

4-1.2 How did location impact the everyday life and culture of the Native American groups?

Everyday life of Native Americans depended on the region in which they lived and how they interacted with their physical environment.

Eastern Woodlands Native Americans

The **Eastern Woodlands** Native Americans lived in the eastern part of North America from the **Atlantic Ocean** to the **Mississippi River**, including the Great Lakes area and the southeastern United States to the Gulf of Mexico.



Homes/Lifestyle

Their **longhouses** were made from saplings and branches for frames with bark from the trees covering the frame for protection. Sometimes up to 20 families would live in one longhouse.

Wigwams are similar to longhouses, just smaller and more compact for one family.

Clothing was made from animal skins.



Infer: Why would branches and saplings to make their homes make the most sense?

How They Get Their Food

Most Eastern Woodlands Native Americans were **farmers**. They grew plants such as corn, beans, and squash. They were also skilled **hunters**. They hunted animals such as deer, rabbits and bears. They also fished in the fresh water rivers that were found in this area.

Cultural/Religious Practices

Songs and dances were part of the culture's practices - everything from death ceremonies to war ceremonies before battle.



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Plains Native Americans

The **Plains** Native Americans lived on the Great Plains in central North America. They lived as far north as the present-day Canadian border and south to present day Texas.

Homes/Lifestyle

The Plains women would stay back at the camp while the men hunted. The women would watch the children, weave blankets, and cook. This group was known for traveling with the **buffalo** herds. Because of this, they needed a home that was easily **portable** and quick to set up and take down. They lived in **tepees** because they were perfect for traveling with the Buffalo.



How did the lifestyle of the Plains Indians influence their homes compared to that of the Woodlands homes?

How They Get Their Food

In order to survive, the Plains Indians hunted **buffalo** as their main source of food. While the men were out hunting the buffalo, women did a little **farming** close to the camp.

Cultural/Religious Practices

The worship of the Great Spirit was key to their beliefs. A dance performed called the **Sun Dance** was a way to show respect and love for their God. This dance would often take place over the span of four days, and much of it was spent staring up at the sun.



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Southwest Native Americans

The **Southwest** Native Americans lived in the present-day southwest United States. The area that is today Arizona, New Mexico, and part of Colorado and Utah.

Homes/Lifestyle

Southwest tribes lived in apartment-like buildings made of adobe. **Adobe** is a mixture of clay and straw that is formed into bricks and dried in the sun. These shelters were usually built on cliffs that had large, shallow caves. Wooden or bone ladders were used to reach higher buildings and rooms.

The climate was so **warm** that Southwest Indians didn't wear a lot. Their long hair was enough cover for most of them. **Moccasins** were usually worn on the feet. Some tribes also grew cotton to use for clothing when the weather got cold.



Think! If it was hot enough to wear little clothing, why were moccasins so important? (Hint: think about the land in this region).

How They Get Their Food

The Southwest Native Americans were able to be **farmers** even though they lived in the **desert** because they built **irrigation systems**. One of the most important foods they grew was maize, or **corn**. They grew 24 different types of corn. They also grew beans, squash, melons, pumpkins and fruit. For meat, they often hunted and ate wild turkeys.



Cultural/Religious Practices

Southwest Indians believed in **Kachinas**. Kachinas were spirits from ancestors who returned with the clouds and rain. They believed the spirits once lived among them but were offended and left. Kachina dolls were made from wood and had masks and costumes to look like the men who dressed up as Kachina spirits.



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Great Basin Native Americans

The **Great Basin** Native Americans lived in the region east of the Northwest coast in today's Nevada, Idaho, and Utah.

Homes/Lifestyle

The Great Basin was a region of **extreme temperatures**. In the cold winters they wore rabbit-skin robes and blankets. In the hot summer months they wore little or no clothing. **Basket weaving** was very popular among the Great Basin tribes. It was needed as a tool for the seasonal harvest. It was also a means of artistic expression. Tribe members often wove baskets with very complex designs and elaborate weaves. This Great Basin Native Americans were **nomadic**, they were constantly moving from place to place.



What does nomadic mean?

What other group of Native Americans were nomadic?

How They Get Their Food

The Great Basin Native Americans were **hunters**. They hunted small and large animals such as jackrabbits, antelope, and waterfowl. They also gathered pine nuts and berries in the forests. Enough food was harvested every summer and fall to last through the winters. Where the geography and climate allowed it, some also fished and farmed small plots. These were **resilient**, **flexible**, and **adaptable** people.



Cultural/Religious Practices

All of the tribes participated in dances, an important tradition to the Native Americans. The **Sun Dance** was a four-day religious centered festival that was held each year during the summer solstice and revolved around the greatness of the sun, focusing on harmony and rebirth.

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Pacific Northwest Native Americans

The **Pacific Northwest** Native Americans lived on the present-day northwest coast of the United States, Canada and Alaska on the Pacific Ocean. This area includes Northern California and into Southern Alaska.

Homes/Lifestyle

The Pacific Northwest Native Americans are well known for their handcrafted **totem poles**. A totem pole in front of a home shows the generations and social rank of that family. For shelter, the Pacific Northwest Native Americans used what was available in their forests, **red cedar trees**. They built **Big Houses**, which were anywhere from 20 to 60 feet wide to 50 to 150 feet long. To keep the rain out, they overlapped wooden planks. There were no windows in Big Houses, but instead a hole in the roof that let air in and smoke out from cooking fires. Tribes on the coast wore very little clothing,



except when it was cold. Many items of clothing were made from cedar bark and helped shield people from the rain and wind.

How They Get Their Food

Coastal tribes lived off the **ocean**. There were plenty of seals, salmon, sea otters and whales. They had a nearly endless supply of **fish** from the ocean, animals to hunt, and fruit from the forest. During the fall, they pulled big **salmon** in by the thousands, enough to feed families for the entire year.



Why is the food this group ate so different from the others we have studied?

Cultural/Religious Practices

One of the most common customs was the **potlatch**. The ceremony was different from tribe to tribe but almost always involved dancing and gift giving. Dancers often wore animal masks and decorated themselves from head to toe with paint and feathers.

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Native American Group	Location	Homes/Lifestyle	Food	Cultural/Religious Practices
Eastern Woodlands				
Plains				
Southwest				
Great Basin				
Pacific Northwest				

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Causes	Effects
What effects did geography have on daily life?	

Native American Groups & Where They Lived

