

The First Americans

Lesson 1 Migration to the Americas

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What are characteristics that make up a culture?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *Who were the first Americans and how did they live?*
2. *How did agriculture change the way of life for early Americans?*

Terms to Know

archaeology the study of ancient peoples

artifact a tool, weapon, or object left behind by early peoples

strait narrow strip of water connecting two larger bodies of water

migration the movement of a large number of people into a new area

nomad a person who moves from place to place

maize a type of corn

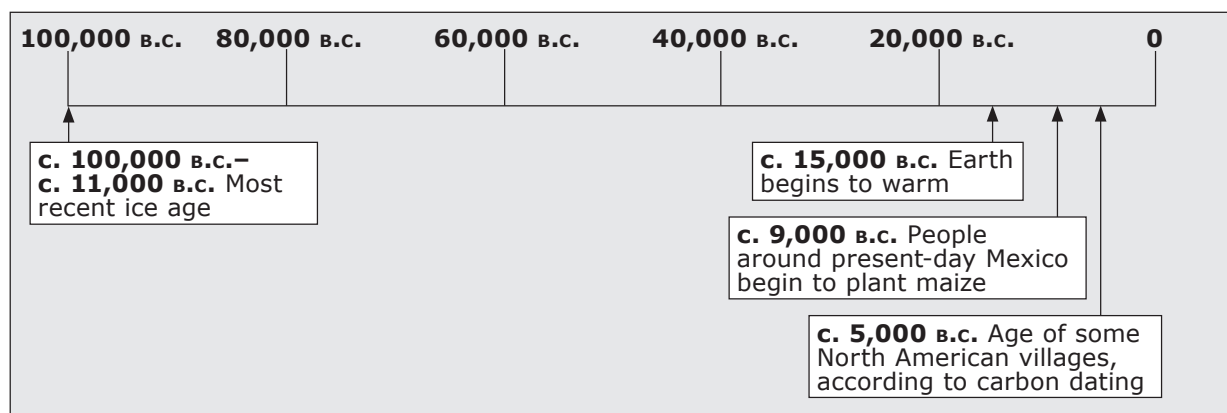
carbon dating a scientific way to find out the age of an artifact

culture a people's shared values, beliefs, traditions, and behaviors

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



The First Americans

Lesson 1 Migration to the Americas, *Continued*

The Migration Begins

People lived in the Americas for thousands of years before Christopher Columbus arrived. Where did they come from? How did they get there? When did they arrive?

Scientists want to answer these questions. Some are experts in the study of ancient peoples, which is called **archaeology**. To discover clues, they study **artifacts**, or things that ancient peoples left behind. These things can be tools, weapons, or other objects. Artifacts are one of the tools archaeologists use to put together the pieces of the puzzle.

Some archaeologists think they understand how the first people arrived in North America. They believe that many thousands of years ago, a strip of land connected Asia and the Americas. This gave people a way to travel from one continent to the other. These scientists think that people used this strip of land to cross from Asia to the Americas 20,000 or more years ago.

Learning About Ancient Peoples	
archaeology	the study of ancient peoples
archaeologist	a scientist who studies ancient peoples
artifacts	objects left behind by ancient peoples, such as tools and weapons

The temperature of the Earth has changed throughout history. There have been some periods of extreme cold. These are called ice ages. The most recent one started about 100,000 years ago. It did not end until about 12,000 years ago. During the ice age, much of Earth's water began to freeze into huge sheets of ice. These sheets of ice are called *glaciers*. So much water froze into glaciers that sea levels were lower.

When the sea levels were lower, there was a strip of land that connected northeastern Asia to what is now Alaska in North America. Today, scientists call this strip of land—or land bridge—Beringia. Today, it is warmer and sea levels are higher. Beringia is covered by the Bering Strait. A **strait** is a narrow strip of water that connects two larger bodies of water. The Bering Strait was named for a famous explorer, Vitus Bering.



