

Name: _____

Precolonial America

Southwestern Tribes

Directions: Read the following passage then answer the questions.



Apache: Desert Defenders

Deep in the heart of the desert, where the sun blazes bright and cacti stand tall, the Apache people made their home. They didn't just survive. They thrived. Even in such harsh conditions, the Apache knew where to find water. They also knew which desert plants could be used for food and medicine.

Imagine being so in tune with the land that you could track any animal, or even find a hidden spring among miles of sand. Their skills weren't limited to survival. They were also magnificent horse riders. Racing with the wind, their horses kicked up dust, making them look like desert ghosts. And in the coolness of night, the tribe would gather, sharing legends of brave warriors and mystical spirits. Their dances around the fire would light up the desert.

Navajo: Weavers of Stories and Cloth

Beneath the vast blue sky and amidst deep, red canyons, the Navajo tribe set up their homes. They weren't just desert dwellers; they were artists! With nimble fingers, they wove tales into tapestries. These weren't just any rugs; they were storytelling canvases filled with dreams, stars, and stories of the past. Think of having a blanket that could tell a tale!

Their stories weren't just on cloth. The Navajo believed in the power of harmony, living in balance with nature. They had songs and ceremonies for different seasons, ensuring they always gave thanks for the land's blessings. The Navajo's connection to the land was deep. They felt the heartbeat of the earth and sang songs to the mountains and rivers. They celebrated every gift from Mother Earth.

Pueblo Tribes: Architects of the Cliffs

High up on the mesas or tucked away in the canyons, the Pueblo tribes like the Hopi and Zuni created magnificent stone cities. Imagine stone structures built one on top of another, often reaching several stories high. These structures, made from sun-dried mud bricks called adobe, took on the color of the land. These cities blended seamlessly with their surroundings.

Strategically built for defense, their elevated locations offered views of approaching visitors or threats from miles away. Their heights posed challenges for outsiders trying to get in. But their design was not just about protection. It was about sustainability. The high locations captured cool breezes in the scorching summer and provided shelter during winter.

Their homes, called "pueblos," kept them safe and cool. But it wasn't just about the buildings. These tribes had ceremonies that brought them closer to the skies. Dances with intricate masks and rhythms echoed through their cliff-side homes, celebrating the rains and the sun. Their homes and hearts were always open, welcoming both the mysteries of the universe and the simple joys of life.

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Reading Questions

1. In what ways did the Apache adapt to their desert environment? _____

2. How might the Apache's nightly gatherings strengthen their bonds? _____

3. How do you think the Apache's skill with horses helped them in the desert? _____

4. Why do you believe this?

5. Why were the Navajo tapestries considered more than just pieces of art? _____

6. How do the Navajo's beliefs appear in their daily life? _____

7. Based on the passage, why was storytelling important to the Navajo tribe? _____

8. How did the Pueblo tribes use natural materials in their buildings? _____

9. Why was the use of natural materials important and helpful to the Pueblos?

10. What were some benefits of pueblos being high off the ground? _____
