

The Land Bridge and the Earliest Americans

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

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Length of Unit: Five Lessons

I. ABSTRACT

The Earliest Americans crossed the Arctic Ocean from Asia to North America during the Ice Age. Around 11,000 B.C. to 9,000 B.C., Native Americans walked across the land bridge and slowly migrated south establishing three of our earliest distinct cultures: the Inuits, the Anasazi, and the Mound Builders. This unit focuses on plotting the migration paths of these early Americans, the time period involved, and the understanding of each tribe's way of life, in comparison to where they lived. Integrated throughout the unit are skills addressing American History, Math, Geography, Science and many aspects of Language Arts.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
2. Students will learn to work with maps to follow tribal migration.
3. Students will understand chronological organization of history.

B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

1. During the Ice Age, nomadic hunters cross what was the land bridge from Asia to North America.
2. How different peoples, with different languages and ways of life eventually spread out over the North and South American continents. These early peoples include:
 - a. Inuits (Eskimo)
 - b. Anasazi, pueblo builders and cliff dwellers
 - c. Mound Builders
3. Spatial sense (Working with maps, globes, timelines and other geographic tools)
 - a. Understand that maps have keys or legends with symbols and their uses
 - b. Identify major oceans: Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic
 - c. Identify the seven continents: Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, and Australia
4. Define B.C./B.C.E and A.D./C.E.
5. Use a dictionary to answer questions regarding meaning and usage of words with which they are unfamiliar.

C. Skill Objectives

1. Identify continents and major oceans on modern and ancient world maps.
2. Read a map and follow migration of the earliest Americans.
3. Create and use a map legend.
4. Create and use a timeline.
5. Create a KWL chart of the unit.
6. Use a concept wheel to understand unknown words.
7. Use a graphic organizer to research for specific information and use that knowledge in class discussion.
8. Know how to gather information from basic print sources and take notes.
9. Interpreting text to give plausible answers to how, why and what-if.
10. Use a dictionary to look up new vocabulary.
11. Create a project based on information gathered.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For Teachers

1. During the Ice Age changes in climate caused the formation of huge amounts of ice made from the surrounding seas. This freezing caused the sea levels to fall and coastlines to change. During this time a 12-mile wide “land bridge” formed (Beringa), approximately 40,000 B.C. to 10,000 B.C. (dates are changing as more information is found).
2. At the end of the Ice Age (approximately 10,000 B.C.) temperatures began to rise and ice began to melt. Eventually the water covered the 12-mile wide land bridge that had been created by glaciers and people could no longer “walk” to America.
3. People chose different lifestyles based on the climate, the food sources and movement. Some chose to stay in the north and hunt while others moved further south and eventually became farmers.
4. Use books to study the homes, food, and modes of:
 - a. Inuits: *Native American People: The Inuit*, Elizabeth Hahn
Houses of snow, skin, and bones, Bonnie Shemie
 - b. Anasazi: *Anasazi*, Leonard Fisher
Cities in the Sand, Scott Warren
 - c. Mound Builders: *Mounds of earth and shell*, by Bonnie Shemie
A History of US: The First Americans, Joy Hakim

B. For Students

1. The study of crossing the land bridge from Asia to North America (1st Grade *Core Knowledge Sequence*).
 - a. From hunting to farming
 - b. Gradual development of early towns and cities

IV. RESOURCES

- A. Arnold, Caroline. *The Ancient Cliff Dwellers of Mesa Verde*
- B. Arnold, Caroline. *Stories in Stone: Rock Art Pictures by Early Americans*
- C. Eyewitness Books, *North American Indian*.
- D. Fisher, Leonard Everett. *Anasazi*
- E. Hahn, Elizabeth. *Native American People: The Inuit*
- F. Hakim Joy. *History of US: The First Americans, Prehistory-1600*
- G. Shemie, Bonnie, *Houses of adobe*
- H. Shemie, Bonnie, *Houses of snow, skin, and bones*
- I. Shemie, Bonnie, *Mounds of earth and shell*
- J. Tamarin, Alfred & Shirley Glubok, *Ancient Indians of the Southwest*
- K. Maestro, Betsy & Giulio, *The Discovery of the Americas*
- L. Warren, Scott. *Cities in the Sand: The Ancient Civilizations of the Southwest*

V. LESSONS

Lesson One

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
 - b. Students will learn to work with maps to follow tribal migration.
 - c. Students will understand chronological organization of history.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Working with maps, globes, timelines and other geographic tools.
 - b. Discussion of geological features which change the earth over time (the opening of the land bridge with the rise and fall of oceans due to glaciers.)

