The Plains Culture Area spanned west from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. It stretched north into Canada and south into what is now Texas. The population of the Plains grew after the Spanish reintroduced horses to the region. The people could now travel farther and use all the region’s resources. The primary food source was the bison, or buffalo. The tribes relied on the buffalo for food, clothing, tools, and shelter. As the people followed the buffalo, they used tipis for easily assembled houses and to carry their belongings while traveling.

The Great Basin and Plateau culture areas border the Plains. The Great Basin tribal nations include the Paiute, Shoshone, and Ute among others on lands between the Rockies and the California Sierra Nevada mountains. The Plateau tribal nations include the Bannock, Colville, Umatilla, Flathead, Kutenai, Nez Perce, Northern Shoshone and Yakama nations in eastern Oregon and Washington, southern Alberta and British Columbia, and northern Idaho and western Montana. Both groups moved around a lot with the Great Basin people living in brush covered houses, while many Plateau people lived in tipis.
Using the following learning objectives and activities tied to them, this section explores Plains cultural artifacts to understand both the similarities and differences between tribal nations.

**Learning Objective 1:** Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

**Learning Objective 2:** When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.
STUDENT WORKSHEET BEFORE THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Activity: Test what you already know about the Plains people.

1. Cut out each of the pictures below. Next, glue them where you think they belong in the chart on the next page.

2. Then, find the word in the Word Bank below that describes the picture and glue that next to the picture in the chart.

Word Bank

- cooking food
- horse
- tanning a hide
- drying food
- travois
- tipi
- scraping a hide
- walking
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Food</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Pre-assessment: Use an atlas to write in the names of states that are in the Plains area.

Questions:
1. How many complete states are in the Plains region? __________
2. How many parts of states are in the Plains region? __________
3. Which state is farthest south? ____________________________
4. Which culture region is to the east of the Plains region? __________

List What You Know Write anything that you already know about Plains Indians below.

________________________________________________________________________
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STUDENT WORKSHEET BEFORE THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Read: Before guns and horses arrived in North America thousand of years ago, the Plains Indians hunted bison on foot. They hunted with spears and bows and arrows. Bison could be captured in several ways. The two most common were the “Buffalo Pound” and “Buffalo Jump.”

In the “Buffalo Pound” method, the bison were lured into a coulee (ravine) by a hunter dressed in buffalo robes. Then, the other hunters, who had lined up along the coulee, stampeded the animals into a corral where they were killed with spears.

In the “Buffalo Jump” method, chasers would lead the buffalo towards a cliff where others waited waving blankets, luring the animals toward the cliff. When the buffalo jumped, men at the bottom would kill the animals.

Bison could weigh 2,000 pounds making it impossible to drag them back to the village after a hunt. Some things had to be done right on the prairie—removing the innards, skinning, bleeding, and cutting up meat to carry back to the village. There, meat was eaten or smoked, the skins tanned for clothes and house, and other parts of the animal made into tools and other objects. The Plains Indians used the entire buffalo to meet their needs. Absolutely nothing was wasted.

Activity: Look at the pictures below. Guess how these buffalo parts were used and write your answer on the line below.

| ______________ | ______________ |
| ______________ | ______________ |
| ______________ | ______________ |

Plains, Great Basin, and Plateau Cultural Area
Discover - Experience – Connect
www.mitchellmuseum.org
STUDENT WORKSHEET AFTER THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

A. Read this story aloud and discuss the suggested topics afterward. Older students can read the story themselves and then complete the questions. Definitions for bold words are at the end of the story.

“The First Fire” by Luther Standing Bear
(from Stories of the Sioux by Chief Luther Standing Bear. University of Nebraska Press, 1934)

A Sioux scout, tired and weary from a long journey, sat down on the plain to rest. Beside him lay a fallen yucca plant with its long body stretched upon the ground. The scout aimlessly picked up a small stick that lay nearby, and, rubbing it between his hands upon the yucca, noticed a thin blue vapor arising.

This vapor smelled very pleasant as it rose in the air and disappeared. The scout thought that, since it went up and out of sight, it must go to the land of the Sky People. And going up so far it would, no doubt, carry a message to those who lived in the sky.

So the scout played on, enjoying the blue clouds of smoke as they ascended and disappeared in the air. After a while a small red and orange flame burst from the tip of the stick. It was beautiful, and the heat that came with it was very agreeable. Interested now beyond all care to continue his journey, the scout watched the stick and yucca plant change into this lovely flame that sprung up, only to fade away and form into another just as beautiful. How strange and yet how beautiful it was, thought the scout. He never wanted to lose this beautiful being, whatever it was.

So he fed the flame with more yucca, and it lived and grew. He could not leave it here to perish, and yet he was forced to go home at last. So he carried a burning wand back to the village with him, and in the center, where all could see, he made it grow with more yucca. All the people of the village came and sat about, marveling at the wonder of it all.

This gorgeous red flame was warming to the hands and body, but it could hurt severely if one got too close. It looked soft and caressing, but stung the fingers if one tried to catch and hold the lovely curling feathers of fire. The wood which was put into these flames to keep them alive turned into brilliant red coals that sparkled and changed color too. So all day the village people watched, and when evening came they were still gathered there. This marvel was something like the sun, for it lighted up the space in which they sat. Strange it did not do this in the daytime. Only at night. This fascinating being had wondrous ways hard to understand.

