

ACTIVITY 3

The First Americans



Atlas pages 14–17

Objectives

- Trace possible routes of migration for the first Americans.
- Identify and locate seven American Indian culture groups.
- Determine how American Indians acquired food.
- Classify information about American Indian culture groups.

Materials

- ☐ Raised Relief Maps
- ☐ U.S./World Desk Maps
- ☐ map markers

Getting Started

Show students an image of an old canoe. Explain that archaeologists have not found any of the early boats that the first people used to come to North America, so we do not know what they looked like. However, we can imagine that they were wooden and relatively small. Ask students what the most important supplies would be if they were going to start a journey that lasted for months. Write student responses on the board.

Teaching

1 Trace possible routes of migration for the first Americans.

- Divide the class into seven groups. Distribute a U.S./World Desk Map, a Raised Relief Map, and map markers to each group.
- Direct students' attention to the World Map and the map pull-out box showing the North Polar View. Have students consult the maps on pages 6 and 7 of the atlas to trace the possible migration route along the Kelp Highway by starting in Asia at the point closest to North America/Alaska and trace south along the coastline until they arrive at the coast of present-day California.
- Explain that the peoples who settled in North America needed fresh water, food, and materials for shelter. Say:
 - Use the U.S. Desk Map and the Raised Relief Map to identify likely locations for settlements. Remember that people needed fresh water and were carrying supplies for settlements by boat or by foot.
 - Identify seven locations and mark these with a question mark on your map.

2 Identify and locate seven American Indian culture groups.

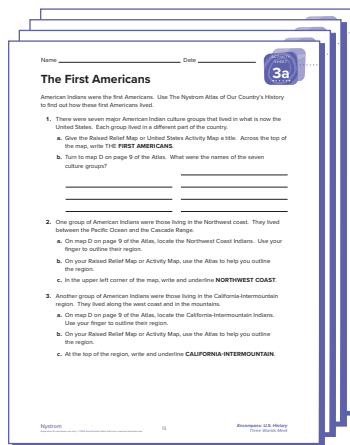
- Tell students to look at map D on page 9 of the atlas. Say:
 - What landmarks or clues can you use to find the same areas on the Desk Map? (rivers, coastlines, borders, latitude and longitude lines, lakes)

3 Determine how American Indians acquired food.

- a. Start by asking students how Americans get their food today. Say:
 - Most Americans today buy most of their food.
 - The first Americans couldn't buy food. There were no supermarkets. There were no restaurants.
 - Each American Indian village had to grow, gather, or catch the food they ate.
 - They were dependent on their environment.
- b. Point out chart C on page 9 of the atlas. Say:
 - This chart shows the main foods that each American Indian culture group ate.
 - However, it does not show every food that a group ate.

4 Classify information about American Indian culture groups.

- a. Remind students that the culture groups had many different groups within them. Culture groups are a way of grouping and organizing people based on similarities. Say:
 - In today's activity, we will be using the charts and maps in the atlas to help us see the characteristics of each culture group, and see the similarities and differences between them.



Activity Sheet 3

Summarizing and Assessing

1. Distribute Activity Sheet 3.
2. After students have complete the lesson, ask them to discuss what natural resources they can think of in the area. What would they use for homes, food, and other survival needs if they had lived here thousands of years ago?

Extending

Writing: Choose an American Indian culture group that lived in your area. Write at least a three-sentence paragraph describing that culture group and its lifestyle.



The First Americans

American Indians were the first Americans. Use The Nystrom Atlas of Our Country's History to find out how these first Americans lived.

1. There were seven major American Indian culture groups that lived in what is now the United States. Each group lived in a different part of the country.
 - a. Give the Raised Relief Map or United States Activity Map a title. Across the top of the map, write **THE FIRST AMERICANS**.
 - b. Turn to map D on page 9 of the Atlas. What were the names of the seven culture groups?







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2. One group of American Indians were those living in the Northwest coast. They lived between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Range.
 - a. On map D on page 9 of the Atlas, locate the Northwest Coast Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - c. In the upper left corner of the map, write and underline **NORTHWEST COAST**.
3. Another group of American Indians were those living in the California-Intermountain region. They lived along the west coast and in the mountains.
 - a. On map D on page 9 of the Atlas, locate the California-Intermountain Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - c. At the top of the region, write and underline **CALIFORNIA-INTERMOUNTAIN**.



