

U.S. HISTORY TO 1865 -STUDY GUIDE – 2023 STANDARDS

USI.2A EARLY CULTURES OF NORTH AMERICA

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STANDARD USI.2A ARCHAEOLOGY

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how early cultures developed in North America by

- a) describing how archaeologists have recovered material evidence of ancient settlements, including Cactus Hill in Virginia.

What is Archaeology?

- **Archaeology** is the study of **past human life** by looking at **artifacts** (tools, pottery, bones, ruins, etc.) that people left behind.
- Archaeologists recover and study this evidence to understand how people **lived thousands of years ago**.

Why is Archaeology Important?

- It helps us answer questions about when and how people **first arrived in the Americas**.
- Scientists don't all agree on these answers, but archaeological sites give important clues.

Cactus Hill: One of the Oldest Sites in North America

- Located on the Nottoway River in **southeastern Virginia**.
- Evidence shows people lived there as early as **18,000 years ago**.
- This **challenges earlier beliefs** that humans only arrived in North America about 12,000 years ago.
- Because of this, **Cactus Hill** is one of the **oldest and most important archaeological sites** in North America.



Cactus Hill is located in Southeastern Virginia along the Nottoway River

Cactus Hill is one of the oldest archaeological sites in North America



STANDARD USI.2B INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

- b) locating and explaining where Indigenous people lived **prior to the arrival of Europeans**, with an emphasis on how the various geographic regions they inhabited influenced their daily lives.
- Indigenous people lived in **various tribes across North America** prior to the arrival of Europeans and **traded extensively** with one another, often over great distances due to specialization of products.
- Indigenous people valued the relationship between their **environments** and **cultural traditions** and recognized that human beings are part of the environment.

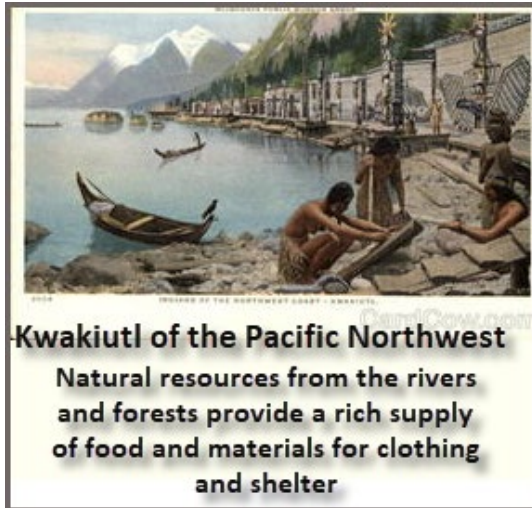


📍 Arctic – Inuit

- Homeland: Present-day **Alaska and northern Canada**.
- Environment: Arctic, with **freezing temperatures**
- **Adaptation**: Wore warm clothing from animal skins and hunted whales, seals, and caribou.

🌲 Northwest – Kwakiutl

- Homeland: **Pacific Northwest coast**.
- Environment: **Rainy and mild climate** with many rivers and forests.
- **Adaptation:** Fished for salmon, built large plank houses, and created totem poles.



🐾 Plains – Lakota



- Homeland: **Great Plains** (interior of the U.S.).
- Environment: **Dry grasslands**.

Adaptation: Lived in teepees that could be moved easily, followed the buffalo herds, and used horses (after Europeans brought them).

🏠 Southwest – Pueblo

- Homeland: Southwest U.S. (New Mexico and Arizona).



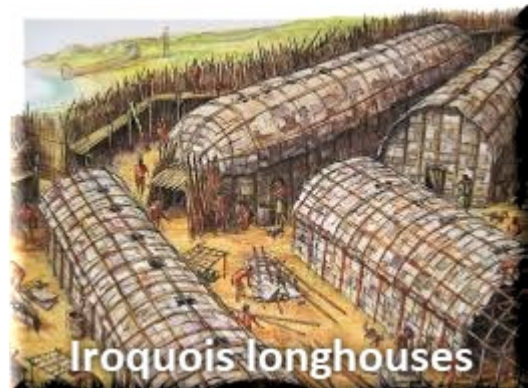
- Environment: Desert areas, cliffs, and mountains.

- Adaptation: Built homes from adobe (clay bricks),

farmed using irrigation, and grew corn, beans, and squash.

🌲 Eastern Woodlands – Iroquois (also known as Haudenosaunee) and Cherokee

- Homeland: **Northeast North America**, also called the Eastern Woodlands.
- Environment: Heavily **forested** with **rivers** and fertile soil.



- Adaptation: Lived in **longhouses** made of wood, farmed the “Three Sisters” (**corn, beans, squash**), and formed powerful confederacies.


Today:

- Members of these tribes **still live in their traditional homelands**, but also in many other areas **across North America**.


QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

 *What do artifacts from the past tell us about the way people lived?*

Artifacts—like tools, pottery, weapons, or clothing—show us how people **hunted, farmed, built homes, cooked food**, and expressed their culture. They are clues about daily life, survival, and traditions.

 *What are the different theories regarding when and how populations first arrived in the Western Hemisphere?*


- **Land Bridge Theory:** People crossed from Asia to North America over a land bridge called **Beringia** during the Ice Age.
- **Coastal Route Theory:** Some groups may have traveled by boat along the Pacific coast.
- **Early Arrival Theory:** Sites like **Cactus Hill in Virginia** suggest people may have been here **much earlier** (as early as 18,000 years ago).

 *What type of new technology (ships, navigation tools, and other technology innovations) were developed during this time and how did they impact this era?*

- **Ships** like caravels could sail farther and faster.
- **Navigation tools** (compass, astrolabe, improved maps) helped explorers cross oceans.
- These innovations made **long-distance exploration** and trade possible and safer, leading Europeans to reach the Americas.


 *How does innovation look different depending on the context (place and time)?*

- In the **Arctic**, innovation meant creating **warm clothing** and **igloos**.


- In the **Southwest**, it meant using **irrigation** to grow crops in the desert.
- In Europe, innovation meant building ships and tools for **ocean exploration**.
 Innovation always matches the needs and **challenges of the environment**.

 *How did the arrival of Europeans and their innovations impact Indigenous people?*

- Brought new goods like metal tools, horses, and firearms.
- Spread diseases that killed many Indigenous people.
- Led to loss of land, forced relocation, and conflict as Europeans expanded.

 *How did the geographic location and features of an Indigenous tribe influence their way of life and products?*

- **Inuit:** Hunted seals, whales, caribou in freezing Arctic.
- **Kwakiutl:** Fished salmon and built totem poles in rainy forests.
- **Lakota:** Followed buffalo herds across grasslands.
- **Pueblo:** Built adobe homes and farmed corn in deserts.
- **Iroquois:** Farmed and built longhouses in thick forests.

 *How can trade help remove barriers between different groups of people?*

- **Trade** encourages **interaction** and **cooperation**.
- Groups may learn new languages, share ideas, and become **less isolated**.
- It builds **relationships** and creates peaceful **connections** through mutual benefit.