Identifying

1. What scientists study ancient peoples? What do they use for clues?



Assessing

2. When do some scientists think people first arrived in North America?



Defining

3. What is an *ice age*?



Calculating

4. How long did the last ice age last?



Mark the Text

5. Underline the definition of *land bridge*.



Reading Check

6. How did the ice age expose Beringia?

The First Americans

Lesson 1 Migration to the Americas, *Continued*



Identifying

7. What are two ways scientists think people may have traveled from Asia to the Americas?



Mark the Text

8. Underline the definition of *migration*.



Identifying

9. What did nomads eat?



Mark the Text

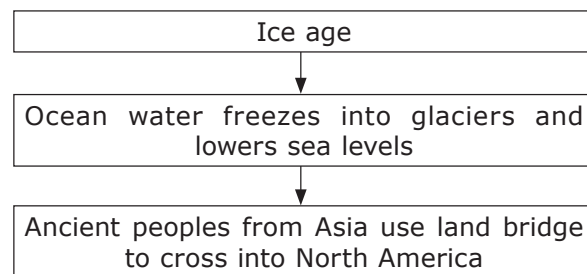
10. What did mammoths and mastodons look like? Circle the answer in the text.



Understanding Cause and Effect

11. How did farming change the lives of early Americans?

Many scientists think that people traveled from Asia to North America over this land bridge, but some scientists disagree. They think people may have come from Asia in boats. Coming by boat would have made it easier for people to spread throughout North and South America faster.



No matter how they came, people eventually spread east all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. They also spread south to the southern tip of South America.

When a lot of people move from one area to another like this, it is called **migration**. People probably traveled in search of food. Early peoples were **nomads**. Nomads are people who move from place to place, looking for good hunting grounds. Even though these people also ate wild grains and fruits, much of their food came from hunting.

When the first peoples arrived from Asia, they found many animals to hunt. For example, they hunted bison and two animals that looked like elephants—mammoths and mastodons. These people hunted with spears.

Around 15,000 years ago, Earth began to warm. As temperatures rose, glaciers began to melt. The oceans rose, and water covered the Beringia land bridge. This cut Asia off from North America once again. The large animals began to disappear, too. Early Americans had to find other sources of food, which included fish and small animals.

Settlement

Around 10,000 years ago, there was a major change in how people got food: farming. People in what is now Mexico began planting a type of corn called **maize**. They also grew pumpkins, beans, and squash. These crops gave them a good supply of food. Because they could grow their own food, they did not have to move around anymore. This meant they could spend more time doing other things. Their quality of life got better.

The First Americans

Lesson 1 Migration to the Americas, *Continued*

After the early people learned to farm, some remained nomads. Others lived in permanent settlements, or villages. They built houses from clay, stone, or wood. They made pottery, tools, and cloth. Today, we sometimes find such artifacts where their villages once stood.

Carbon dating is a scientific process that measures how much radioactive carbon an artifact contains. Scientists use this measurement to decide how old the artifact is. They have used this process on artifacts from North American villages and found that some villages existed about 5,000 years ago.

Scientists can tell that farming changed people's lives. As early Americans settled down, they began to share beliefs and ways of doing things. These shared traditions and behaviors are called **cultures**.

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Check for Understanding

List two ways that changes in the climate affected the migration of prehistoric peoples.

1. _____
2. _____

How did farming change the lives of early people?



Reading Check

12. What changes affected the nomadic way of life?



Analyzing

13. How can scientists tell how old a village is?



Defining

14. What is a *culture*?



15. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Label the tabs *Nomadic Culture* and *Farming Culture*. Use both sides of the tabs to list the characteristics that you remember about each kind of lifestyle.

The First Americans

Lesson 2 Cities and Empires

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do civilizations rise and fall?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What civilizations in Mexico, Central America, and South America predated the arrival of Europeans?*
2. *Why were the Inca considered a highly developed culture?*

