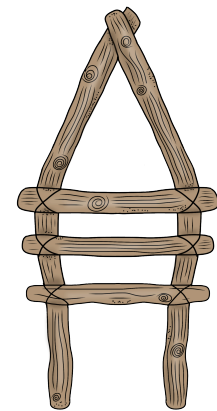


Great Plains



travois

There are many tribes within the Great Plains region. Some of the tribes are Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Sioux, Mandan, Kiowa, Crow, and Pawnee. In the early years, tribes were frequently in conflict with each other.

The early peoples in the Great Plains region had resources to survive, but they also suffered many hardships. The Great Plains has some rivers and streams to fish and use for water, wild fruit to gather, and an abundance of game to hunt. There are also berries and cherries found on bushes and trees. The peoples planted and harvested corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins along the rivers and streams. They hunted small game and **bison**, commonly known as buffalo. However, many early peoples found it difficult to live in the Great Plains region due to the lack of rain, hot summers, and cold, snowy winters. In addition, whenever it would rain, it often caused dangerous floods in the region. Another challenge the early peoples faced was traveling long distances on foot when hunting buffalo. These hardships resulted in many of the region's early peoples migrating to other regions that offered an easier way of life.

The biggest triumph of Great Plains living was **bison hunting**. Bison was the main source of food for the Great Plains tribes. The meat could be dried and stored for long periods of time. Although most bison were hunted strictly for the meat, early peoples also found ways to use every part of the bison. John Fire Lane Deer says that they made blankets, winter coats, and tipis with the buffalo hide. The skin was made into water bags. The stomach became a soup kettle. The horns were spoons. Knives and women's awls and needles were made from the bones. The sinews became bow and string. The ribs were made into sleds. Rattles were made from hoofs. The skull was considered mighty and became part of their sacred altar. After a successful hunt, the peoples would put the animal on

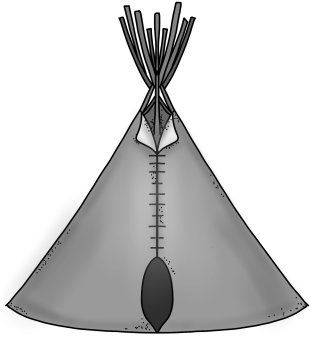
top of a **travois**, a frame made from poles and skins, to pull their prize back to camp. They also attached the travois to dog harnesses so they could carry the bison for them.

When Europeans began to bring horses over for trade, more people moved to the Great Plains region. The horses provided better transportation to hunt buffalo and cover long distances. However, the early peoples did not adopt everything the Europeans brought over. They still used bows and arrows for hunting even after the Europeans introduced guns.

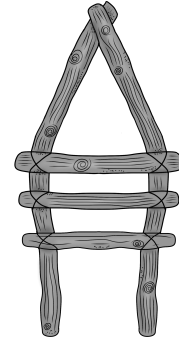
The early Great Plains peoples had two kinds of housing. Natives either became **nomads** (wanderers) to follow the roaming buffalo herds or chose to live near rivers and streams because the moist soil there allowed them to grow crops. The hunters who followed the buffalo used a temporary type of home called the **tipi**, made from buffalo hide stretched over poles. They could carry their home from place to place. The opening of the tipi typically faced east. The outside of some of the tipis would be decorated with painted pictures of sacred animals, geometric shapes, legends, battle scenes, and other symbols. They were built so that rain would not seep in, but smoke would still be able to creep out. In villages, the early peoples lived in **lodges**, which were large round huts built over a deep hole. Lodges were more permanent type of housing.

The Great Plains peoples have many traditional beliefs and customs. The early peoples held **powwows** which are celebrations or prayers to the **Great Spirit**. At powwows, they danced and held religious ceremonies. Today's tribes still hold powwows and dancers often wear traditional feather and beaded clothing. Another important ceremony to the Great Plains tribes was the **Sun Dance**. It was time of renewal for tribes, peoples, and earth. This took place in the summer months and lasted for four days. During the four days, the dancers performed the same moves over and over again without eating or drinking. They would also stare at the sun as long as they could tolerate it. They were allowed to take short breaks without food and drink. Some men were there for self-sacrifice. They were looking to better themselves with hunting, healing, or fighting skills. Holy men would pierce the men's chests with bones. This would be tethered to one of the poles where the men would dance together around the circle.

The early Great Plains peoples were very brave and daring warriors. They were known for "**counting coup**." This was the act of touching or scaring the enemy with a coup stick, then escaping without causing harm to the enemy or getting harmed himself. It was considered more impressive and honorable to touch the enemy and escape unharmed than to kill the enemy. If a warrior was successful, coming out unscathed, the coup was counted. This ultimate act of bravery would help him gain status within the tribe. The result was a fierce competition between the warriors.



Great Plains



Main Idea

Main Idea of Paragraph 2 _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Main Idea of Paragraph 3 _____

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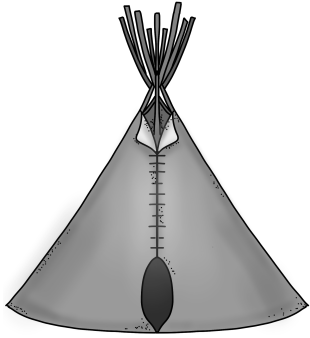
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Main Idea of Paragraph 4 _____

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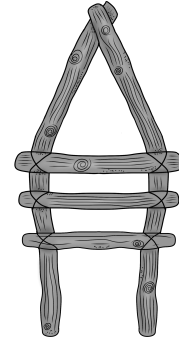
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Great Plains

Main Idea(cont)



Main Idea of Paragraph 5 _____

Detail _____

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Main Idea of Paragraph 6 _____

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Main Idea of Paragraph 7 _____

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