

THE FIRST AMERICANS

Modern humans first appeared in Africa. They spread all over the world. But how did they reach America?

Today North and South America are joined together and separated from Europe by an ocean. But thousands of years ago it wasn't so. There was a land bridge called **Beringia** (Bering Strait) that connected America with Asia (see the map!). People could walk from Asia to America and they did not need boats to travel.



People in those times were **nomads** who followed the animals that they hunted. They also needed new land to gather fruit and berries. Over hundreds of years they followed the animals and travelled huge distances. At around **11.000 years ago** these people came to America.

These Indians settled all over North and South America. There were many different groups of Indians. The historians put them into 2 groups:

1. **ENVIRONMENTS** (where people live) If the Indians lived by the sea then they fished. If they lived in woods or plains then they hunted animals.



2. **LANGUAGES** (how people speak) There were probably about 200 different languages. The Indians did not write down their languages. So our knowledge comes from what white people saw and wrote. Many of white people did not like the Indians.

THE FIRST AMERICANS- working station No.1

Write true (T), false (F) or the answer is not given (NG).

1. The first modern human comes from Africa. _____
2. Bering Strait joined North and South America thousands of years ago. _____
3. We can still walk from Asia to America today. _____
4. Nomads are people who move a lot. _____
5. Nomads came to America because they followed buffalo. _____
6. The Indians, who lived in woods, ate only hunted animals. _____
7. Each tribe had its own language. _____
8. Indians liked to write books. _____
9. We know mostly what white people told us. _____
10. All white people thought Indians are great. _____

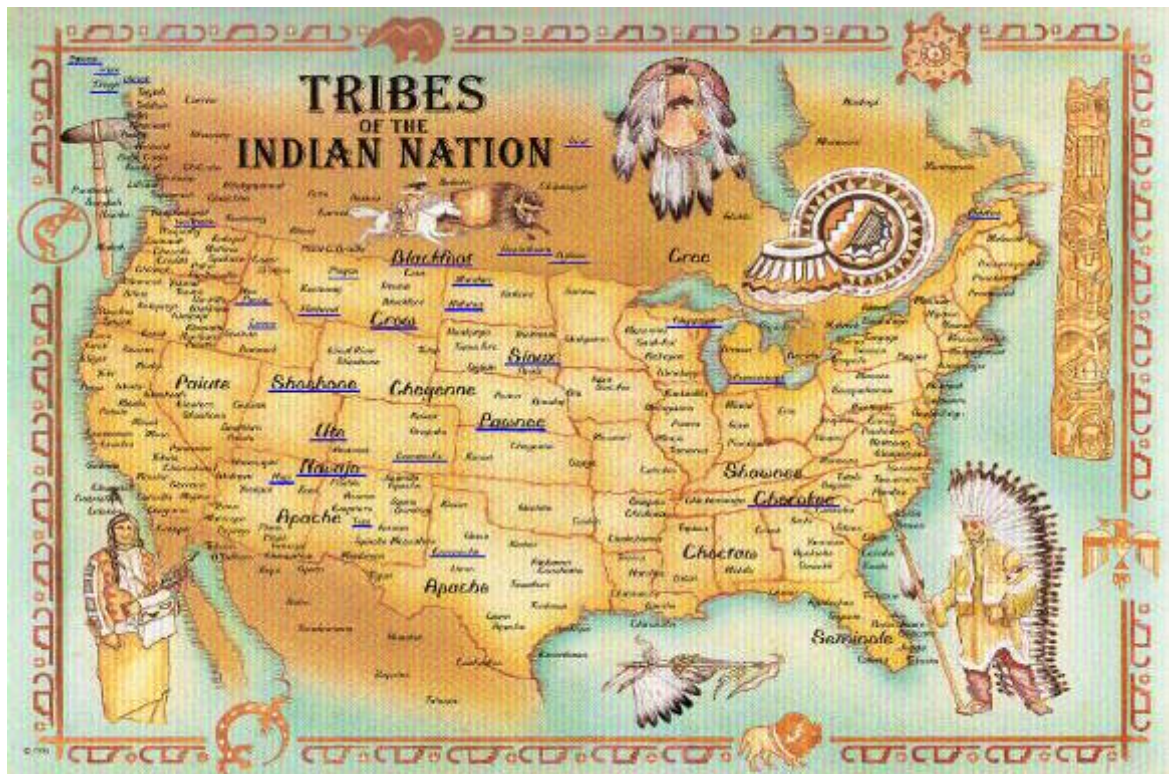
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS'S MISTAKE



In **1492** the European explorers arrived in America. They found around 2 million Native Americans living there. **Christopher Columbus** made his famous mistake. He called them **Indians**, thinking they had landed in Far East of Asia, in India. He discovered the New World, but it was **Amerigo Vespucci** who proved, this New World is the 4th continent, not Asia. After him the America got its name.

