

Native Americans

By ReadWorks



Native Americans have been living in America long before the Pilgrims came. The term “Native American” is used to describe many different groups of people. There are all different kinds of Native Americans. Different Native American groups have different languages, religious beliefs, and ways of living. If you compare different Native American groups to each other, you will see just how different they can be.

Two different Native American groups are the Hopi and the Navajo. These groups both came from the American Southwest, but had very different ways of living. Let’s first look at the Hopi people. When the Spanish came to America in the 16th century and found the Hopi people, they called them “pueblo people.” *Pueblo* is a Spanish word that means “town.” The Spanish called the Hopi “pueblo people” because they lived together in what amounted to towns. The Hopi have always been a very peaceful people. Their name comes from the term *Hopituh Shi-nu-mu*, which means "The Peaceful People" or "Peaceful Little Ones" in the Hopi language.

Now let’s compare the Hopi to the Navajo. Like the Hopi, the Navajo also lived in the American Southwest. But the Navajo were not a “pueblo people” and did not live in permanent towns like the Hopi. Instead of staying in one place, the Navajo moved around. They were a “semi-nomadic” people. While the Hopi were historically known for farming, the Navajo were known for hunting and gathering. After they met the Spanish, the Navajo became known for sheepherding.

The Hopi and the Navajo both come from the same part of America, yet they are two very distinct groups of people. If these two groups have such different ways of living, then imagine how much Native Americans from different parts of the country might differ!

For thousands of years, the Chinook have lived near the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The Chinook were masterful canoe builders and were good at navigating on the water. They were known, and are still known, for being skilled fishers. The fish that they caught most often was the salmon. The salmon was a very important food source for the Chinook, and it plays a large role in the Chinook sense of identity.

Let's compare the Chinook to a group of Native Americans on the opposite coast: the Penobscot people in Maine. The Penobscot also derived meaning from the animals they hunted, although the animals were different. The Penobscot hunted beavers, otters, moose, bears, and caribou. The Penobscot were also skilled canoe builders, but they used a different method than the Chinook. Penobscot canoes were made using birch bark instead of a hollowed tree trunk.

Today, there may not be as many thriving Native American tribes as there used to be, but there are more than a few. The United States of America recognizes over 550 different Native American tribes. When a tribe is federally recognized, it means that the tribe is allowed to form its own government with its own laws, taxes, and rules. In addition to the federally-recognized tribes, there are around 400 non-federally-recognized Native American tribes. In total, there are almost 1,000 different groups of people who call themselves Native American, and each group is unique.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How long have Native Americans been living in America?

- A a few decades
- B since after the arrival of the Pilgrims
- C about the same time as the Pilgrims
- D long before the Pilgrims came

2. Why does the author compare different Native American tribes throughout the passage?

- A to show they all come from the same region of America
- B to show how different Native American tribes can be
- C to show the different ways Native American tribes found food
- D to show the traveling patterns of different Native American tribes

3. Read the sentence: "The Hopi and the Navajo were, and are, two very distinct groups of people, and they come from the same part of America!"

What does the author suggest with this information?

- A The Hopi and Navajo tribes are extremely unusual tribes.
- B Native American tribes from different parts of the country may be similar to the Hopi and Navajo.
- C Native American tribes from different parts of the country may be even more distinct from the Hopi and Navajo.
- D Other tribes may try to move to the part of America where the Hopi and Navajo live.

4. What can be inferred about how the number of Native American tribes has changed over time?

- A There are more Native American tribes today than in the 16th century.
- B There are fewer Native American tribes today than in the 16th century.
- C There are the same number of Native American tribes today as in the 16th century.
- D It is unclear how the number of Native American tribes has changed.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A Native American tribes can be very different from one another.
- B Native American tribes should be recognized for their similarities.
- C The Spanish had a large role in determining the difference of Native American tribes.
- D The Hopi and Navajo are the two most important Native American tribes.

6. Read the sentences from paragraph three: "But the Navajo were not a 'pueblo people' and did not live in **permanent** towns like the Hopi. Instead of staying in one place, the Navajo moved around."

As used in the sentence, what does the word "**permanent**" most nearly mean?

- A changing
- B cultural
- C long-lasting
- D unstable

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The Chinook and Penobscot tribes both derive meaning from the animals they hunt _____ the animals they hunt are completely different!

- A because
- B even though
- C in contrast
- D nevertheless

8. According to the passage, what similarity do the Penobscot tribe from Maine share with the Chinook tribe that live near the Pacific Ocean?

9. Both the Hopi and Navajo people came from the American Southwest yet they had different lifestyles. Explain how the lifestyle of the Hopi people differed from the lifestyle of the Navajo people.

10. Native American tribes can be similar in some ways even though they are very different in other ways. Use evidence from the text to support this statement.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 870

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8. According to the passage, what similarity do the Penobscot tribe from Maine share with the Chinook tribe that live near the Pacific Ocean?

Suggested answer: Both tribes derive meaning and a sense of identity from the animals they hunt.

9. Both the Hopi and Navajo people came from the American Southwest yet they had different lifestyles. Explain how the lifestyle of the Hopi people differed from the lifestyle of the Navajo people.

Suggested answer: The Hopi people lived together in one place in towns. The Navajo, however, did not stay in one place but moved around as they were a semi-nomadic people. Furthermore, the Hopi were known for farming whereas the Navajo were known for hunting and gathering.

10. Native American tribes can be similar in some ways even though they are very different in other ways. Use evidence from the text to support this statement.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary and should be supported by the text. Students may explain that while the Hopi and Navajo had different lifestyles, they both came from the same region. They may also explain that the Chinook tribe that live near the Pacific Ocean and the Penobscot tribe from Maine both derive meaning and a sense of identity from the animals they hunt even though they hunt very different animals in different geographic locations.