

Lesson Title: Comparing Land Use for Dwellings among Pioneers and Pawnee Indians

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Teaching Traditional American History Program

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<http://www.chillihistoryproject.com/>

Lesson Overview: *This lesson is designed to show students examples of dwellings used by Native Americans and pioneers during the 19th century that were made from eathern materials, specifically the sod house and earth lodge..*

Objectives:

- The student will be able to describe how environments affect people who depend on and adapt fo the land

Materials:

1. Internet Access and preferable one computer for every two students
2. SMARTBoard or some other projection system
3. Comparing Worksheet
4. Note taking sheet
5. Pencils

Class Time: *50 Minutes*

Teacher Input:

1. First, use the photo at the bottom of the page to build interest in today's topic. Focus studenst on guessing the five w's by writing a newspaper caption for the photo. Share ideas, and then visit the site in step two to learn that the picture is of a Pawnee Earth Lodge.
2. Using this site, tour the earth lodge with students together:
<http://www.gips.org/ManilaWeb/Engleman/EarthLodge/EarthLodge-Pages/Image0.html>
3. Begin taking notes with students about the lodge, life inside and how it was built. When touring myself, I was lucky to have the lodge designer there to visit with. Here are some fast facts from my experience:
 - a. The lodge roof is held up by six large pillars
 - i. White: The sun hits this pillar
 - ii. Black: No light from outside ever hits this pillar
 - iii. Brown: Representing Earth

- iv. Red: Blood, and positioned right by the door as a reminder
 - v. Unpainted
 - vi. Unpainted
- b. The two unpainted pillars were used for hanging equipment, while the painted pillars were never to have anything leaning or hanging on them.
 - c. The fire pit was located in the center of the circle, with a ventilation hole directly above it. It could be covered by a buffalo skin to keep out inclement weather.
 - d. 50 people could potentially live together in this small space. Women would sleep on the benches around the outside, while men and warriors slept on the floor closest to the fire.
 - e. The young women of marriage age slept across the lodge from the door, close to the alter to avoid being taken by men from neighboring tribes. Grandmothers were placed near the doors to surprise a would-be wife grabber.
 - f. The blankets hanging near the beds were for trade as indicated on the slideshow, but also served as a means to keep dirt from falling off the ceiling as mice worked around the rafters.
 - g. The alter area was sacred and never sat on and no one ever crossed in front.
 - h. Each lodge was expected to last about 10 years before a new structure needed to be built
4. <http://www.stuhrmuseum.org/tourlodge.htm> This site takes you to one of the main pages on the official Stuhr Meseum web site (Grand Island, NE) with some good background knowledge of the lodge as well as another outside picture.
 5. <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/northamerica/pawnee.html> This site gives other good information including crops and religion
 6. Having taken notes with students on the previous pages, and lectures from my experience, I then turn things over to my students. They are responsible for researching in partners sod houses build and lived in by homesteaders across the great plains. This site gives a lot of good information to get them started. <http://websteader.com/wbstdsd1.htm>
 7. Check out this site for a view inside a sod house with a short paragraph <http://geoimages.berkeley.edu/GeoImages/Starrs/SODHOUSE.html>
 8. This site offers good information and first hand accounts of living in sod houses. To challenge some of your better readers, be sure they click "next page" to learn even more about life in a sod house. http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0500/frameset_reset.html?http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0500/stories/0501_0109.html
 9. As a final project, students need to fill in the compare/contrast worksheet attached. A Venn Diagram would also work here, but I prefer to introduce something different every once in a while to show how information can be organized differently. This should be completed by each student individually to assess how they are tying the information together.

Activities:

This is mainly a research lesson, but students will have the opportunity to work on the internet in pairs to gather information to compare/contrast sod houses with the Pawnee Earth Lodge. Notetaking and comparing worksheets are attached.

Questions for review:

Q) *Which structure would you rather live in, an earth lodge or sod house?*
A) *Answers will vary but should be supported by information gained.*

Q) *How was the surrounding environment used to build these eathern homes?*
A) *The earth lodge was construced of poles, center posts, with branches and grass forming a framework to support a dirt mound. The Sod house on the other hand, was made primarily of dirt bricks with a thached roof covering it.*

Closure: *It's time to find out how much the class knows about construction. List the supplies that might be needed to build a house today. Most of the supplies they'll list wouldn't have been used to construct the two structures we've studied tdoay. There was no Wal-Mart, no Home Depot, no Lowes or local lumber yards. It's impressive to think about how much they made from so little. Conditions were also much harder as wind cut through the cracks in the walls and it was possible for a ceiling to colapse when too much rain came.*

Assessment:

| Student Score | Possible Score | Description of Points to be Eanred |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | 8 | Notes taken on Pawnee Earth Lodge are copied from discussion and web with teacher |
| | 8 | Student notes on Sod House are complete. At least two ideas must be written down for each section. |
| | 8 | Two points for each idea written to compare dwellings on Compare/Contrast worksheet |
| | 8 | One item written to contast dwellings/lifestyles in each of the eight boxes. |
| | /32 POINTS | |

Extension: The website below gives directions for building a replica of a sod house using popcicle sticks, cotton balls, water, flour, clay, brown spray paint, cardboard and cups for mixing. To encourage economic concepts, eight groups could be formed with each group getting all of a single supply for the entire class.