Terms to Know

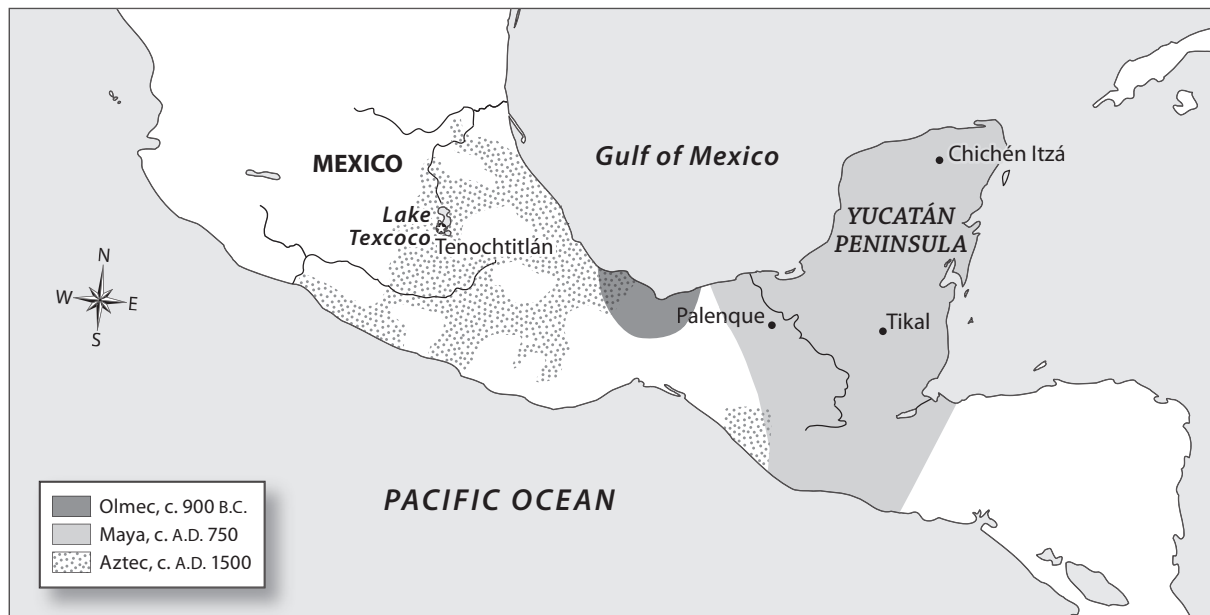
civilization highly developed society

theocracy a society ruled by religious leaders

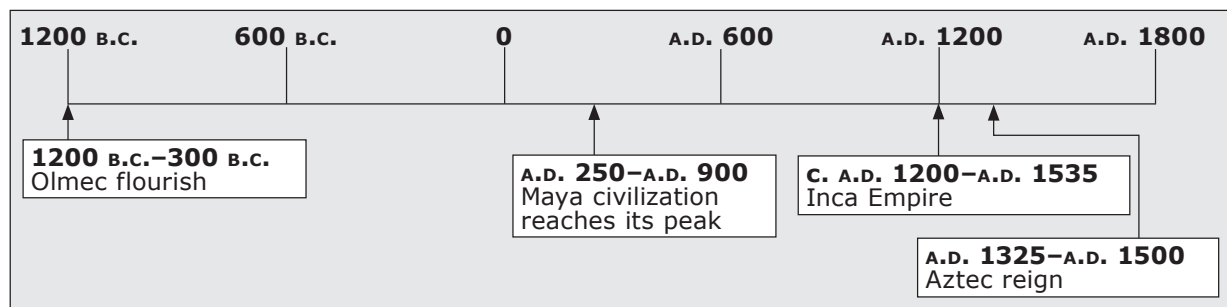
hieroglyphic a form of writing that uses symbols or pictures to represent things, ideas, and sounds

terrace broad platform of land cut into a slope

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



The First Americans

Lesson 2 Cities and Empires, *Continued*

Great Civilizations of Mexico, Central America, and South America

Hundreds of years before European explorers arrived, there were great **civilizations** in Mexico, Central America, and South America. Each civilization controlled large areas and had millions of people. They built cities in forests and on mountains. They created great art and advanced tools. This included complex, or very detailed, ways to track time, count, and write.

The largest and most advanced civilizations were:

- the Olmec
- the Maya
- the Aztec
- the Inca.

The Olmec civilization flourished between 1200 B.C. and 300 B.C. They lived along the Gulf Coast in today's Mexico. The Olmec built stone houses, monuments, and drainage systems. Olmec farmers grew enough food to feed thousands. The Olmec civilization eventually died out. Why this happened is still a mystery.

