The Lenape

An Algonquian People
The Lenape, or Delaware, Indians were part of a group of Native Americans who spoke the Algonquian language.

Lenape Government and History
The three Lenape clans lived in different areas. Clans had animal names that may have been symbols for a common ancestor. Villages were governed by a sachem and a council of men. The Lenape passed down their history and legends by telling stories and by carving pictures into bark. They later recorded events on paper.

Village Life
Villages were made up of longhouses and wigwams and were often near rivers and streams. The Lenape used natural resources for shelter, food, and clothing. Food such as beans, corn, and squash came from agriculture. Men also hunted and fished.

Sharing the Work
Lenape women farmed, gathered food, and cooked. They also made baskets and clay pots and took care of children. In addition to hunting and fishing, men made weapons and tools, cleared fields, and defended villages from attack. Older Lenape made pottery, fishnets, and wampum, which were used as money and as gifts.

Legends and Ceremonies
Lenape culture included ceremonies held during planting and harvesting seasons. Many of these ceremonies were held in the Big House, a spiritual center. Lenape legends described the creation of Earth.

Who governed Lenape villages? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.
What were the responsibilities of Lenape women and men? Highlight the sentences that tell the answer.