

Picture Writing

There were many different nations of Indians living on the Great Plains. Each tribe had its own spoken language. These tribes often moved from place to place and found other people speaking languages that they did not understand. In conversation and communication with each other, they used sign language and picture writing.

In sign language, the Plains Indians moved their hands and fingers in certain ways to make signs that other Indians could understand. In picture writing, the Plains Indians used small brown symbols that stood for words and ideas. Picture writing was used to describe their lives and their journey on horseback. Indians carried important messages the way of the wolf. Usually, messages were written in a code instead of real words like we use for writing.

On the lower part of this page, you can see Plains Indian symbols that were used in picture writing. Look at these carefully to see what each symbol means. Then, on the next page, try to write your own picture story. Remember the "Wolf's Walk" we learned last year and written. The pictures tell the story.

Picture Writing Symbols