The Maya came after the Olmec. Between A.D. 250 and A.D. 900, they lived in areas that now make up Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. They built many large cities in the rain forests there. At one time, there may have been as many as 2 million Maya.

Maya civilization was a **theocracy**. This means it was ruled by religious leaders. Each Maya city had at least one stone pyramid, topped with a stone temple. This temple served as a center of religion and government.

The Maya believed the gods were visible in the stars, sun, and moon. Maya priests studied astronomy and advanced mathematics. They used their knowledge to predict eclipses and develop a 365-day calendar. To write, they used **hieroglyphics**. Hieroglyphics are symbols or pictures used to represent things, ideas, and sounds.

The Maya fed a large population with extensive farming. They grew maize, beans, squash, and other vegetables. They would trade their food crops at city markets for things like cotton cloth, pottery, deer meat, and salt. The Maya had many roads, but they did not have horses or the wheel. Traders carried goods—like jade statues, turquoise jewelry, and cacao beans (for making chocolate)—on their backs or by canoe up and down the east coast of Mexico.



Identifying

1. List two facts about the great civilizations before the Europeans arrived.



Mark the Text

2. Draw a circle around the four most advanced civilizations.



Examining Details

3. Where did the Olmec live?



Mark the Text

4. Underline the definition of *theocracy*.



Listing

5. List two accomplishments of the Maya that were based on their knowledge of astronomy and advanced mathematics.

The First Americans

Lesson 2 Cities and Empires, *Continued*



Describing

6. How did the Aztec know where to settle down?



Reading Check

7. Name the capital city of the Aztec Empire, and describe its location.



Explaining

8. How did the Aztec treat the people they conquered?



Making Connections

9. How were the Inca like the Aztec?

Eventually the Maya civilization declined. No one knows why. One idea is that the soil grew weak and could not produce enough food for the population. Its once-great cities were nearly empty by 1200. The descendants of the Maya still live in Mexico and Central America.

Many centuries later, another great civilization arose in central Mexico—the Aztec. An Aztec legend said that a god would send them a sign to tell them where to build their permanent home. In 1325, a group of Aztec hunters saw that sign on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco: an eagle with a snake in its beak sitting on a cactus.

The Aztec built their capital city on the island and called it Tenochtitlán. It was a wonder of construction. Workers dug soil from the bottom of the lake to build bridges between the city and the shore and to make fields for crops in the lake. Tenochtitlán became an important trade center. It was the largest city in the Americas and one of the largest in the world.

In the 1400s, the Aztec used their military to conquer many other groups. They forced conquered people to give them food and goods and to work as slaves. They also sacrificed prisoners of war to their gods to ensure rich harvests. Their empire was still strong when the Europeans came.

	Location	Accomplishments
Olmec	Gulf Coast of Mexico	Built stone houses, monuments, and drainage systems Grew crops to feed thousands
Maya	Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize	Could predict eclipses Developed 365-day calendar Wrote with hieroglyphics Grew crops to feed millions
Aztec	Central Mexico	Built Tenochtitlán Conquered large empire

The Great Inca Civilization

The largest early American empire developed in western South America—the Inca. Like the Aztec, the Inca had a powerful military and conquered many neighboring groups.

The First Americans

Lesson 2 Cities and Empires, *Continued*

All Inca men between 25 and 50 might have to serve in the army. They were skilled warriors and used weapons like clubs, spears, and slings. At its peak, the Inca empire stretched from Columbia to northern Argentina and Chile.

The Inca founded their capital city of Cuzco around 1200. Another important city was Machu Picchu, which may have been a place for religious ceremonies. Religion was a central part of Inca life. The Inca believed their emperor was a descendant of the sun god. They made beautiful jewelry and tributes for this god.

Farming was important to Inca life. In order to farm in their mountainous land, the Inca cut broad platforms called **terraces** into the slopes. They grew:

- maize
- squash
- tomatoes
- peanuts
- chili peppers
- cotton
- potatoes

To connect the large empire, the Inca built more than 10,000 miles (16,093 km) of roads. These were built over mountains, across deserts, and through rain forests. The Inca, who spoke Quechua, used quipus for keeping records. Quipus were different colors of string knotted in special patterns.

