

The Americas Assessment: Study Sheet- Copy this into your notebook!

The Great Plains are virtually **treeless**. For early settlers, **it was challenging, as there was no wood to build homes**. There were ample fields for farming and ranching, however, and no clearing had to be done.

Like the United States today, Native Americans had **a network of regional cultures**. In some parts of the United States, the regional culture is partly composed of aspects of Native American culture, such as place names.

The Iroquois built their houses out of **wood poles and deerskin**, either in the shape of a **wigwam** (cone-shaped) or as longhouses. Their environment provided plenty of wood for poles and fences, and the deer of the forests provided the covering materials.

The Great Plains include many of the states of the central United States and was once home to several Plains Indian tribes.

Southwest Indians: The desert climate affected their food and housing choices. The Anasazi built entire cities in the sides of cliffs, which are known as cliff dwellings.

Plains Indians did not have the means to make cloth, but they had wildlife, so they made their clothing from **animal hides**.

North American Indian cultures differed from place to place. **The geography of their surroundings impacted what natural resources** they had access to, which also means **economic activity could differ greatly from group to group**.

The **Eastern Woodlands**: Although these tribes had cultural differences, **they were all linked linguistically**. In fact, **the word Iroquois refers to a language rather than a tribe**. **The Iroquois Confederacy constitution was a spoken, rather than written, constitution**.

Pacific Northwest: **The mild climate and plentiful food sources stand apart from more arid parts of North America**. In fact, when the fish and acorns were plentiful in an area, native peoples tended to **live in permanent villages and created societies that were settled rather than nomadic**.

The Pueblo relied on **corn** for their food supply. Even though their region was very dry, they were able to produce corn by using irrigation canals and planting crops near rivers.

Native American culture groups consisted of many distinct tribes. Within each group, there was a great deal of cultural diversity.

Plains culture group. They depended on the plentiful herds of buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter. They also established trade networks along the Mississippi River. They built boats from bison skin stretched over a wooden frame.

Kings governed individual Mayan cities. Over time, cities united, and kings controlled larger areas. However, **the Maya were not a unified empire**. They did not form a single, strong government.

The Inca civilization did not develop a writing system, instead, they relied on **orally passing down history and culture**. The Inca did have a counting system, called quipus, but no formal writing system.

The **Inca built a network of roads to make travel within the immense empire easier. Suspension bridges** crossed rivers and canyons. The Inca even built "**rest stops**" **along the roads**, mainly for the army to have a place to stop on long journeys. Some of the roads and bridges are still standing today.

The Maya were one of the first civilizations to create a complex writing system. They **left behind artifacts from their time period.**

The **Maya carved their symbols into stones and statues. They also wrote books on paper made from tree bark.** Some of these books survived, and historians use them to try to understand the Maya better.

The **Aztec civilization covered central Mexico.** It was mostly located in the Valley of Mexico, **near present-day Mexico City**

In Aztec civilization **slavery was common.** Slaves were often **prisoners of war**, but slavery was not inherited—the **child of a slave was free. Aztec slaves could also own property.**

Corn is a crop that can grow well in different places. It was important to the Maya, Aztec & Inca civilizations because it provided them with a dependable food source. The civilizations learned to prepare corn in many different ways.

Llamas are native animals to the South American region of the Inca empire. The Inca respected llamas for their many uses. The animals provided wool for clothing and meat for food. They carried loads over the rocky mountain ground. Sometimes, they were even sacrificed as offerings to important gods.

All three cultures: **Maya, Aztec, & Inca offered sacrifices to their many gods.** They would mostly sacrifice animals, but they would also **sacrifice humans on certain occasions.** They offered **sacrifices to get help and good fortune from the gods.**

Both the **Maya and Aztecs developed a 365-day calendar.** The **Aztec calendar was called the Sun Stone and also featured a 52-year "century" cycle.** The **Maya developed the concept of zero by 357 CE.**

Aztec temples were built high off the ground in order to be closer to the gods. Priests would climb the long stairways to perform religious ceremonies. Many of the Aztec pyramids were destroyed by the Spanish explorers, but some can still be seen in Mexico today.