

R3 THE PLAINS INDIANS

Life for the Apache, Comanche, and Sioux tribes was very different from that of the Eastern Woodland Indians. Known as the PLAINS Indians, these tribes lived on wide and open land that was covered with short tough grass. It was not easy to farm because the ground was hard and dry. There were few trees to provide these Indians with the wood and bark that other tribes used to make their homes. However, these Native Americans had something very important for their survival---the BISON or BUFFALO.

The tribes used this animal to supply them with food, clothing, and shelter. The Plains Indians ate fresh buffalo meat, and what could not be eaten right away was dried in the sun and stored for later. The hairy buffalo hides were used for wall coverings, robes, and blankets. They even used the hides to make their homes which were called TEPEES. Not a single part of the buffalo was wasted. The bony shoulder blades became strong hoes for digging in the soil. Even buffalo droppings, when dried, burned well enough to be used as fuel for their cooking fires. The pioneers who later crossed the prairie along the Oregon Trail used this same resource for their fires.

Life for the Plains Indians depended on the buffalo. Hunting was their most important activity. Until the Europeans brought horses and guns to the New World in the 1500s, these tribes hunted on foot and used a bow and arrows. At times the tribes would organize a hunt and kill the buffalo by causing a herd to stampede and run off high places.

Write the answers on your paper. **DO NOT WRITE ON THIS CARD.**

1. Draw or copy a picture of a buffalo. Label how some of the parts were used by the Plains Indians.
2. What are some foods we eat today that are preserved by drying them?
3. T F The Plains Indians built wooden shelters for their homes.
4. T F The buffalo was necessary for the survival of these tribes.
5. (optional) Construct a small model of a tepee. The real ones were made by long poles tied together at the top, then covered with buffalo hides.