

# Plains Indian Tipi Activity and Tour (Grades Pre-K – 2) Teacher Guide

## Tour Description

Students will explore the tipi as a dwelling for Plains Indians. They will discover that the tipi is a large part of the Plains Indian cultural history. Students will make a miniature tipi using their own designs.

## Objectives

- To teach students how human needs and concerns are addressed within cultures.
- To learn how the tipi was an important part of family history to the Plains Indians.
- To design and assemble their own tipi.

## Standards

### Wyoming

- SS.4.2.1 (K) – Students describe how human needs and concerns (i.e. freedom, justice, and responsibility) are addressed within cultures.
- SS.4.2.2 (K-4) – Students explain how culture is reflected in literature and the arts.

### Montana

- SS.4.3.3 – describe and illustrate ways in which people interact with their physical environment (e.g., land use, location of communities, methods of constructions, design of shelters).
- SS.4.3.4 – describe how human movement and settlement patterns reflect the wants and needs of diverse cultures.
- SS.4.4.7 – explain the history, culture, and current status of American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States.

## Pre-Visit Activities

### **Brainstorm Museum Etiquette**

Discuss your upcoming trip to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Engage students in a brainstorming session. Ask them to name rules they should follow when visiting the museum.

### **Introduce Vocabulary**

Discuss the vocabulary terms below.

**Buffalo hide** – the pelt or skin of the buffalo; used for many different purposes by the Plains Indians

**Culture** – a shared pattern of learned behavior; a shared way of thinking, believing and acting that is passed from generation to generation. Examples include language, stories, folktales, music, roles of men, women, elders, and children, spiritual beliefs, and economic development

**Reservation** – area of public land set aside by the United States government for the use of American Indians

**Tradition** – custom or belief passed down from generation to generation

**Tipi** – the home of Plains Indian people, typically made from buffalo hide or canvas and long sticks

**Earth Lodge** – a Plains Indian home often built by agricultural tribes such as the Mandan and Hidatsa.

**Canvas** – a durable waterproof material introduced to the Plains Indians through trade with Euro-Americans

**Parfleche** – a folded rawhide carrying case for food, clothing, and other items

### **Plains Indian Homes: Yesterday and Today**

Engage students in a discussion comparing the homes they live in today to the tipis Plains Indians used to live in. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.

## Post-Visit Activities

### **Build a Home**

*Materials: drawing or construction paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils*

Have students draw or construct a model of their own home and yard. Provide time for students to show their classmates the differences between their model home and the tipi they made while at the museum.

### **Using What Is Around You**

*Materials: pictures of woodland, beach, and plains habitats, habitat resources, drawing or construction paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils*

Show students pictures of different habitats that make up the United States, such as woodlands, beaches, and plains. Think about including pictures that also represent Hawaii and Alaska. Explain that they are going to design a home that is appropriate for one of these habitats. Work with students to help them identify the resources that include information about these habitats. Have student brainstorm what they would need to build their home if they could only get materials from their environment. Ask students:

- *What would your home look like?*
- *What materials would you use to make your home?*
- *What tools would you use to make your home?*
- *What would you call your home?*

Allow students to create a drawing of their home. Finish by showing students different homes that American Indians have lived in such as wigwams, longhouses, earth lodges, igloos, etc. Explain to students that now Native Americans live in homes just like they do.

## Resources

### **Buffalo Bill Center of the West Resources**

Plains Indian Art Trunk – available through our lending program

This trunk fosters an understanding and appreciation for the culture of Plains Indian people. Materials in the trunk include examples of traditional Plains Indian arts such as beadwork, quillwork, and rock art. A new teacher's guide is included.

Powwow Trunk – available through our lending program

Music and dance have long been central to American Indian cultures, and today's powwow is a celebration of that heritage. Learn about powwows in their present form and the history behind them with a video, dance outfits, musical instruments, accessories, and a teacher guide.

## **Other Resources**

National Museum of the American Indian, *Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian*. Washington, DC.: Smithsonian, 2007.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Native American Stories*. Golden Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991.