

Native Americans of the Plains



Life on the Plains

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- The Great Plains region is east of the Rocky Mountains.
 - It is made of dry prairies and hills.
 - Mostly grass and few trees.
 - Receive little rain
 - Summers can be extremely hot and winter can be extremely cold
 - Herds of buffalo roamed the Great Plains.

People of the Plains

- Although the plains people did some farming, they were mainly hunters.
- The buffalo provided them with their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.
- They built lodges, which are homes made of logs covered with grasses, sticks and soil.

The Arrival of Horses

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- Horses that had escaped from their Spanish owners roamed freely across the plains.
 - Plains people became expert riders, breeders and trainers.
 - Some groups left their villages and stopped farming. Instead they hunted buffalo and traded other items they needed.

The Lakota

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- The Lakota trained boys and girls from early ages their traditions.
 - Young boys were given bows and arrows as toys.
 - Mothers taught daughters how to set up a teepee, cure buffalo meat and search for herbs.

The Winter Count

- The Lakota kept track of important events by making special calendars called winter counts.
- Each winter the Lakota met to choose an important event of the past year, and that event was recorded.

The Importance of Buffalo

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- Buffalo meat would be made into sausages. Meat that was not eaten right away was made into jerky, which is dried meat.
 - Buffalo skin would be used for clothing and shelter.
 - The horns were used to make cups and spoons. The bones were used to make weapons and tools. The tails were used for brushes.

Comprehension Questions

1. How did acquiring horses change the life of the Native Americans of the Plains?
2. How did the Lakota pass on their heritage?
3. How were the many parts of the buffalo used?
4. What kinds of homes did Plains people live in?
5. Explain how the Plains peoples used natural resources to survive?

