits. Therefore, they only took what they needed from the resources present on the earth.

Suggested Activities

- 1) **Before viewing the video:**
 - a) Ask the students to tell what the word "Indian" brings to mind. Ask the students if they know why the natives are called Indians. The video will explain the answer. Watch the video and pay attention to the regions where the Native North Americans lived.

2) After viewing the video:

- a) Show the areas where the early Native Americans lived in North America. Use a map or a globe.
- b) For younger students: give the students 12" by 18" sheets of white paper, pre-folded into thirds. Have them label the columns: homes, clothing, and food. Review these categories according to the information in the video. Then have the students draw a native home, a Native North American Indian, and the food they ate. Use the appropriate columns.
- c) Label five sheets of writing paper with the following headings: homes, clothing, food, food containers, obtaining food. The students are to write and illustrate a brief paragraph for each topic, describing some aspect of that category. For example, under houses one might describe a long house, a roundhouse, an adobe house, or a teepee and draw a picture of one. After these booklets are completed, watch the video again and label each drawing/paragraph with the appropriate North American region where it is found.

Vocabulary

Arroyo — A stream or gully that contains water in a normally dry environment

Caribou — An animal similar to a reindeer

Irrigate — To supply water through artificial means

Moccasins — A soft leather shoe with no sole or heel

Native — Implies birth in a particular area with no known predecessor that inhabited the area.

Natural Resource — Anything present in nature that is of value to human life