Since the beautiful flame burned one’s hands and toes, what would it do to meat? A piece of buffalo meat was held close, and as the flames wound around it the odor was strangely tempting. The meat was tasted, and it was good. Everyone tasted the meat that came from the red-hot coals, and all found it delicious. No longer would the Sioux prepare their meat only by the heat of the sun.

And so this is the way fire was brought to the Sioux people. The man who brought it to them is great in their history.
Sioux—a large group of Native nations living in the Great Plains area made up of the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota tribes.

Yucca-- large plants or trees with tough, sword-shaped leaves that live in hot, dry areas. Some yuccas have seeds, flowers and fruit that people can eat. When dried, the leaves are easy to light on fire.

vapor—a smoke, fog or gas that floats in the air

agreeable—pleasant

B. Questions for discussion

1. What are three ways fire improved the life of the Sioux?

2. Why did the people sit around and watch the fire during the day?

3. Did this story take place a long time ago, or recently? How can you tell?

4. Is this the way you believe fire was discovered? If not, write a story about how and when you believe people discovered fire.

5. Have you ever read other stories about the coming of fire? If so, what were they?

6. Describe how to start a fire using the method in this story. What are some other ways to start a fire?

7. Who was Luther Standing Bear?
Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes and transportation by using the resources available in their environment.

A. Study the Plains Mural on page 2. Note the different kinds of tasks performed by members of the village.
   - List the tasks you see in the 1st column.
   - Select who does it — man, woman, or child — and answer in 2nd column.
   - Select the need the task meets — food, housing, clothing, or transportation — in the 3rd column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
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B. What conclusion can you draw about the division of labor among the native people of this culture area?

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STUDENT WORKSHEET  AFTER VISITING THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental survival needs for food, clothes and transportation by using the resources available in their environment.

Read: As a part of a culture’s survival, the people must have a way of preserving what they learned in the past so that each generation has the knowledge necessary to ensure the continuation of the culture and their beliefs. Prior to contact with people from other parts of the world, the native people of the Plains did not have a written language. Therefore, cultural traits were transmitted from one generation to the next by their oral traditions. One of the roles in villages was that of story teller. Because of the hard work needed to memorize and remember a tribe’s history, the story teller was held in very high esteem. This was true in other culture areas as well, not just among Plains peoples.

Activity: Study the picture of the Plains story teller above. Write a well-developed paragraph telling the story you think the elder may have been telling the child.

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Learning Objective 2: When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.

Instructions: Look at the photos in the left-hand column. They show artifacts that demonstrate the traditional way of life. Draw a line to a picture that matches it in the right-hand column, one that shows how tradition changed because of European materials or trade.
Learning Objective 2: When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.

A. Look at the photo at the bottom left. List as many items as you can that were not indigenous to the Plains Culture Area. Then explain how these items altered the lifestyle of the people.

List: ________________________________________________________________

How life changed: ____________________________________________________

B. Examine the photo of the Plains bag in the center below and the Woodland bandolier bag on the right. Compare and contrast the decorative designs that became cultural motifs for each area.

Compare: ____________________________________________________________

Contrast: ____________________________________________________________

C. How did trade goods from other areas of the world impact the artistic elements of each cultural area?

Plains: ________________________________________________________________

Woodlands: ___________________________________________________________
STUDENT WORKSHEET AFTER VISITING THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Learning Objective 2: When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.

Compare Two Objects

A. Look at the two pictures below. The first one shows how Woodlands people carried and stored their possessions. The second shows how Plains people carried and stored them.

1. What did Woodlands people use to make baskets? _____________________________

2. What did the Plains people use to make a parfleche? ____________________________

3. Think about where each group lived. Why did they use such different materials to make these items?
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

B. Look at the next two pictures below. They show a Plains headdress and cradleboard.

1. Name the parts of the headdress that come from animals. _________________

2. Name parts of the headdress that Plains people got through trade. _________________

3. What trade item can you see on the cradleboard? ____________________________

Extended Activity  Design, paint, and make a parfleche [par-flesh] with stiff paper or cardboard boxes.
STUDENT WORKSHEET  AFTER THE MUSEUM

Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Learning Objective 2: When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.

Read: Buffalo were integral to Plains life providing the people with food, tools, shelter, and supplies. However, as waves of settlers moved into Plains territory, Native tribes experienced life-altering changes. Buffalo were hunted for their hides and tongues. Buffalo hide and horn chairs even become popular with non-Natives throughout Europe and the U.S. In addition, the U.S. military encouraged overhunting as a way to remove the main source of survival for Plains people. This forced them to relocate to smaller and smaller reservations. At the beginning of the 1800s, 60 million buffalo roamed the Plains. By 1910, only five thousand remained.

A. Use the information above and what you learned at the museum to answer the following questions.

1. Why was the buffalo important to Plains people?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What factors led to the disappearance of the buffalo?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How do you think Plains people reacted to the loss of the buffalo?

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

B. Look at the photos. Discuss with your classmates what parts of each show things replaced by new materials after the buffalo disappeared.
Learning Objective 1: Native people met their fundamental, basic survival needs for food, houses, clothes, and transportation by using the resources available to them in their environment.

Learning Objective 2: When Europeans arrived, new resources from another part of the world became available to Native people and altered their ways of life.

Post-Assessment: Write facts about the Plains in the correct place. Put a question mark if you don’t know an answer. Add other information that you remember at the end of the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/Climate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade Items</td>
<td></td>
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