4. A third group of American Indians were those living in the Southwest. They lived in what is now Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico.
 - a. On map D on page 9 of the Atlas, locate the Southwest Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - c. At the top of the region, write and underline **SOUTHWEST**.
5. A fourth group of American Indians were those living in Middle America, also called Mesoamerica. These people lived mainly in Mexico. But this culture group was also found in southern Texas.
 - a. On map D on page 9 of the Atlas, locate the Middle America Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the portion of the region that shows.
 - c. In the Gulf of Mexico, write and underline **MIDDLE AMERICA**.
6. A fifth group of American Indians were those living in the plains. They lived between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.
 - a. On map D on page 9 of the Atlas, locate the Plains Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - c. At the top of the region, write and underline **PLAINS**.
7. A sixth group of American Indians were those living in the eastern woodlands. Most of these people lived east of the Mississippi River.
 - a. On map D, locate the Eastern Woodlands Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - b. On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - c. At the top of the region, write and underline **EASTERN WOODLANDS**.







8. A seventh group of American Indians were those living in the subarctic region. They lived in the cold climates in the far north.
- On map D, locate the Subarctic Indians. Use your finger to outline their region.
 - On your Raised Relief Map or Activity Map, use the Atlas to help you outline the region.
 - At the top of the region, write and underline **SUBARCTIC**.
9. Some culture groups, like the Eastern Woodlands and Northwest Coast Indians, rarely went hungry. Their environments provided plenty of food. Other groups, like some of the California-Intermountain Indians, lived in a dry, harsh area with few resources and little food.
- Look at the map key on your map. Find the four natural regions.
 - Now look at your map. What was the main or largest natural region in each of the following areas?
Northwest Coast _____
California-Intermountain _____
Southwest _____
Plains _____
Eastern Woodlands _____
 - Little of the Middle America area is shown on the map. The main natural region in that area was shrub or desert.
 - On your map, below the name of any group that lived in forestland, write  = **FOREST**.
 - Below the name of any group that lived in grassland, write  = **GRASS**.
 - Below the name of any group that lived in a shrub or desert region, write  = **DESERT**.
10. Other natural features also affected the food available to the culture group.
- Every culture group, except the Plains Indians, lived in an area with major mountain ranges. Below the names of all five of these groups, write  = **MOUNTAINS**.
 - The Plains and some Eastern Woodlands Indians lived in areas with flat or gently rolling plains. Below the region name, write  = **PLAINS**.
 - The Eastern Woodlands, Northwest Coast, and California-Intermountain regions bordered either the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean. Below each of their names, write  = **OCEAN**.