Then, members would have to barter for the other seven supplies they would need to build their house.

<http://www.lehigh.edu/~info/ios/kelly/buildingsod.html>

References:

Children of the West by Russell Freedman
Web Addresses listed throughout lesson

Graphics: *Using this image, encourage students to guess where this man is standing. Upon exploring the websites in this lesson, they will discover he is standing against the light/sun pole, one of six poles holding up the roof of a Pawnee Earth Lodge.*



“A People without history are like the wind on the buffalo grass...”
Lakota

Name: _____

Comparing Homes
Note Taking

| Pawnee Earth Lodge | Pioneer Sod House |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Construction | |
| | |
| Life Inside | |
| | |
| Food | |
| | |
| Location | |
| | |

Sample

Comparing Homes Note Taking

| Pawnee Earth Lodge | Pioneer Sod House |
|---|--|
| Construction | |
| <p>38 ft across 10-15 poles in a circle 4-6 center posts Willow branches, grass, earth covered framework Floor 3 ft below ground Stood for 10 years before new lodge was constructed</p> | <p>Stacked layers of turf made up the walls. Roots held the earthen material together. It was cut with a plow, by hand or shovel/ax. The roof was made of timber and covered by sod. If no timber, twigs, branches, bushes, & straw were used.</p> <p>The house was vulnerable to cattle rubbing against it and weather erosion House lasted 6-7 years, longer if covered with whitewash or stucco</p> |
| Life Inside | |
| <p>30-50 people Shared home with mice, and blankets kept dirt knocked loose from falling on people inside. A fire pit was dug in the center Women slept on benches around the outside of the lodge, with the young women sleeping closest to the alter across from the door. Blankets covered the walls to keep dirt from falling on sleeping occupants. Mice were common pests inside</p> | <p>Drafty walls were covered with newspaper or canvas. Oilcloth covered ceiling to catch loose dirt from above. The clay floor could be wet and then smoothed out The stove was used for cooking and warmth One room with cramped conditions, one house highlighted held 9 people Mice often found their way inside and rattle snakes had dens in the walls</p> |
| Food | |
| <p>Women raised corn Followed stars for knowing when to plant</p> | <p>Farming was difficult as there was a foot of grass and weeds to chop through to find tillable soil. Corn and wheat were then planted.</p> |
| Location | |
| <p>Found along Platte River Towns were established together in groups ranging from 40-200 lodges.</p> | <p>Found all over great plains. Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, & Canada were specifically mentioned</p> |

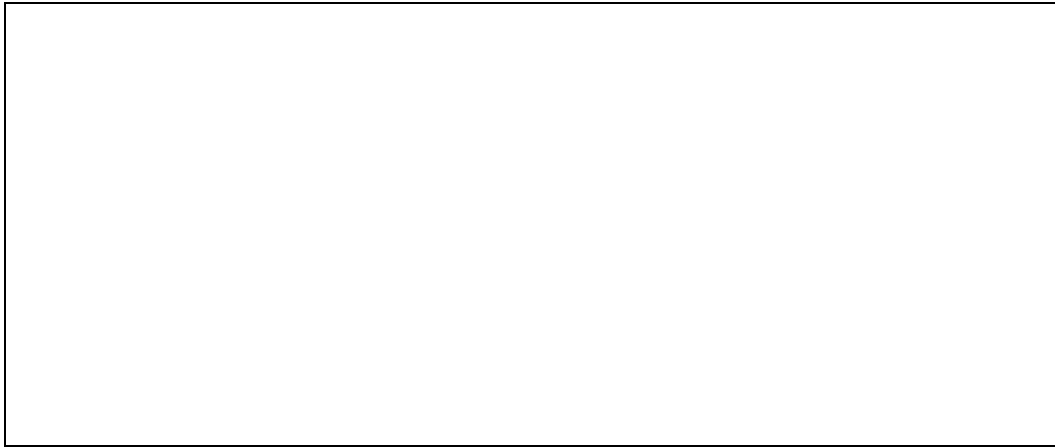
Name: _____

Compare and Contrast

Pawnee Earth Lodge

Pioneer Sod House

HOW ALIKE?



HOW DIFFERENT?

| | | |
|--|--------------|--|
| | Construction | |
| | Life Inside | |
| | Food | |
| | Location | |

Compare and Contrast

Sample
HOW ALIKE?

Pawnee Earth Lodge

Pioneer Sod House

Built homes from materials found in nature
 Live animals often found their way inside
 Dirty living arrangements
 Both lived on Great Plains
 Both worked land for farming

HOW DIFFERENT?

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| <p>Lasts 10 years Circular shape with wood frame construction</p> | <p>Construction</p> | <p>Lasts 6-7 years Square/rectangular in shape with no frame</p> |
| <p>Blankets caught dirt No draft due to large dirt mound on outside Fire pit used for cooking, warmth Home shared by 30-50 people, large extended families</p> | <p>Life Inside</p> | <p>Oilcloth caught falling dirt/mud Very drafty, which was minimized by newspaper on wall Stove used for cooking/warmth Single family dwelling normally (9)</p> |
| <p>Grew primarily corn</p> | <p>Food</p> | <p>Grew some wheat as well as corn in some areas.</p> |
| <p>Settled along Platt River Lived in Communities</p> | <p>Location</p> | <p>Settled all over plains Lived on homestead and were self-supporting</p> |