

The Bison Hunters: Native Americans of the Plains

Teacher Guide

Grade Levels: 4 — 5

Program overview

Students will use artifacts from Native American cultures that lived on the Great Plains to discover how these peoples used the natural resources of the plains. Student teams will analyze and measure tools, clothing, and other artifacts to gain a better of Plains Indian life.

Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

After participating in this program students will:

- Be able to explain how Plains Indian culture was influenced by, and an adapted to, the plains environment.
- Be able to categorize natural resources as animal, vegetable or mineral.
- Place the Plains Indian tribes in both time and space.
- Appreciate cultural diversity in general, and the resourcefulness of the Plains Indian culture in particular.

P.A.S.S.

GRADE 4

Social Studies 4.1, 4.2, 5.2,
5.3, 5.5

GRADE 5

Social Studies 6.3, 7.2, 7.5

Background

Native Americans have a long and complex history on the Great Plains. During the early time periods (25,000 years ago to about 1 A.D.) the Native Americans on the plains made their living by hunting bison, antelope, deer and smaller game on foot. Following the adoption of agriculture, the people grew corn, beans and squash in addition to their hunting activities. This subsistence pattern required that the people live part of the year in settled villages, and part of the year as nomadic hunters. Depending on the area of the plains in which they lived, various tribes did more or less hunting or farming, in response to local climate and growing seasons.

After the Spanish explorers and settlers brought horses to the Great Plains, hunting bison became easier and many tribes shifted their lifestyle to that of full-time mounted, nomadic hunters. The skills that men used as mounted hunters also made the Plains Indians effective warriors. This was just one aspect of Plains Indian life that was important in the conflict between the Native Americans and the European and American settlers.

Supplementary/Enrichment Activities

Geography

1. **Naming the Plains** (*note: students will need a map of the Central United States for this activity*):

While the Plains tribes moved around a lot in search of food and good pastures, they usually stayed within a traditional area. As settlers moved onto the plains, this vast area was divided up and became several states.

- Look at the list below of tribal names and see if you can find names that were adopted as names for states in the USA.
- Write the name of the tribe inside the state that uses their name. Some of these names will be identical to the state name and some will be a little different.
- Tribes:
 - Arapaho
 - Kansa
 - Arikaira
 - Kiowa
 - Apache (Plains Apache)
 - Mandan
 - Cheyenne
 - Missouri
 - Crow
 - Pawnee
 - Comanche
 - Tejas
 - Dakota (also called Lakota)
 - Ute
 - Iowa

VOCABULARY

Bison/buffalo—The largest herbivore of the plains, and the Indian's "supermarket"

Great Plains - The area bounded by the Rocky Mountains, on the west and the Mississippi River on the East. Grasses are the primary native plant cover.

Lodge - The proper name for a tipi. Made from bison hide.

Native American - Indians, any of the people indigenous to the North and South American continents.

Natural Resources - the plants, animals, and minerals that occur in nature and are useful to people.

Pemmican - A combination of dried meat and berries that was pounded together. Pemmican made a good food for traveling.

Parfleche - A type of hide container used to carry food and clothing.

Rawhide - hide that has not been tanned.

Sinew - Tendon. Sinew provided a strong, thin material suitable for sewing.

Tanned hide - Hide that has been tanned and is therefore soft and appropriate for clothing.

2. **Oklahoma Geography** (note: students will need a map showing Oklahoma counties): Many of the tribes now in Oklahoma are non-plains people who were moved to Oklahoma during the last 175 years.

- Look over the list of tribal names below. People from all of these tribes (and more) live in Oklahoma now. Plains tribes that you heard about in the program have an * next to their names.
- Oklahoma Tribes
Plains Apache*
Caddo
Comanche*
Cheyenne*
Delaware
Otto
Cherokee Muskogee
Creek (European name for Muskogee)
Choctaw
Iowa
Modoc
Kiowa
Osage
Ottawa
Sac -Fox
Pawnee
Pottawatomie
Seminole
- Using a map that shows Oklahoma's counties, color in the Oklahoma counties that are named after tribes.

Tribe - an organized group of people that share a language, cultural practices, and self-identification. Tribes varied greatly in their life-ways and it is important to specify which tribe is being discussed, rather than just talking about "Indians." Tribes are now a legally defined entity with federal recognition.

Math

1. A large bison weighs about 2,000 pounds. How many how many quarter-pound hamburgers can you make from one bison?
2. About 20 bison hides are needed to build a large Plains Indian lodge (tipi.) If your group needs 50 lodges, how many bison hides will you need?
3. You are going to the trading fair. One bison hide is worth three metal axes, a rifle, and a pound of gunpowder. You have five bison hides to trade. How many axes can you get? How many rifles? How many pounds of gunpowder?

Additional Resources

For Teachers

When Buffalo Ran, by George Bird Grinnel. University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.

People of the Buffalo: How the Plains Indians Lived (How They Lived series), by Maria Campbell.

The Cheyenne: Indians of the Great Plains. By Hobel, E Adamson. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960

For Students

The Return of the Buffaloes: A Plains Indian Story about Famine and Renewal of the Earth, by Paul Goble.

Buffalo Woman, by Paul Goble. Aladdin Paperbacks, 1987

Sioux. Cobblestone Magazine, <http://www.cobblestonepub.com>