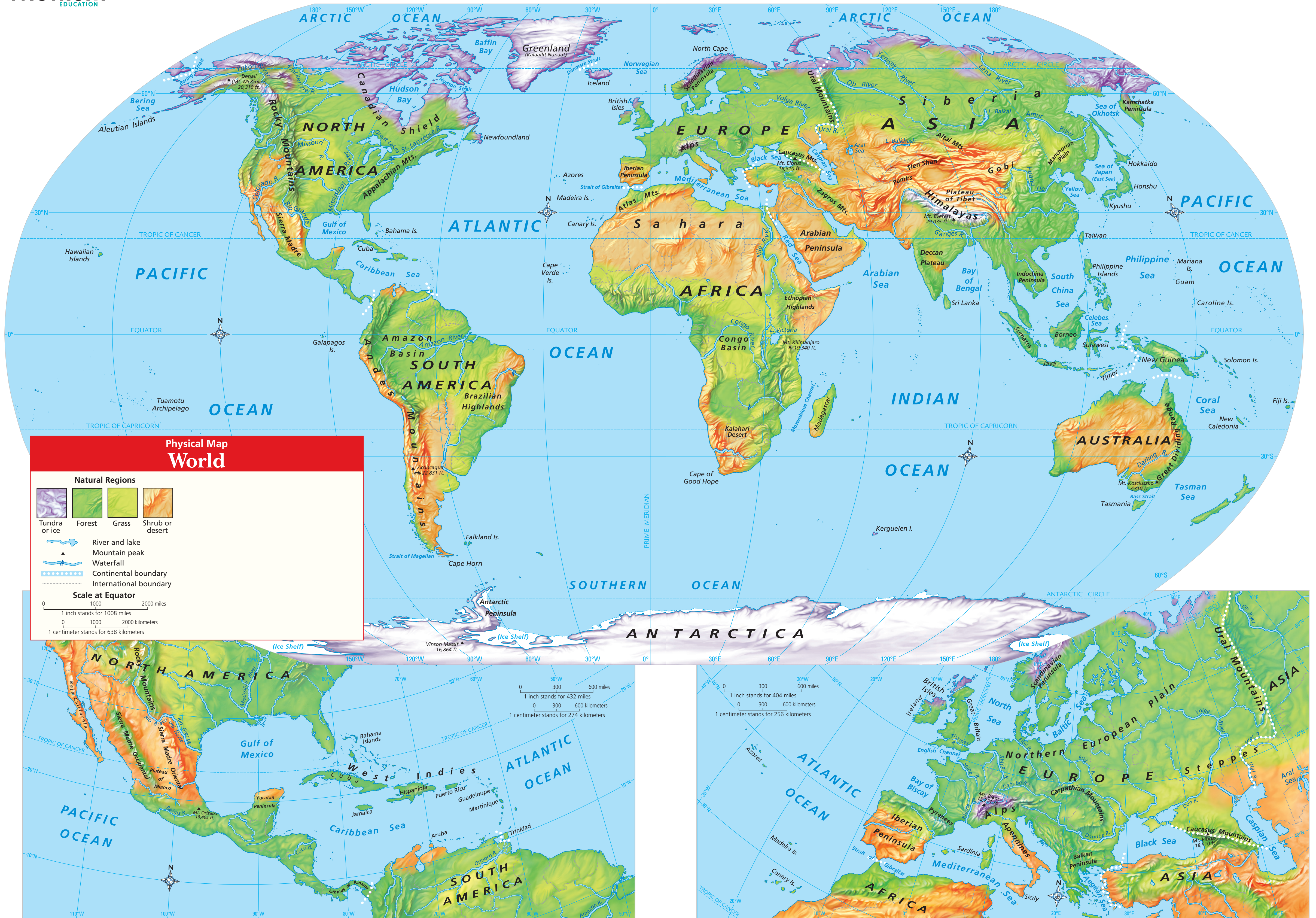
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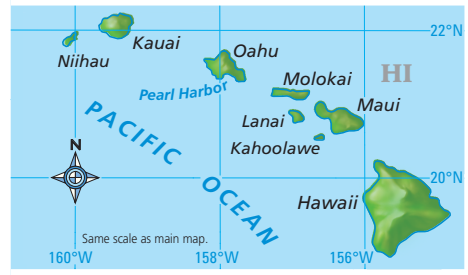


11. American Indians obtained food in a variety of ways.

- a. Some American Indians were farmers. Look at chart C on page 9 of the Atlas. Point to groups that ate corn, beans, or squash; they were farmers.
- b. On your map, below the names of any groups that farmed, write  = **FARM**.
- c. Some groups gathered their food from trees and bushes. Look again at chart C on page 9 of the Atlas. Point to groups that ate roots, nuts, acorns, cactus fruit, or berries; they were gatherers.
- d. On your map, below the names of any groups that gathered, write  = **GATHER**.
- e. Many groups hunted for their food. Look at chart C on page 9 of the Atlas. Point to groups that ate animals such as deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, or rabbit; they were hunters.
- f. On your map, below the names of all the groups that hunted, write  = **HUNT**.
- g. A few groups relied heavily on fishing for their food. Look at chart C on page 9 of the Atlas. Point to groups that ate salmon; they fished.
- h. On your map, below the names of any groups that fished, write  = **FISH**.







Physical Map
United States

Natural Regions

| | | | |
|---------------|--------|-------|-----------------|
| | | | |
| Tundra or ice | Forest | Grass | Shrub or desert |

River and lake
 Mountain peak
 Waterfall
 Continental boundary
 International boundary
 State boundary

Scale

0 100 200 miles
1 inch stands for 163 miles

0 100 200 kilometers
1 centimeter stands for 103 kilometers

NYSTROM
EDUCATION

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