3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Identify continents and major oceans on modern and ancient world maps.
 - b. Create and use a timeline.
 - c. Create a KWL chart of the unit.
- B. *Materials*
1. Current world map with Asia on the left
 2. Student world maps with emphasis on Asia to North America land bridge area
 3. Butcher paper or sentence strip for timeline
 4. KWL chart for each student and one poster, or overhead, for class of KWL chart
 5. Socials Studies folder for unit materials (handmade or pocket folder)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Land bridge – land connecting two continents
 2. Timeline – a line marking a period of time
 3. B.C./B.C.E. – the initials of the phrase “Before Christ,” B.C. is used to show dates before the birth of Jesus; Before Common Era (B.C.E.) is the “new” phrasing
 4. A.D. – the initials of the Latin phrase Anno Domini, which means “in the years of the Lord,” used to show dates after the birth of Jesus
 5. Archaeologist – scientists who study materials from the past
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Teacher will put up a current map of the world.
 2. Ask students, “What is this?”
 3. Give students world map worksheet.
 4. As a group, label continents and major oceans.
 5. Begin a discussion as follows:
 - a. “Do you think the world has always looked like this? Why? Why not?”
 - b. (Encourage students to imagine.) How do you think it looked millions of years ago? Thousands? Hundreds?
 - c. Say, “The earth hasn’t always looked like it does today. What kind of things can change how the land looks?” (volcano, fire, glaciers)
 - d. Say, “How does the land look different in summer and winter? What if it were winter ALL the time? Can you walk on water in the winter? Do you know there WAS a time when it was winter all year round? It was called the Ice Age.”
 6. Draw a timeline (butcher paper or sentence strip) with only 0 marked in the middle. Have students copy the timeline on the open area of their modern world map.
 - a. Write the current year (2000) on the timeline, define A.D. and discuss number of years from 0 – 2000. Write 2,000 on the board.
 - b. Write 10,000 on the timeline, define B.C.E./B.C. and discuss how years count “backwards” during this time. Write 10,000 on the board.
 - c. Add the number of years you have put on the board. (12,000 years).
 7. Begin discussion for KWL Chart.
 - a. Ask, “What do you know about events that happened last year?”
 - b. Ask, “Do you think people are interested in what happened 5 years ago? 10 years? 100 years?” (We must be, because we have the history channel, books, and history classes.)
 - c. “Why would anyone want to know about things that happened 12,000 years ago?” (We can build on what others learned and improve our society.)
 - d. “What do you call a person who studies about the past?” (Archaeologist)
 - e. Get out KWL chart. Use a wall chart for the whole class and give each student a copy to use at their desk.

- f. Ask, “What do YOU know about what was happening 12,000 years ago?” (Houses, people, food, modes of travel, etc.)
 - g. Fill in chart as students respond.
 - h. Ask, “What would you LIKE to know as we study this time period?” (Houses, people, food, modes of travel, etc.)
 - i. Fill in chart.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
- 1. Filled in timeline and map with continents and major oceans. Keep timeline/map in folder for use in later lessons.
 - 2. Filled in K & W of KWL chart. Keep in folder for use in later lessons.

Lesson Two

A. *Daily Objectives*

- 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will learn to work with maps to follow tribal migration.
 - b. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
 - c. Students will understand chronological organization of history.
- 2. Lesson Content
 - a. During the Ice Age, nomadic hunters cross what was the land bridge from Asia to North America. (Migration)
 - b. Spatial sense (Working with maps, globes, timelines and other geographic tools.)
 - i. Understand that maps have keys or legends with symbols and their uses
 - ii. Identify major oceans: Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic
 - iii. Identify the seven continents: Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, and Australia
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print sources and take notes.
 - b. Use a dictionary to look up new vocabulary.
 - c. Read a map and follow migration of the earliest Americans.
 - d. Create and use a timeline.
 - e. Create and use a map legend.
 - f. Use a concept wheel to understand unknown words.