These “Indians” belonged to at least **600 different tribes** (unofficially 4000) and spoke about **200 different languages**. The most famous tribes were:

- the Sioux (or Lakota)
- the Apache
- the Cheyenne
- the Cherokee
- the Bigfoot



Each tribe spoke a different language, they had different languages, houses and entertainments. However they all followed a similar life based on hunting and farming. Those people were all related to people of Northern Asia. Their ancestors crossed a land bridge from **Siberia to Alaska**.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS- working station No.2

Complete the text with the words in box. There are two words extra, that don't fit in the text.

tribes, Indians, incorrect, Amerigo, types, 1492, Sioux, way, Columbus, India, different, Apache

In ¹ _____ Christopher ² _____ “discovered” America by accident. He was actually trying to reach ³ _____. He called the people that lived there ⁴ _____. This was completely ⁵ _____. Later, America got its name after ⁶ _____.

There were numerous ⁷ _____ of Native Americans or “Indians”. Even though they spoke ⁸ _____ languages, had different ⁹ _____ of houses and entertainment, they lived the very same ¹⁰ _____ of life.

THE PLAINS INDIANS

The largest group of Indians that lived in North America were the **Plains Indians**. The largest tribe of Plains Indians called themselves the **Sioux or the Lakota Indians**. At the start of the 19th century tribes moved from place to place hunting. They were called **nomads**. Nomad means that the Indians never stayed in one place but moved following the buffalo that they hunted.

The Plains Indians were people who travelled around and moved camps at least **three** times a year. For this reason they lived in **tepees**, those were like big tents and were easy to put up and take down. The tepees were transported by horses.



Inside the tepee you would find all the items you need to live. They were decorated with pictures, stored with weapons and food. The Indians would also have a fire in the middle of the tepee to cook the food. The Sioux used to put buffalo skins on the floor to use as carpets and beds.

In the Indian camp everyone had a job to do. The **men** had to hunt for food and keep the families safe. The **women** had to cook the meals, make the clothes, look after children and whenever they moved they had to take down or put up the tepees. Did you know that a woman could put down the tepee in just 15 minutes?



THE PLAINS INDIANS- working station No.3

Answer in short the questions below.

1. What was the biggest group of Indians called? _____
2. Who were Sioux? _____
3. What did nomads do? _____
4. Why did they live in tepees? _____
5. What items could be found in a tepee? _____
6. Where did they sleep? _____
7. Did all the members of the tribe work? _____
8. What was men's job? _____
9. What did women do? _____
10. What were women on the last picture doing? _____

FAMILY LIFE

Women worked very hard to make life comfortable. First of all they made tepees. It was a women's job. You had to be very hard-working and had great skill for it. Buffalo hides had to be scraped, softened, stretched, cut and sewn together. They needed an average 18-20 buffalo hides for one tepee. Women also collected food like wild berries and plants to serve with meat. They had great skill in beadwork and quills, too.



The Indians lived in large family groups including all generations- young and old. A **child** called aunts and uncles “mother” and “father” as well as parents. They didn't go to school. they learnt by copying adults. Girls played with deer skin dolls and toy tepees and boys played with miniature arrows and bows.

By the age 13 they learnt all the needed to become an active member of the tribe. They married young 12-15 years old. Women usually had 3-4 children. The children were give a name by a respected older woman or man of the tribe.



RITUALS AND CUSTOMS



COUNCIL: Indians didn't have written laws. They had a Council instead. They selected quiet and honest men to be councilmen. Those would sit and discuss important things, from murder to war with another tribe. Councilmen were often dressed in ceremonial clothes.

POLYGAMY: Polygamy means having more than one wife. That was normal for Indians because there were more women than men. One Indian hunter could kill enough buffalo to feed a number of women and children, so he could have more wives (they called them *squaws*). The more wives he had, the more buffalo skins were prepared and he could trade more to get valuable things.



FAMILY: No other tribe than Sioux loved their family more. They adored their children and spoil them. They never punished them, except in extreme cases, when they would throw a bucket of cold water over them. They never beat their children. When boys needed discipline they couldn't go hunting or play war games. For the girls; they couldn't help their mothers or play with dolls.

Sioux needed to travel all the time to find food. When a person was too old to travel with, she or he was left behind to die. For them that was perfectly normal.

RITUALS AND CUSTOMS- working station No.5

There is one mistake in each sentence. Correct the mistake.

1. Indians had laws written down.
2. Council was made of men who were rich.
3. They sat and discuss everyday things, dressed in ceremonial clothes.
4. Indians had polygamy because there were more men.
5. Squawes were Indian tepees.
6. Indians hated their families.
7. They always beat their children.
8. The worst punishment for children was throwing hot water at them.
9. Girls' punshment was no hunting with adults.
10. If they couldn't run with the tribe anymore, they left them to die alone.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

MARRIAGE: Many men were killed in war and hunting, so there were more women than men. A wealthy man might have more than one wife (polygamy). The number of wives was limited with how much food he could hunt. The more successful hunter he was, the more wives he could have. For the wives it meant good because they could share their work.

