

Summary: Peoples of the West

Northwest Peoples

The Pacific Northwest is a place along the coast of the Pacific Ocean. It goes from Alaska to northern California. Several American Indian groups lived in the Pacific Northwest. Many still live there today.

Long ago, the Northwest Indians got everything they needed from nearby land and waters. They got food from the rivers. During the spring and summer, they fished for salmon. They dried any surplus salmon so they could eat the fish all year round. Wood was important to the Northwest Indians. They used wood to build canoes, houses, and totem poles.

Southwest Peoples

The Southwest is a region that includes a desert. The land is very dry. This made it hard for the Southwest Indians to farm. They had to find ways to get water to their fields. Many of the Southwest Indians used irrigation.

Religion was important to the Southwest Indians. One group, the Hopi, believed they were supposed to take care of the land. The Hopi had many religious ceremonies. At one ceremony called the Bean Dance, the Hopi danced and prayed for a good harvest.

Great Plains Peoples

Many animals lived on the Great Plains. The Western Plains Indians got everything they needed from the buffalo. They ate buffalo meat and used the skins for clothing and teepees. The Western Plains Indians were nomads who followed the buffalo herds. A nomad moves from place to place. Nomads carry their things with them.

When the Spanish brought horses to the Plains in the 1500s, it changed the Indians' lives. The horses made it easier for the Great Plains Indians to hunt and travel.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

surplus *noun*, extra

irrigation *noun*, a way of supplying water to crops with streams, ditches, or pipes

religion *noun*, the belief in one or more gods

ceremony *noun*, a formal event at which people gather to express important beliefs

nomad *noun*, a person who moves around and does not live in one place



After You Read

REVIEW Which two important resources helped the Northwest Indians live? What did the Northwest Indians eat all year? What did they use for building things? Circle the words that tell the answers.

REVIEW What was the Bean Dance? Highlight the sentence that tells about this ceremony.

REVIEW Why were horses important to the Western Plains Indians? Draw a box around the sentence that tells how horses helped the Plains Indians.