

The First Americans

How did the first Americans adapt to their environment?

PREVIEW

Carefully examine the photograph of a Canadian forest. Imagine that you suddenly find yourself in this environment. Brush and a thick forest of fir and pine trees surround the mountain valley. It is late fall and getting cold. The pond has not yet frozen. You must survive here for a year.



Describe the shelter you would build, the clothing you would make to protect yourself from the elements, and the tools you would create to acquire food.

READING NOTES

Social Studies Vocabulary

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

migrate culture
environment cultural region
natural resource

Section 1

1. Define the term *Beringia* in your own words. Then draw a simple illustration to represent the term.

2. Using the map in Section 1, answer these questions:
 - Where did the first Americans come from?

 - Where did they migrate?

Section 2

1. Read this quotation.

From Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, there came a great unifying life force that flowed in and through all things—the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals.

What does the quotation reveal about how American Indians viewed the environment?

2. Give two examples of how American Indians used natural resources to adapt to their environment.

3. Use the maps in Section 2 to answer these questions:
- Which American Indian cultural region do you live in?

 - What type of clothing would most American Indians living on the Plains wear?

 - What type of housing would most American Indians living in the Southeast build?

 - What type of food would most American Indians living in the Great Basin eat?

Section 3

Complete this chart. Give at least one example of each characteristic listed. In the last row, draw a symbol to represent the cultural region.

	Arctic Cultural Region
Main geographic features	
Main food sources	
Types of homes	
Types of, and materials for, crafts and clothing	
Tools	
Symbol	

Sections 4 to 11

If your class is doing the activity for this lesson, fill in the entire matrix. Use information from the corresponding placard and reading section to complete the column for each cultural region. Give at least one example of each characteristic listed. In the last row, draw a symbol to represent the cultural region. Some answers are given for you.

(Note: If your class is not doing the activity, leave the "Placard" row blank.)

	Section 4: Northwest Coast	Section 5: California	Section 6: Great Basin
Placard			
Main geographic features	thick forests of fir, spruce, and cedar; rugged mountains		
Main food sources		salmon, shellfish, deer, roots, berries, pine nuts, acorns	
Types of homes			temporary shelters of willow poles shaped into a cone and covered with brush or reeds
Types of, and materials for, crafts and clothing			
Tools			
Symbol			

Section 7: Plateau	Section 8: Southwest	Section 9: Great Plains	Section 10: Eastern Woodlands	Section 11: Southeast
clothing from animal hides decorated with seeds and shells; woven baskets and hats				
	corn grinders			

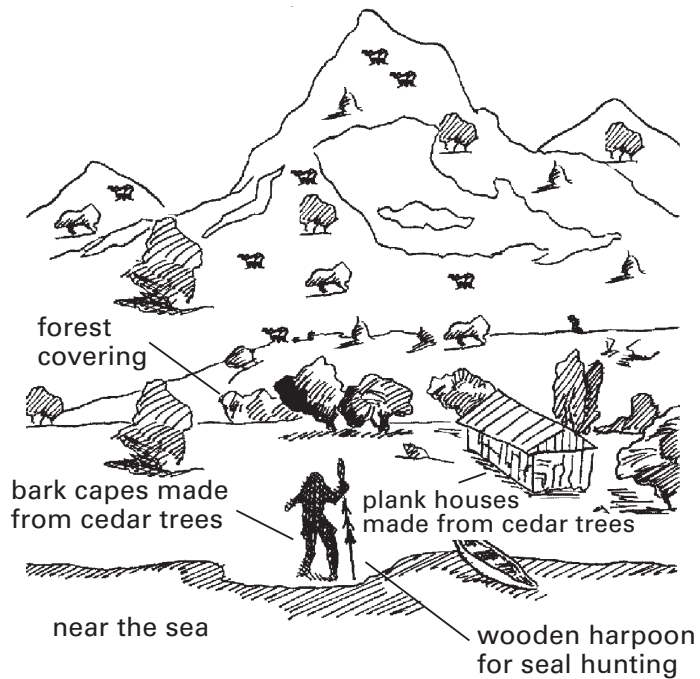
PROCESSING

Look at this example of an annotated diagram of the Northwest Coast region.

Create an annotated diagram showing how the American Indians in one cultural region adapted to their environment.

Your diagram should include:

- at least two examples of the land and climate.
- at least three adaptations made by American Indians to their environment.
- at least five labels describing the land, climate, and adaptations.

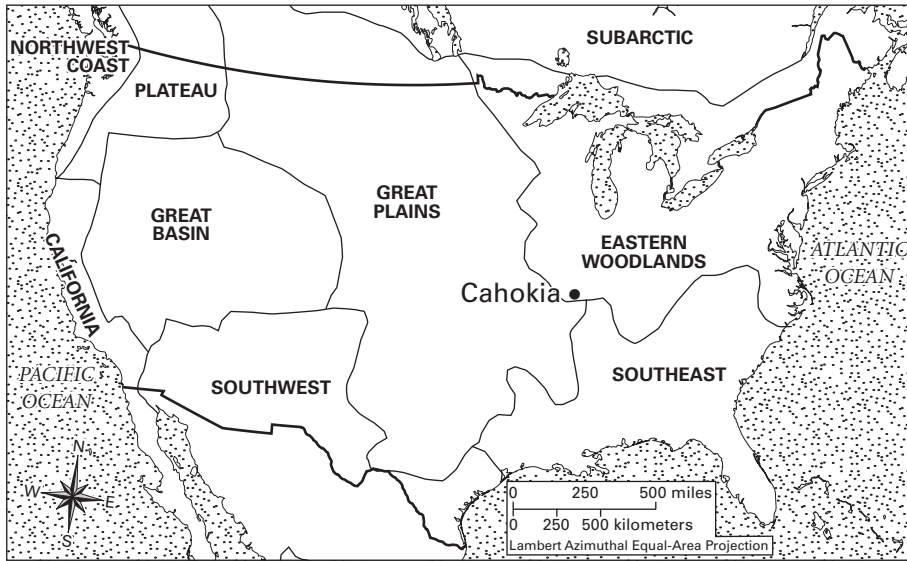


READING FURTHER

Preparing to Write: Asking Good Questions

The location of Cahokia is shown on the map below.

American Indian Cultural Regions



List five questions people have asked about Cahokia. Also tell what tools or techniques they have used to try to answer each of those questions. An example is given for you.

Example: Thomas Jefferson asked, *Who built the mounds?* He dug up skeletons and artifacts to find an answer to his question.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Writing Research Questions

Suppose you are an archaeologist like Tim Pauketat. Choose one of the eight cultural regions. What else would you like to know about life in that region before Europeans arrived? Think of a compelling question you would like to research.

My compelling question:

Write a series of supporting questions that will help you answer your compelling question. Tell what tool or tools from the archaeologist's toolkit could help you answer each of those questions. An example is given for you.

Example: Did men or women build the houses?

Tools: oral histories, witnesses

Archaeologists' Tools

oral histories
radiocarbon dating
artifacts
witnesses

Use this rubric to evaluate your questions. Make changes to your questions if you need to.

Score	Description
3	The compelling question is very relevant to the topic. The supporting questions and tools will help answer the compelling question. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	The compelling question is somewhat relevant to the topic. The supporting questions and tools may help answer the compelling question. There are some spelling or grammar errors.
1	The compelling question is not relevant to the topic. The supporting questions and tools will not help answer the compelling question. There are many spelling or grammar errors.