

Early Native American Life

Reading and Discussion

Thousands of years ago much of the earth was covered in ice. It was called the Ice Age. The people who lived during the ice age were called **nomads**. Nomads did not stay in one place to live; they moved with the animals that they hunted. They used the animals they followed and hunted for food, shelter, and clothing.

Nomads used animal skins for clothing and to make shelters for protection from the harsh weather. They could easily move their homes with the animals. When the animals moved to North America to find food, so did the nomads. During this time, the **climate** got warmer and the ice began to melt. When the ice melted, water covered the land bridge that brought the nomads to North America from Asia. These were the first Native American people. They began to stretch across the **continents** of North and South America.

As the climate changed, so did the way that Native Americans lived. The animals they hunted were different. There weren't as many large animals, so they hunted animals that were smaller. Fishing became a way of life for some tribes. They also began gathering and eating fruits and herbs that they found in the wild. Many tribes stopped their nomadic lifestyle and settled in permanent small homes made with natural materials from their surrounding **environment**. Eventually they began to learn how to farm the land.

The different groups they formed were called **tribes**. Tribes were located in different areas, had their own ways of life, and spoke different languages. They found different types of food in accordance with where they lived. Depending on their location, they hunted animals, lived on fish, and gathered plants from the forests. They developed different **traditions** and beliefs. One thing that most tribes had in common was respect for nature. When they hunted, they used every part of the animal. They gave thanks for everything they received from the earth and had ceremonies hoping to please the different gods they believed in. They were aware of the different cycles of the sun and moon and weather patterns, and they lived their lives in harmony with these cycles.

Name _____

Date _____

Activities

Activity A: Fill in the blanks :

1. When much of the earth was covered in ice, it was called the _____.
2. Nomads used animals for _____, _____ and _____.
3. Animal skins were used for _____ and _____.
4. When the climate changed, there weren't as many _____ animals.
5. Many tribes settled in homes made of natural materials from their surrounding _____.
6. When they hunted, Native Americans used every part of the _____.

Activity B: Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary word with the correct definition.

- **tradition, tribe, environment, continent, climate, nomads**

1. The conditions that surround people and affect they way they live _____
2. A group of people who wander from place to place to hunt _____
3. A custom that is valued by a group of people _____
4. A group of people who have beliefs and customs in common _____
5. Type of weather in an area _____
6. One of the seven large areas of land on earth _____

Name _____

Date _____

Activity C: Answer the following questions:

1. What are some differences between the ways we live today compared with the ways the Native Americans lived?

2. How did the change in climate affect the nomadic way of life?

3. What do you think we can learn from the Native American way of life?

4. Would you have enjoyed living in the early days of Native Americans? Why or why not?

Name _____

Date _____

Answers

Activity A

1. Ice Age
2. food, shelter, clothing
3. clothing, shelter
4. large
5. environment
6. animal

Activity B

1. environment
2. nomads
3. tradition
4. tribe
5. climate
6. continent

Activity C

1. Answers will vary
2. The climate got warmer and melted ice; people stayed in North and South America; they hunted for smaller animals; They settled in permanent homes; they began to farm land.
3. Answers will vary
4. Answers will vary