B. *Materials*

- 1. Social Studies folder (maps/KWL/timeline)
- 2. *Ancient Indians of the Southwest* (Appendix C)
- 3. Highlighter for each student
- 4. Class dictionaries
- 5. Copy of instructions for Concept Wheel for teacher (Appendix A)
- 6. Copies of Appendix B for each student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

- 1. Ancient – very old
- 2. Legend – a list or chart that explains the symbols on a map
- 3. Migrate – to move from one living place to another
- 4. Mammoth – an elephant with shaggy hair that lived thousands of years ago
- 5. Mastodon – an animal related to and resembling the elephant

D. *Procedures/Activities*

- 1. Give students a copy of reading from *Ancient Indians of the Southwest* (Appendix C).
- 2. Read together marking unfamiliar words with a highlighter. Add words to the list that are ‘key’ vocabulary. Look up vocabulary in dictionary.
- 3. Discuss vocabulary and definitions.
- 4. Ask, “What things would you like to see on our maps?”

5. Ask, "How will other people know what our map shows?"
 6. Instruct students to create a legend that includes:
 - a. the "land bridge" (glaciers and ice free corridor)
 - b. the route traveled (little people)
 - c. mammoths/mastodons they followed for food (small drawing)
 - d. oceans and continents (Asia, North America, Pacific Ocean).
 7. Have students reread the story and fill in map using their legend. (Could be used as homework.)
 8. Use their maps and legends to discuss "migration." (Use bird or animal migration as a reference.)
 9. To develop concept of migration further use Concept Wheel (Appendices A and B).
 10. Review modern world map and timeline, emphasizing the vast amount of time that is passing.
 11. Add what we learned today to the KWL chart (student and group copy).
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Completed student map showing migration route, glaciers, and ice-free corridor. Keep this map in folder for use in later lessons.
 2. Completed concept wheel, turned in.

Lesson Three

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
 - b. Students will understand chronological organization of history.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. During the Ice Age, nomadic hunters cross what was the land bridge from Asia to North America.
 - b. Daily life of the Inuit people.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Use a graphic organizer to research for specific information and use that knowledge in class discussion.
 - b. Know how to gather information from basic print source and take notes.
 - c. Create and use a timeline.

B. *Materials*

1. Social Studies folder
2. "The First Americans" poem (Appendix D)
3. Shemie, Bonnie, *Houses of snow, skin and bones* **
4. Books, encyclopedias, Internet, etc. for Inuit research (see Bibliography)
5. Compare and contrast graphic organizer (Appendix E)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Inuit – modern name for Eskimo people
2. Glacier – a large mass of ice moving slowly down a valley or mountain
3. Igloo – a dome shaped house made from blocks of hard snow
4. Blubber – a thick layer of fat under the skin of whales and some other sea animals; blubber was used as food and oil for oil lamps
5. Quarmang – an Inuit house with a foundation of rock

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Read poem "The First Americans" (Appendix D) to introduce the lesson.
2. Discuss glaciers and how melting covered the "land bridge."
3. Introduce "Inuit" (Eskimos) as one group that chose to stay in Alaska and Northern Canada.

4. Ask, "What would you need to live if you were an Inuit?" Allow students to brainstorm.
 5. Divide class into three groups to research Inuit life.
 - a. Food
 - b. Homes
 - c. Mode of travel
 6. Give each student a compare and contrast graphic organizer (Appendix E) and allow students to use a variety of reference books to research their area. (Group or individual)
 7. Students record information in the block for Inuit and their group (home, food, or mode of travel).
 8. After giving students time to research, allow time to share and be sure all students complete all three boxes for Inuits from the discussion.
 9. Plot Inuits on timeline from 6000 B.C. to present (ancestors of the early Eskimos are still in Alaska (name changed from Eskimo to Inuit in 1977).
 10. Add what we learned today to the KWL chart.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Students should have Inuit section of graphic organizer for food, homes, and mode of travel completed. Keep this in folder for use in later lessons.

Lesson Four

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
 - b. Students will understand chronological organization of history.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Daily life of the Anasazi people.
 - b. Petroglyphs
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print source and take notes.
 - b. Create and use a timeline.

