

Grade 5 -- Informational Living Off the Earth

Imagine a life quite different from the one you live. Imagine there are no ready-made houses or clothing. Imagine that you can't just go out and buy food or medicine, because there are no stores. Instead, you must depend on what nature offers. How would you get along? What would you do?

The ways that Native Americans lived can give some answers. Two hundred to three hundred years ago, the people who lived in the area that is now the United States made their homes and clothing from what the earth supplied. They used plants for medicine, and they caught or gathered all their food.

Shelters and Clothing

Some Native American tribes lived where there was plenty of food. These people stayed in one place and used wood, stones, mud, or clay to build homes that would last a long time. Other tribes, such as the Apache, moved often in search of food. They needed shelters that they could take with them, so they built tipis. It was easy to move a tipi. The Native Americans could take down the tipis and put the long poles of wood and buffalo skins onto a "travois." This was a sled that a horse pulled.

Some Native Americans made clothing and shoes called "moccasins" from animal skins. In the southwestern areas, the Pueblo people made clothing from cotton that they grew and wove into yarn. The Navajo people wove wool into blankets and rugs. Along the northwestern coast, the Chinook tribe was one of several tribes that made clothing from the bark of the cedar tree.

Native Americans needed tools in order to build shelters, to make clothing, and to grow, hunt, and prepare food.

Tool Time

Where there were trees, people used wood to create bows, arrows, spears, and digging sticks. A digging stick was a piece of hard wood about three feet long. People stripped the stick of all bark and sharpened one end into a point. They poked holes into the ground for planting seeds. These sticks also lifted out roots and dug up plants that could be eaten.

Some people made tools from stone, too. They found rocks along riverbanks, lakeshores, and ocean coasts. From these stones, Native Americans made hammers, farming tools, and the heads of axes and arrows. They used thin, sharp pieces of stone to cut meat. They also scraped animal hides to make leather.

Bone was another useful material for making tools. People made sewing needles out of animal bones. They also made awls. An awl had a slim handle and a sharp point. People used awls for punching holes in leather. They could then sew the leather into tipi coverings, clothing, or moccasins.

Tying Things Up

In order to sew, fish, or tie things together, Native Americans made their own rope, cord, string, and line. Many plants are made of fiber, a material that is like thread. People twisted, rolled, or braided strands of fiber together. More fiber could be twisted to the ends of these strands. The string or rope could be as long as people needed.

Some Native Americans also made cords from the sinew of animals. Sinew is the stretchy band of tissue that fastens a muscle to a bone.

Plenty of Plants

Native Americans ate plants, of course. But they also used many plants as medicine. And when water wasn't easy to find in the southwestern desert, people in that area knew to cut open a cactus. There would be water inside.

A fistful of dry grass could mop up morning dew from rocks and plants. The water would then be squeezed from the grass into a jug or pot.

A plant with many uses was the cattail. This plant grows in wet areas. The top of the cattail looks like a brown, fuzzy sausage. The western Paiute tribe was one tribe that twisted the plant's leaves into rope or wove them into baskets, mats, cradles, and hats. The fluffy part inside the head of the cattail made great diaper material and bandages.

Life for most people in the United States is quite a bit different today. With department stores and supermarkets, people don't have to make many of the things they use. But the Native Americans did, and the earth gave them everything they needed.

1) Which tool has a slim handle and sharp point? (LA.5.1.6.k)

- a) awl
- b) digging stick
- c) hammer
- d) spear

2) Which word describes the stretchy band of tissue that fastens a muscle to a bone? (LA.5.1.6.k)

- a) cord
- b) fiber
- c) sinew
- d) thread

3) Which material did the Native Americans use like a sponge? (LA.5.1.6.k)

- a) cactus
- b) clay
- c) grass
- d) sinew

4) Which material did the Chinok tribe commonly use to make clothing? (LA.5.1.6.k)

- a) bark
- b) buffalo skin
- c) cotton
- d) wool

5) How does the author organize the informational text? (LA.5.1.6.f)

- a) headings
- b) sequence
- c) description
- d) cause and effect

6) What is the author's purpose for writing this passage? (LA.5.1.6.a)

- a) to entertain the reader with facts about Native Americans
- b) to inform the reader about how Native Americans used the earth to help them survive
- c) to inquire or ask a question about how Native Americans used the earth to survive
- d) to persuade the reader to believe that Native Americans were resourceful people

7) Which type of figurative speech is used in this sentence, "The top of the cattail looks like a brown, fuzzy sausage."? (LA.5.1.5.d)

- a) alliteration
- b) metaphor
- c) personification
- d) simile

8) What is the reason the Apache built tipis? (LA.5.1.6.g)

- a) They are easy to make.
- b) They are easy to move.
- c) They are inexpensive to build.
- d) They are a good source of shelter.

C4L Reading - Item Writing Tally Sheet

Grade 5- Informational

Passage Name: Living Off the Earth

Gr5 Vocabulary	DOK Level	DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	Item Total
LA 5.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build literary, general academic, and content specific grade level vocabulary.					
LA 5.1.5.a <i>Apply knowledge of word structure elements, known words, and word patterns to determine meaning (e.g., affixes, abbreviations, parts of speech, word origins)</i>	1, 2				
LA 5.1.5.c <i>Select and apply context clues (e.g., word, phrase, sentence and paragraph clues, re-reading) and text features (e.g., glossary, headings, subheadings, captions, maps) to determine meaning of unknown words in a variety of text structures</i>	2				1
LA 5.1.5.d <i>Identify semantic relationships (e.g., multiple meanings, metaphors, similes, idioms, analogies)</i>	1, 2	1			1
Gr5 Comprehension	DOK Level	DOK 1	DOK 2	DOK 3	Item Total
LA 5.1.6 Comprehension: Students will extract and construct meaning using prior knowledge, applying text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading grade level text.					
LA 5.1.6.a <i>Identify author purpose(s) (e.g., explain, entertain, inform, persuade) and recognize how author perspective (e.g., beliefs, assumptions, biases) influences text</i>	3				1
LA 5.1.6.d <i>Identify literary devices and explain the ways in which language is used (e.g., simile, metaphor, alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, rhythm)</i>	2, 3				
LA 5.1.6.e <i>Summarize and analyze the main idea from informational text using supporting details</i>	2				
LA 5.1.6.f <i>Understand and apply knowledge of organizational patterns found in informational text (e.g., sequence, description, cause and effect, compare/contrast, fact/opinion)</i>	2		1		1
LA 5.1.6.g <i>Apply knowledge of text features to locate information and gain meaning from a text (e.g., index, maps, charts, tables, graphs, headings, subheadings)</i>	1, 2	1			1

<p>LA 5.1.6.h <i>Describe the defining characteristics of narrative and informational genres (e.g., textbooks, myths, fantasies, science fiction, drama, periodicals, essays)</i></p>	2				
<p>LA 5.1.6.k <i>Generate and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, supporting answers using prior knowledge and literal and inferential information from the text and additional sources</i></p>	1, 2, 3	4			4