



Many Plains tribes lived in tent-like homes called teepees or tipis.

Some of the tribes of the Great Plains

Arapaho	Kiowa
Apache	Lakota
Blackfoot	Mandan
Cheyenne	Pawnee
Comanche	Wichita



Buffalo were important to the tribes of the Great Plains.

Tribes of the Great Plains



The Great Plains of the United States was home to many different tribes of Native Americans. The plains stretched from the central part of Texas in the south into Canada in the North. Covering over a half million square miles, it featured level grassland with few trees.

The Native Americans who lived on the Great Plains were mostly nomadic hunters, meaning they moved from place to place to follow wildlife. They lived in portable homes, called teepees or tipis, which could be taken apart and carried to a new location.

The Spanish explorers of the 16th century brought horses to North America. The Plains tribes attained horses through trade, capture or other means. By the 18th century, the introduction of horses had radically changed the culture of the tribes. Horses became a symbol of wealth. The tribes in the southern Great Plains often had large numbers of horses. This meant they must constantly move to find new grazing areas for their horses.

The horse also changed hunting styles. The tribes hunted elk, deer, and buffalo. Buffalo were difficult to hunt on foot. With the arrival of horses, the Native Americans could more easily hunt buffalo. As a result, buffalo hunts were more successful, and the people prospered.

The westward movement of the United States changed the tribes forever. Large hunts by white Americans killed so many buffalo that the animal was almost extinct by the end of the 19th century. The Plains tribes had a difficult time finding enough buffalo to feed their people.

The late 1800s was a difficult time for the Native Americans. Their main food source, the buffalo was gone. Their land was now covered with farms and ranches. After many battles with the U.S. Army, many of the Plains tribes were forced to settle on reservations, which was land assigned to them by the U.S. government.

Answer the questions below.

1. What does nomadic hunters mean?

2. Who introduced horses to North America?

3. What were the portable homes called?

4. Why were buffalo almost extinct?

5. What are reservations?



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Actual student answers may vary.

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