B. *Materials*

1. Social Studies folder
2. Fisher, Leonard Everett, *Anasazi*
3. Pictures of petroglyphs (can be found easily on Internet or in books)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Petroglyphs – carved images on building walls, boulders and cliffs
2. Mesas – high, flat hilltops
3. Adobe – A brick made of clay and straw dried and hardened in the sun
4. Kivas – ceremonial chambers
5. Pueblo – a Spanish word for community

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Preview vocabulary words
 - a. Write words on board.
 - b. Discuss meanings
 - c. Explain, "Archeologists learn a lot from ancient civilizations from what they leave behind like petroglyphs." Show samples and tell meanings.
2. Based on petroglyphs let the students predict how they think the Anasazi might have lived.
3. Have students take out compare and contrast graphic organizer (Appendix E) and record information in food, homes, and mode of travel columns during the reading.
4. Read *Anasazi* by Leonard Everett Fisher. (This is an excellent story but other books that cover the food, homes, and travel may be used.)

5. After reading, ask students to share the information they included on their graphic organizer (Appendix E).
 6. Check that students have filled in organizer.
 7. Ask students to plot dates of Anasazi period on timeline.
 8. Add what we learned today to the KWL chart.
 9. Write these questions on the board for students to answer in writing (possible homework):
 - a. What do you think was most important for the Anasazi's survival?
 - b. Develop a petroglyph that you might see in one of the Anasazi's home. Explain what it means.
 - c. Name another item that could help archeologists learn about Anasazi culture. What does it tell us?
 - d. What do you think caused the Anasazi's disappearance? Why?
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Written answers to questions, turn in.
 2. Completed "Anasazi" row in graphic organizer. Keep this in folder for use in later lesson.
 3. Plotting up-to-date on timeline.

Lesson Five

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Students will understand how tribal migration had an impact on tribal society.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Daily life of the Mound Builders
 - b. Creative building of mounds
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print source and take notes.
 - b. Create a project based on information gathered.

B. *Materials*

1. Social Studies folder
2. Shemie, Bonnie, *Mounds of Earth and Shell*
3. Timeline Final (Appendix F)
4. Final Test (Appendix G)
5. Find as many pictures of the animal mounds as possible. I like to line them up, open, on the chalk tray. Many are available in books on Hopewell Indians, Adenas, Minnesota, Ohio and Cahokia, Illinois. Many of these pictures are available on websites also.
6. Construction paper
7. Thick yarn, ½" or larger, if possible

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Agriculture – the science of farming
2. Artifact – a man-made object
3. Aerial – of, in or produced by the air
4. "Three sisters" – corn, beans, and squash

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Line available pictures of mounds around the room.
2. Say, "We have discussed two cultures which developed after crossing the land bridge. Another group of these early Americans moved into the region of Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, along the thickly populated river regions."
3. Find these areas on the map.

4. Present the information in the Background Notes, Appendix H, (can be read aloud) and read *Mounds of Earth and Shell* (this would be a great class set book to read together). Have the students fill in their compare and contrast graphic organizer (Appendix E).
 5. Plot time of the Mound Builders on the timeline.
 6. Add what we learned today to the L section of the KWL chart.
 7. Review items that should be in their folder.
 - a. Student map
 - b. Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer
 - c. "The First Americans" poem
 - d. Reading from *Ancient Americans of the Southwest*
 8. Give students final timeline (Appendix F). They may use their notes to complete the timeline.
 9. Go over timelines as a review, collect their folders and administer final test (Appendix G).
 10. As a focus for this lesson have the students make an "aerial view of their own mound." Give each student a sheet of 11x14 (legal) construction paper. Give each student about 2 feet of the thick yarn. Have them create shapes with the yarn (animals, pyramids, circles, etc.) until they find one they like. Glue the yarn down to the paper and title the sheet with the name of their mound (possible homework).
 11. Students, who finish early, may work on "mound" or I created a crossword puzzle, from the vocabulary.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect created "mound" activity and hang in hall, room, etc.
 2. Collect folders and final test for grading.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Final Assessment
1. Students fill out timeline (Appendix F) independently, using notes
 2. Matching Test Assessment (Appendix G)

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Migration Concept Wheel instructions
 B. Appendix B: Blank Migration Concept Wheel
 C. Appendix C: *Ancient Indians of the Southwest* reading
 D. Appendix D: "The First Americans" poem
 E. Appendix E: Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer
 F. Appendix F: Timeline Assessment
 G. Appendix G: Final Test (matching)
 H. Appendix H: Background Information

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

MIGRATION CONCEPT WHEEL

Procedures for the Teacher

Purpose: The concept wheel builds on students' background knowledge, encourages brainstorming and discussion, and visually displays the connection between previous conceptual knowledge and the new word.