If a man's brother died, he would be expected to marry the widow and take care for her children. Polygamy seemed like a perfect solution. It meant one wife didn't have so much work, and everyone could be properly looked after.



DIVORCE: Indians honoured their wives very much because they did all the work except hunting, fishing and fighting. If the marriage didn't work, the divorce was very easy for either partner.

To be divorces the man would announce publicly that he had "thrown away his woman". Men usually did this by banging a drum. The woman could divorce her husband simply by moving her belongings back to her parent's tepee.



MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE- working station No.6

Chose the right answer a, b or c to complete the sentences.

1. If a man was a _____ hunter, he could have more wives.
a. bad b. good c. fast
2. The number of wives was limited by _____.
a. children b. how pretty he was c. hunted food
3. The wives had _____ work to do, if there were more of them
a. less b. more c. same
4. The tribe expected a man to marry his brother's _____.
a. sister b. widow c. youngest daughter
5. Indian women were treated _____.
a. with respect b. like men c. badly
6. A divorce was very _____ for man or woman.
a. hard b. complicated c. simple
7. They needed to tell _____ about getting a divorce.
a. the chieftain b. the whole tribe c. their parents
8. Playing a _____ could mean a divorce.
a. guitar b. flute c. drum
9. A woman _____ also divorce her husband.
a. could b. couldn't c. never
10. She simply moved all she had back to her parent's _____.
a. house b. apartment c. tepee

WARFARE

Bravery was extremely important to Indians. Every man wanted an opportunity to prove their bravery. And each tribe expected loyalty and bravery from its members.

The greatest bravery during a battle was to touch the enemy with bare hands or with a special stick (called *coup stick*). Acts of bravery were more important than actually killing someone!

A warrior got “few points” for killing a man from a distance with his bow and arrow, but he got even more points for getting close enough to tap him with his **coup stick**. They marked their winnings with feather or notches on a stick that were shown to all tribe members.



CAUSES OF WAR: Indian often liked to fight wars because gave them a chance to win glory. The most common reason of war was desire for horses. Capturing horses from an enemy was an act of bravery. They also fought for hunting lands or because an insult. For the war they always prepared and painted the horses and themselves and made rituals, like dances with medicine man, who gave them spiritual advice.

They preferred to surprise the enemy with unexpected attack. They were very brave and cunning. Average 20-30 men attacked and few were killed. Women rarely took part in attacking.

Death of the enemies often led to **scalping**. The skin and hair from the top of a head were removed. They believed that without a scalp you could not enter the eternal after-life. So they removed scalps to have fewer enemies in the after-life. For them, a scalp was a trophy and a cause of celebration.



medicine man

WARFARE- working station No.7

Put the word from the box into the right category.

medicine man spiritual advice, hunting territory, bravery, loyalty, touching the enemy with bare hands, painting horses, insults, capturing horses, scalping, killing the enemy with bow and arrow, tap the enemy with coup stick, ritual dance of war

good warrior	acts of bravery	preparation for war	causes of war

The battle of the LITTLE BIGHORN, 1876

Sioux and Cheyenne were very angry with white people. White people were travelling into their sacred lands in search for gold. Sioux gathered to fight for their lands with Sitting Bull. They were led by Crazy Horse to fight against whites.



Sitting Bull



Crazy Horse



Colonel Custer

The US army sent Colonel George Custer and the 7th cavalry to force Indians back to their reservations. They should wait for reinforcements but Colonel Custer ignored the orders to wait and decided to attack only with men he had there.

He didn't realize how many the Indians were. But Sioux Indians joined with Cheyenne Indians too. There were now **12.000 Indians** together. The US army, led by Custer, had only **250 men**.

Custer divided troops into **three parts**. First was sent to prevent Indian escape through the upper valley; second to take charge of the Indian village and third, led by Custer, to fight with Indian warriors.



As the Indians closed in circle the US army, Custer ordered men to shoot their horses and form a wall. The army still thought they could win because they had better weapons.

In a fierce battle in **less than an hour**, Custer and all his men were killed. It was the worst American military disaster ever.

Little Bighorn showed the Indians power. It was their greatest victory, but soon the tribes union fell apart because of white men slaughtering. Within a year Sioux nation was defeated and broken. The survived Indians were forced to live in small reservations, like animals in cages.

LITTLE BIGHORN- working station No.8

Make questions to the underlined information in the answers.

1. _____
Indians were angry with white people.
2. _____
Whites were stealing gold from Indians' sacred land.
3. _____
Indians gathered to fight for their lands.
4. _____
The US army wanted to force Indians to live in reservations.
5. _____
They ignored to wait for the reinforcements.
6. _____
They decided to attack alone the Indians.
7. _____
Cheyenne joined the Sioux.
8. _____
There were 12.000 Indians together.
9. _____
The battle lasted one hour.
10. _____
Indians won the battle in less than an hour.