

PLAINS INDIAN CULTURE



Yesterday & Today Guided Tour

GUIDED TOUR DESCRIPTION

Discover how Plains Indians enrich their lifestyles by incorporating contemporary and historical aspects of their culture. Much of this culture is rooted in their past traditions.

TOUR OBJECTIVES

- To define culture and its importance to communities.
- To provide opportunities for students to enrich their understanding of Plains Indian cultures, both past and present.
- To demonstrate Plains Indians' ability to incorporate new technologies and methods while maintaining traditions.

STANDARDS

Wyoming

Social Studies: SS.5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.4, 5.5.3, 5.5.4a, 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.4, 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.4a, 8.53a, 12.2.1, 12.2.2, 12.2.4, 12.4.1a, 12.4.2, 12.4.4a

Montana

Social Studies: SS.4.3.3, 4.3.4, 8.3.3, 8.3.4, 8.3.7, 12.3.4, 4.4.1, 4.4.7, 12.4.7, 4.6.2, 4.6.3, 4.6.4, 8.6.2, 8.6.3, 8.6.5, 12.6.2, 12.6.3, 12.6.5

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.

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.

Who Are the Northern Plains Indian Tribes?

Help students define the Native American tribes of the Northern Plains. Review the list of tribes below that make up these groups of people.

- Shoshone
- Lakota
- Crow
- Hidatsa
- Arapahoe
- Mandan
- Cheyenne
- Nez Perce

- Arikara
- Blackfeet

GRADES 3-12

TEACHER GUIDE

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Introduce Vocabulary |

Discuss the vocabulary terms below.

- **Adversity** – difficulty
- **Beliefs** – an opinion or conviction considered to be true
- **Buffalo hide** – the pelt or skin of the buffalo; used for many different purposes by the Plains Indians
- **Canvas** – a durable waterproof material introduced to the Plains Indians through trade with Euro-Americans
- **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
- **Earth Lodge** – a Plains Indian home often built by agricultural tribes such as the Mandan and Hidatsa
- **Euro-American** – United States citizen of European ancestry
- **Generation** – people who are born and living at around the same time
- **Language** – spoken or written communication
- **Parfleche** – a folded rawhide carrying case for food, clothing, and other items
- **Reservation** – area of public land set aside by the United States government for the use of American Indians
- **Tipi** – the home of many Plains Indian people and was typically made from buffalo hide or canvas and long sticks
- **Tradition** – custom or belief passed down from generation to generation

POST-LESSON ACTIVITIES

Build a Home (Grades 3-5)

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 a tipi.

Using What Is Around You (Grades 3-8)

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 students 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 American Indians live in homes just like they do.

Comparing Cultures and Traditions (Grades 3-12)

Have students summarize the culture of their home, family, and community. Then have them compare their own culture to that of Plains Indians today. They should base this comparison on what they learned during their tour at the museum.

Why Move? (Grades 5-12)

Materials: journals or notebooks, pencils or crayons

Ask students to spend some time writing or illustrating a time in their lives when they moved or had a change in their lives. Allow time for student volunteers to share their experiences. Ask students if these changes were made by choice or by force. Engage in further discussion about when people may have been moved from their homes by force and why. Examples include wars, natural disasters, and reservations.

Tribes of your Region (Grades 4-12)

Have students research the different tribes that are native to their region or area. Research should focus on comparing and contrasting the tribes' beliefs and traditions. Allow time for students to present their findings to their classmates through creative methods of delivery, such as skits, artwork, journal entries, photographs, etc.

Governmental Influence on Reservations (Grades 6-12)

Spend time reviewing what students learned about reservations on their tour at the museum. In particular, engage students in research and discussion about the government policies that placed Plains Indians onto reservations. Hold a classroom debate arguing the reasons for and against moving tribes onto reservations.

RESOURCES

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

Buffalo Bill Center of the West Resources

Visit our website at
www.centerofthewest.org

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.

Explore Plains Indian Culture and History

Looking to enrich your curriculum with primary resources through photos, art, and oral histories? This rich content will help teachers and students, whether they have visited the Center or not. Visit the following links to explore Plains Indian culture and history.

- 1. Land of Many Gifts** – Learn about village life from the historic era.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-land/>
- 2. Buffalo and the People** – Explore the economic and spiritual importance of buffalo to the Native people of the Plains.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-buffalo/>
- 3. Honor and Celebration** – Discover the ceremonial aspects of Plains life.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-honor/>
- 4. Adversity and Renewal** – Reflect on the changes and innovation that have taken place in the cultures of Plains people since being placed on reservations.
<https://centerofthewest.org/exhibit/pim-adversity/>

Plains Indian Map Project

The Plains Indian Map—created with generous funding from The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston—is a fusion of scholarship and educational interpretation. The map represents 230 years of movement on the Plains amongst more than 45 different Indian cultures. Territorial, treaty, reservation, and state boundaries flow in an animated timeline. Visit this link to view the map: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=f83rCIXOVWU.

Other Resources

Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian) by National Museum of the American Indian

Native American Stories (Fulcrum Publishing) by Joseph Bruchac

Iktomi and the Buffalo Skull (Orchard Paperbacks) by Paul Goble (note: Paul Goble wrote a series of books with Iktomi as the central character)

The Return of the Buffaloes (National Geographic Society) by Paul Goble

Tipi: Home of the Nomadic Buffalo Hunters (World Wisdom) by Paul Goble