Materials:

Blank concept wheel hand out (Appendix B)

Dictionary

Procedure:

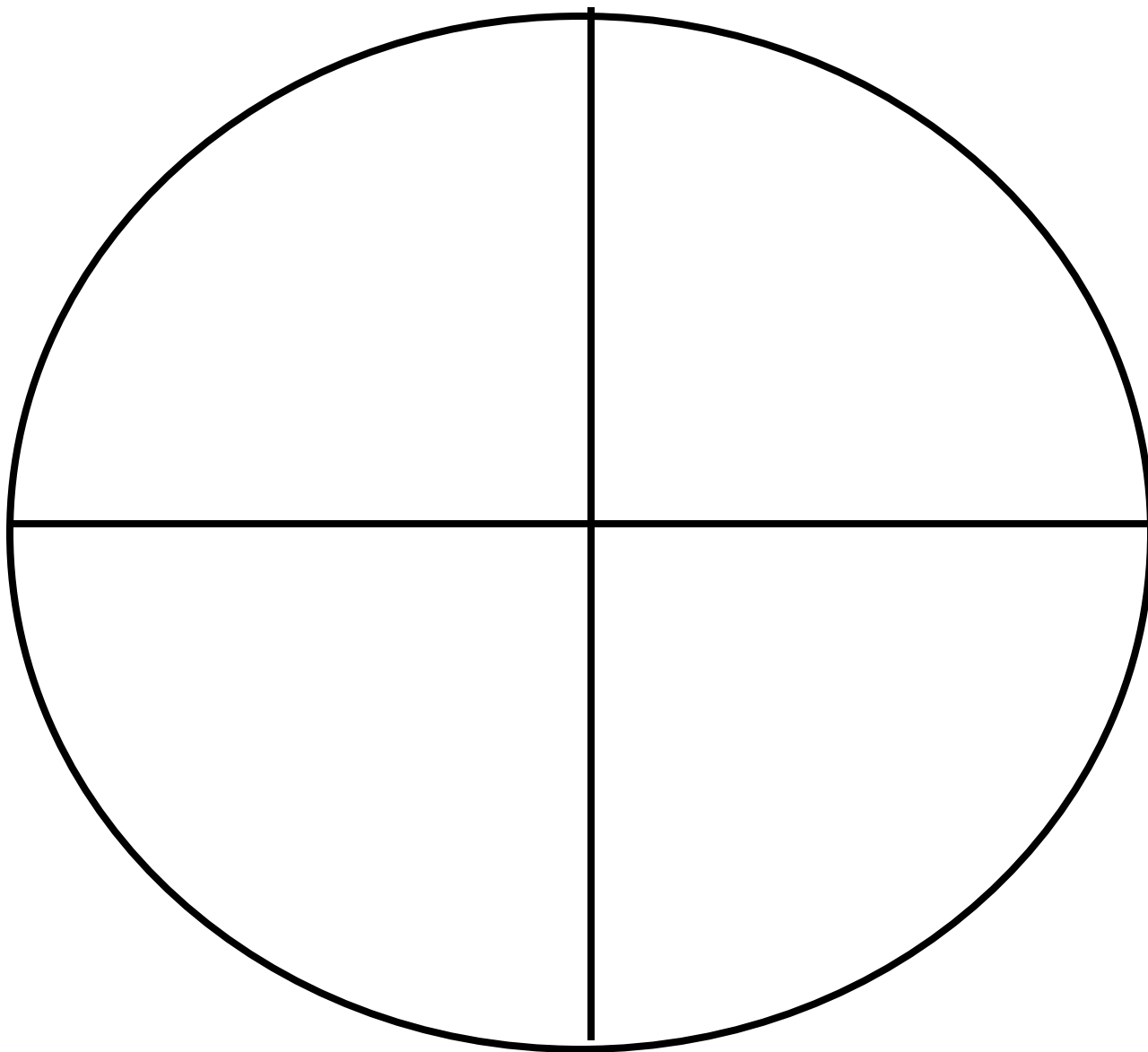
1. Say "We are going to study the word migrate."
2. Ask the class, "What are some words that come to mind when you think of migrate?" (Birds fly south, butterflies, farmers, whales, travel, winter etc.)
3. Acknowledge all responses and prompt students to generate as many words or phrases as possible. Ask for explanations and pose questions to clarify responses when necessary.
4. When suggestions have ended, generate a list of words that fits appropriately with migrate. Write them on the chalkboard.
5. Direct students to find the word in the dictionary, then read aloud a sentence using "migration" in context (**The migration of people continued very slowly over thousands of years**). Or you may refer students to read migrate in context while reading the definition aloud.
6. The students then compare their generated list of words to the dictionary definition.
7. Tell the class, "I'd like everyone to look over these words on the board very carefully. Now based on the definition located in the dictionary, you need to decide on at least three words that will help you remember the word migrate. I want you to write all of the selected words in each section of your wheel and turn in your assignment." (Example of completed concept wheel may include: "Migrate-Travel-Movement-Go south.")

