

## Summary: The Navajo

### Living in the Desert

The Navajo are American Indians. Many Navajo live in the southwestern United States. Their land includes mountains and deserts.

The Navajo learned skills to live in the desert. They adapted to the land and used things they found in the desert. They hunted animals for meat and skins. They gathered plants and nuts to eat. They grew food like corn, squash, and beans.

The desert has little rain, so the Navajo planted seeds deeply to reach underground water. Later, the Navajo had herds of sheep and goats. They used sheep's wool to weave warm blankets.

### The Navajo Today

The Navajo teach their culture and beliefs to their children. Religion is an important part of Navajo culture. Navajos believe nature is sacred. Many Navajo thank the plants and animals they use for food. Some Navajo build homes facing east to honor the sunrise.

Navajo stories also show respect for nature. One story tells how Spider Woman taught the Navajo to weave. The Navajo believe she is one of the Holy People, or spirits.

Sometimes the Navajo have a ceremony to ask the Holy People for help. At times, the ceremonies use paintings made with colored sand. Today, Navajo live in many places and have many different jobs.



#### Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

**adapt** *verb*, to change the way you live to fit a new place

**culture** *noun*, the way of life, or beliefs, ideas, and language of a group of people

**religion** *noun*, the belief in God or gods

**ceremony** *noun*, a formal act or event that honors a people's beliefs



#### After You Read

**REVIEW** What skills did the Navajo learn in order to live in the desert? Circle the sentence about planting seeds.

**REVIEW** In what ways does Navajo culture continue today? Highlight sentences that tell the answer.