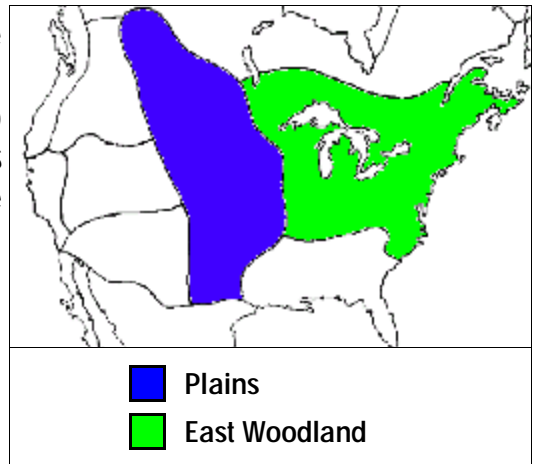




Why were the Buffalo so important to the Plains Indians?

Many of the Plains Indians originally came from the Woodlands. In the Woodlands, Indian life was based on hunting the buffalo and simple farming. Most of the Plains was unsuitable for farming as Indians didn't have the tools to use on the difficult Plains soils.



Using this worksheet, you need to work out why the Buffalo were so important to the Plains Indians.

WHAT WAS THE BUFFALO USED FOR?

Meat / Organs: food

Flesh - boiled, roasted or dried
Brain, nose, gristle and tongue - eaten raw
Kidneys and liver - eaten raw

Hide: clothing & shelter

Tipi covering, leggings, shirts, dresses, winter robes, shoes, shields, knife sheaths, quivers for arrows

Other parts: tools

Shoulder blades - hoes
Hair - ropes and pillows
Fat - soap
Bones - knives, dice, paint brushes
Tongue - hairbrush

By surrounding a herd of buffalo, Indians could kill all of them in about 15 minutes. It was noisy and dangerous as the confused animals ran around in a circle of panic.

“ When chasing a large herd, the Indian generally rides close to the rear, until he selects the animal he wishes to kill, which he separates from the crowd as soon as he can, by dashing his horse between it and the herd, and forcing it off by itself where he can approach it without the danger of being trampled to death. ”

A

George Catlin, artist and explorer

Once the animals had been killed, the women came in to skin and butcher them where they lay. The women carried their meat and skins home, where they put them to a great variety of uses. The thick strong skin of old bulls was used for shields and winter moccasins.

“ For the beginner, there is much danger to his limbs and life. For the Indian who had made this the everyday sport and amusement of his life, there is less difficulty and less danger. ”

B

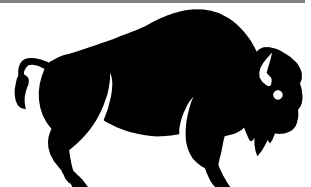
George Catlin, artist and explorer

The thin skin of a calf was made into underclothes and tobacco pouches. Buffalo fat was used for soap, and the rough side of the tongue was used for hairbrushes.

“The buffalo's doom is sealed, and with their extinction, the Indians must surely sink into despair and starvation. The Plains offer them no other means of living. ”

George Catlin, artist and explorer

C





Why were the Buffalo so important to the Plains Indians?

ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN FULL SENTENCES - USE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE!

1. Where did many of the Plains Indians come from?
2. What was the Indian life based on in the Woodlands?
3. Why couldn't Indian life be the same in the Plains?
4. Find an example use for each part of the buffalo:
 - a) Meat
 - b) Hide
 - c) Other parts
5. How long would it take Plains Indians to slaughter a herd of buffalo?
6. Why was it noisy and dangerous for the Indians?
7. According to George Catlin (source A), how did the Indian separate his intended kill from the rest of the herd?
8. What words does George Catlin use (in source B) that put across the idea that for the experts hunting buffalo was enjoyable?
9. Who had the disgusting job of skinning and butchering the animals?
10. How were the skins of old bulls used differently from skins of a calf? (give two examples of each.)
11. Using all your answers so far, copy and fill in the table below:

Aspect of Life	Used buffalo? [YES or NO]	Part of buffalo used
Eating	yes	flesh, brain, nose, kidneys
Clothing		
Housing		
Cleaning		
Farming		
Hunting		
Entertainment		

The Plains Indians began killing many more buffalo than they needed so they could trade buffalo skins for European goods. Seeing this, George Catlin says that the buffalos were doomed (source C).

Use source C, together with all your previous work, to write a paragraph (at least 5 lines) explaining **why the buffalo were so important to the Plains Indians**.

Bonus Ask your teacher for a buffalo diagram, and using the information on the first side, write in what each part of the buffalo was used for!