*This can be used with other vocabulary words as well. Another idea would be to give the students a completed concept wheel and have them determine the concept word.

APPENDIX B

Name _____

Concept Wheel



APPENDIX C

The Ancient People *Ancient Indians of the Southwest* by Alfred Tamarin & Shirley Glubok

The Big-Game Hunters (p. 19-20)

1.

The little band of ancient hunters crept along cautiously, stopping often to listen for the sounds of the game lumbering through the underbrush ahead. An icy wind swept down from the slowly melting glacier, but the sun was warmer than it had been for a long time. The hunters moved on, carrying sharp, pointed stone spears to bring down the fleeing mammoth--or was it a mastodon? The elephant-like mammal pushed forward blindly, trying to escape its pursuers.

The hunters themselves did not realize that every step was taking them farther and farther east into a land where no human being had ever walked before. The men did not know that, pursuing their prey, they were stepping off a broad land bridge that then connected Asia with what is now Alaska. The hunting band was composed of the first humans to set foot on the continent of North America.



THE FIRST AMERICANS

When ice blankets you call glaciers,
were moving, slowly moving,
we found an open passage,
between their frozen walls.

And we took that rich, green passage,
in small bands we took that passage,
following the bison,
following the game,
Finding as we followed,
nuts and berries,
elk and deer.



*Mother Earth and Father Sun,
hear the voices of your children,
thankful voices of your children,
for the gifts you made appear!*

Ours were the first voices.
The first voices were The People.
Now we whisper
when the winds blow.
Remember we were here.

-Author Unknown

APPENDIX E

Compare and Contrast Chart

	Home	Food	Mode of Travel
Inuit			
Anasazi			
Mound Builders			

Additional Information:

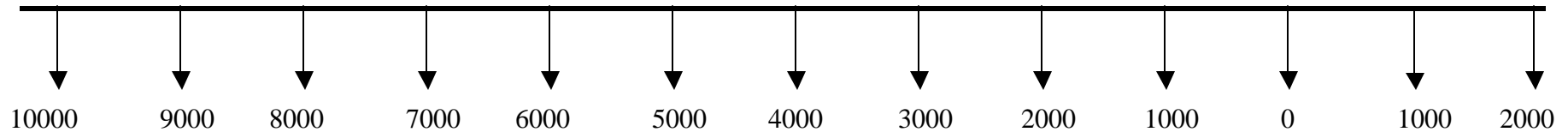
APPENDIX F

Name _____

Time Line

Using your notes, plot the events listed below on the timeline.

1. The current year (now).
2. The beginning of the Anno Domini (A.D.)
3. The years the ancient Americans were supposed to cross the land bridge (60,000 to 10,000 A.D.)
4. Mark the period of years we believe the Inuits were here (6000 B.C. to present).
5. Mark the period of years we believe the Mound Builders were here (1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.)
6. Mark the period of years we believe the Anasazi were here (500 to 1300 A.D.)



