

America's First People



To compare and contrast ideas in a passage, determine how the ideas are alike and how they are different.

Native Americans were the first people to live in America. They lived in many different areas of the United States including the Eastern Woodlands and the Southwest.

The Eastern Woodlands Native Americans had a much different lifestyle than those who lived in the Southwest. The Eastern Woodlands encompassed all of the area from what is now the Canadian border down to the Gulf Coast. The area also extended from the East Coast to the Mississippi River. The northern parts of the area had cold winters, and the whole region had warm summers.

The Southwest Native Americans lived in a large, warm, dry area. Today, Arizona, New Mexico, southern Colorado, and northern Mexico make up this area. In the northern part of the region, wind and water created steep-walled canyons, sandy areas, mesas, buttes, and other interesting landforms. In the southern part, the desert land was flat and dry.

The Iroquois, Wampanoag, Cherokee, and Chickasaw are just a few of the major tribes that made their home in the Eastern Woodlands. The Southwest was home to tribes such as the Apache, Navajo, and Pueblo.

Housing was very different for the Native Americans who lived in these two different regions. The Eastern Woodlands natives built a variety of homes, depending on their location. Northern dwellers lived in dome-shaped wigwams covered with sheets of bark or in longhouses. A longhouse was a large, rectangular shelter that was home to a number of related families, each living in its own section. Those in the southeastern area often built villages around a central public square where community events took place.

Many of the Native Americans of the Southwest lived in cliff houses or large, many-storied homes built from rock and a mudlike substance called adobe. These adobe dwellings could house many families.

All of the Native Americans living in both regions ate a lot of corn, beans, and squash. Hunting was important in both regions, but fishing was more significant in the Eastern Woodlands.

