

# Summary: Peoples of the Southwest

## The Southwest

The Southwest region includes New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Texas, southern California, and northern Mexico. The Southwest is mostly low, flat desert or desert on high plateaus. There are some mountains and deep canyons. There is almost no rain and the land is very dry. Streams are fed by snow melting in the mountains. There are few trees.

Native Americans in the Southwest built houses of sticks, stones, and clay called adobe. They built their homes on top of steep mesas to keep them safe from attacks. They planted their corn deep in the ground so the roots could get moisture from the earth. They developed irrigation to water their crops in order to get good harvests. They also planted crops on land that was flooded in the spring.

## The Hopi

The Hopi have lived in the Southwest for hundreds of years. They are Pueblo Indians. Early Hopi used irrigation to grow corn, beans, and squash. Corn was the staple food. Hopi grew red, blue, yellow, white, and purple corn. They grew enough to store so it would last all year. They also made clay pottery. They were among the first people to fire pottery. Firing pottery with coal makes the clay hard and strong.

Through their religion the Hopi acted as caretakers of the land. They believed that when the land is healthy, the harvest would be good. Throughout the year the Hopi prayed and held ceremonies as part of taking care of the land. For instance, at a ceremony called the Bean Dance, the Hopi danced and prayed for a good harvest.

Modern Hopi follow many traditions of their culture. Most live in villages of the Southwest and continue to take part in traditional ceremonies. Many Hopi are skilled at traditional pottery, weaving, and jewelry making. Others hold jobs in local companies, are teachers, or run their own businesses.



### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**irrigation** *noun*, supplying water to crops using streams, ditches, or pipes

**staple** *noun*, main crop that is used for food

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



### After You Read

**REVIEW** Why was irrigation necessary for the Southwest Indians?

Highlight the sentence that describes the climate of the region.

**REVIEW** What is the Bean Dance? Underline the sentence that tells you the answer.