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Check for Understanding

List four great early cultures of Mexico, Central America, and South America.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

How were the Aztec and Inca civilizations similar? How were they different?



Reading Check

10. How did the Inca Empire grow so large?



Visualize It

11. In the box, draw a diagram of the terraces the Inca built for their crops.



Mark the Text

12. Circle the name of the Inca language.



13. Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. On the anchor tab write *Accomplishments*. Label the tabs *Olmec*, *Maya*, and *Aztec*. List two accomplishments for each group.

The First Americans

Lesson 3 North American Peoples

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What makes a culture unique?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What did the Adena, Hopewell, Mississippian, Hohokam, and Ancient Puebloan cultures have in common?*
2. *How did early Native Americans adapt to their environment?*

Terms to Know

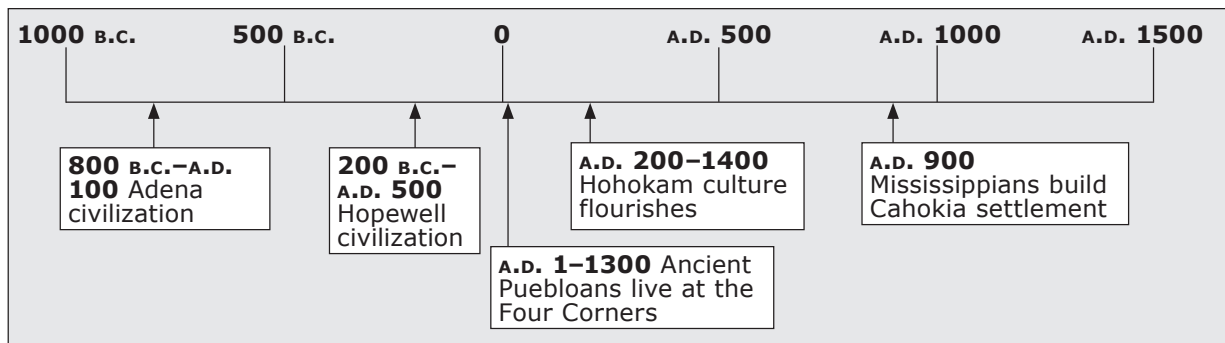
irrigate to supply water to crops by artificial means

federation government that links different groups

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



The First Americans

Lesson 3 North American Peoples, *Continued*

Early North American Cultures

North America produced advanced cultures in the centuries before Europeans arrived. Among them were:

- the Adena
- the Hopewell
- the Mississippians
- the Hohokam
- the Ancient Puebloans.

In Central and Eastern North America lived the Mound Builders. Scientists call them the Mound Builders because they built thousands of mounds out of earth. These mounds had different shapes and uses. Some looked like animals, such as snakes. Others looked like Maya or Aztec pyramids. Some were burial chambers, and others had temples on top like Maya pyramids. Could there have been a link between the Mound Builders and the Maya and Aztec?

Archaeologists have divided the Mound Builders into three different groups.

Mound Builder Cultures

Culture	Location	Notable Accomplishments
Adena c. 800 B.C.—A.D. 100	Ohio River valley	Hunters and gatherers
Hopewell c. 200 B.C.—A.D. 500	Ohio River valley and Mississippi River valley	Farmers and traders Built huge burial mounds Indications of wide trade networks
Mississippians c. A.D. 700—c. A.D. 1500	Southeast and along Mississippi River	Built Cahokia, largest earthworks settlement

The Mississippians settlement Cahokia may have had a population of 20,000 or more. This city resembled the great cities of Mexico. It featured a large pyramid-shaped mound with a large temple on top called Monks Mound. It was 100 feet (30 m) tall.