APPENDIX G

The Earliest Americans Final Test

Name _____

Write the letter of the definition in the blank next to the correct word.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 2. _____ glaciers | A. Scientists who study materials from the past |
| 3. _____ land bridge | B. Native Americans who built numerous mounds |
| 4. _____ Inuits | C. A Spanish word for community |
| 5. _____ petroglyphs | D. Land connecting two continents |
| 6. _____ blubber | E. High, flat hilltops |
| 7. _____ timeline | F. Carved images on buildings, walls, and cliffs |
| 8. _____ archaeologist | G. Ceremonial chambers |
| 9. _____ BC | H. Thick layer of fat under some whales |
| 10. _____ AD | I. Another name for Eskimo |
| 11. _____ ancient | J. Used to name a particular year before Christ |
| 12. _____ migrate | K. A large mass of ice |
| 13. _____ mammoth | L. Dates in history marked in an organized way. |
| 14. _____ artifacts | M. Brick made of clay and straw dried in the sun |
| 15. _____ mesas | N. Used in giving dates after the birth of Jesus |
| 16. _____ adobe | O. Native Americans who lived in cliffs |
| 17. _____ pueblos | P. Man- made objects |
| 18. _____ kivas | Q. The science of farming |
| 19. _____ Mound Builders | R. Ancient shaggy relative to the elephant |
| 20. _____ Anasazi | S. Very old. |
| 21. _____ agriculture | T. To move from one living place to another |

APPENDIX H

Background Information

Lesson Two: Migration theory – because of the glaciers, during the Ice Age, huge amounts of water froze and sea levels fell. Coastlines changed and some places that had been separated by water were now joined by land. The Bering Strait became a wide, low, treeless plain (Beringia). This “land bridge” connected Siberia with present day Alaska. Although the date is unsure (10,000 to 40,000 years ago) archeologists have found evidence of a migration of people over this “land bridge.” These people had “fire” and so could easily follow their food supply. At the end of the Ice Age, the temperatures began to rise, the ice melted, and the seas returned. The “land bridge” disappeared and people could no longer “walk” to America. Many of the plants and animals that needed the cold to survive died out. The people who relied on this food source had to change their way of life. At the same time these early Americans were developing more efficient tools and learning about the native plants and animals. Suddenly they were able to settle down and maybe only move between a summer and winter settlement. Some were able to stay in one area and they actually became farmers.

Lesson Three: The Inuits first settled along the coast of Alaska where they could hunt and fish. Some moved further into Northern Canada and some even went as far as Greenland. We don’t know why they chose such a harsh, cold land but they learned to survive with courage and resourcefulness. If you have Internet access you can take an “Artifact Challenge” and try to identify 10 items from the Bering Land Bridge. Try www.pbs.org/beringlandbridge/explorations.

Lesson Four: The Anasazi occupied the four corners area, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah, from around 500 to 1300 A.D. Their homes started in the canyons then they moved to the mesas and built adobe homes. Eventually, they returned to the cliff dwellings, perhaps to farm the mesas or to escape intruders. They left behind a form of picture writing called petroglyphs. This picture writing showed the animals they hunted and sometimes included human figures. The Anasazi left the four corners area mysteriously. There is evidence of a changing climate and a waterless period of twenty-five years. They may have arrived at the brink of thirst, famine, and starvation with their only choice being to leave the four corners area.

Lesson Five: The mound builders flourished for over 2,000 years, beginning somewhere around 1,000 B.C. and ending around 1,000 A.D. The mound builders were Native Americans who built numerous earth mounds mostly in Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri. It is likely that the mounds were built over a span of several thousand years by groups of people who were probably farmers living in different villages. The size, shape, and purpose of these mounds varied from place to place. Mounds, in the shapes of cones and pyramids, were common. Some mounds were built as burial places for the dead. After about 700 A.D. many of the mounds were built in the form of animal images. Platform mounds, originally built as bases for public buildings, houses for leaders, and temples, date from after 800 B.C. Spaced around a plaza, they formed central portions of important communities.

One mound, in Cincinnati, OH, is a snake 1,300 feet long. From the air you can see that it looks like it is swallowing an egg. There were hundreds of thousands of these mounds when the Europeans arrived in America. Farmers and builders pushed down many mounds, but some were protected. One farmer, M.C. Hopewell, had 30 mounds on his farm in Ohio. He called in some archaeologists who carefully dug up pieces of pots and bones. They also found copper from near Lake Superior, shells from the Atlantic coast, and obsidian (a type of rock) from the far west in the mounds. Because of these artifacts, we believe the mound builders were great traders. There is no evidence of river travel but thanks to Mr. Hopewell, we know a great deal about the mound builders.

Mound builders were hunters and gatherers that lived off the land. Some grew crops. Often called the “Three Sisters,” corn, beans, and squash gave the mound builders the chance to start moving away from more of a hunter-gatherer society to an agricultural one. With the establishment of settled communities the civilization flourished. We believe that mound builders probably had towns much larger and more advanced than European communities of the same time. Mound builders society was flourishing at the time of Christ.