Listing

1. List two shapes the Mound Builders used in their earthworks.



Making Inferences

2. Why might people think there was a connection between the Mound Builders and the Maya and Aztec?



Analyzing

3. Which Mound Builder civilizations existed at the same time? When?



Identifying

4. What was the name of a Mississippian settlement?

The First Americans**Lesson 3** North American Peoples, *Continued***Mark the Text**

5. Underline the definition of *irrigate*.

**Describing**

6. Describe the area called the Four Corners.

**Reading Check**

7. Name two types of dwellings the Ancient Puebloans built.

**Defining**

8. What is an *igloo*?

**Reading Check**

9. Give two examples of how Western peoples adapted to their environment.

The Hohokam lived in the hot desert of what is now Arizona from about A.D. 200 to 1400. In order to farm in that climate, the Hohokam built hundreds of miles of channels to **irrigate**, or bring water to, their fields. They grew corn, cotton, and other crops. They also made pottery, carved stone, and used acid to make patterns in shells, which they got from coastal peoples.

From about A.D. 1 to 1300, the Ancient Puebloans lived in the Four Corners region. This is the area where the modern states of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet. The Ancient Puebloans are known for their huge stone dwellings, later called *pueblos* by Spanish explorers. One pueblo—Pueblo Bonito—has four stories and hundreds of rooms.

The Ancient Puebloans also built shelters into the walls of steep cliffs. These cliff dwellings were good protection from winter weather and enemy attacks. One of the largest was Mesa Verde in Colorado, where thousands lived.

The Native Americans Circa 1492

The Inuit settled the cold region of North America near the Arctic Ocean. Scientists think they originally came from Siberia, which is also very cold, and brought cold-weather survival skills with them. They built shelters called *igloos* out of snow blocks. They hunted whales, seals, and walrus from small boats and caribou on land. They used animal skins to make clothes and burned seal oil in lamps.

The western coast of North America provided a milder climate and dependable food sources. Western peoples included:

- The Tlingit, Haida, and Chinook of the northwestern coast (present-day Canada, Washington, and Oregon). These cultures relied on the woods and the waters. They built houses and canoes from wood. Their main food was salmon.
- The Nez Perce and Yakima of the plateau region between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains. These groups lived in earthen houses. They fished, hunted deer, and gathered roots and berries.
- Today's California was home to many groups. Along the northern coast, people fished for food. In the central valley, the Pomo pounded acorns into flour. In the southern deserts, nomads gathered roots and seeds.

The First Americans

Lesson 3 North American Peoples, *Continued*

- In the Great Basin of the Southwest between the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains, the Ute and Shoshone hunted small game and gathered pine nuts, juniper berries, roots, and even some insects.

The Hopi, Acoma, and Zuni of the Southwest descended from the Ancient Puebloans. They built houses from bricks made of dried mud called *adobe*. They irrigated their fields and farmed maize, beans, squash, melons, pumpkins, and fruit. In the 1500s, the nomadic Apache and Navajo came to this region. The Navajo later formed villages, living in square houses called *hogans*. They began to farm and even to raise sheep.

The nomadic Plains peoples lived in hide tents called *tepees*. The women planted maize, squash, and beans. The men hunted antelope, deer, and buffalo. Buffalo provided more than food. Their skin was used for clothes and shelter, and their bones were used to make weapons.

In the woodlands of eastern North America lived many Algonquian peoples, who all spoke a similar language. The Cherokee and Iroquois had formal laws and alliances called **federations**. There were five Iroquois nations—the Onondaga, Seneca, Mohawk, Oneida, and Cayuga. They were often at war until, in the 1500s, they established the Great Peace and formed the Iroquois League. Under the League's constitution, the Grand Council settled disputes.

Southeastern peoples were farmers. In the eastern part of the region, the Creek grew corn, squash, tobacco, and other crops. The Chickasaw farmed the fertile area where the Mississippi River connects to the sea.

Check for Understanding

What evidence might connect the Mound Builders with the Maya and Aztec?

Name one way each of these Native American groups adapted to their environment:

Hohokam _____

Ancient Puebloans _____

Inuit _____

Plains People _____



Describing

- 10.** How did the Southwest people grow crops in such a dry region?



Listing

- 11.** List three things buffalo provided for the Plains peoples.



Analyzing

- 12.** How did the five Iroquois nations come together?



- 13.** Place a one-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Create a memory map by writing *Dwellings* in the middle of the tab. Draw arrows to words or phrases you remember about the kinds of shelter Native Americans built. Write additional information on the back.