Paths Across America

Locate communities and compare two patterns of movement

SS24.7.10a "Identify locations and migration patterns of early Indigenous peoples on a map, including the Olmec and Woodland Period civilizations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentences that tell where the Olmec or Woodland communities lived. Write 1 beside the early migration route through Beringia and 2 beside the Woodland seasonal travel route so you can compare these two kinds of movement.

Places and Paths

1. Imagine following footsteps across a huge stretch of time, not one trip by one group. During the last ice age, lower sea levels exposed Beringia, land joining northeast Asia and northwest North America. Over many generations, some people moved into North America by this northern route. Their descendants spread into different parts of the Americas by many paths. Scholars still study the timing and routes of these movements, including travel along the Pacific coast. This early movement does not mean every later Indigenous community followed the same path.

2. Much later, the Olmec developed communities along the Gulf Coast of what is now southern Mexico. San Lorenzo stood in present-day Veracruz, west of La Venta in present-day Tabasco. Both centers were near rivers that connected settlements with the coast. People and materials traveled through the region, but the movement of goods is not proof that the entire Olmec population migrated from one center to the other. The Olmec heartland lay south of what is now the United States, beside the Gulf of Mexico.

3. Far to the north and east of the Olmec heartland, Woodland Period communities lived across parts of eastern North America. Their lands included the Great Lakes region, the Ohio River valley, and areas nearer the Atlantic coast. These communities had different ways of life and were not one single nation. Some families moved with the seasons between riverside homes and nearby places to hunt or gather food, then returned. This local pattern differed from the long-distance movement through Beringia many thousands of years earlier. Woodland communities were not a branch of the Olmec civilization.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where did the early route through Beringia begin, and what part of North America did it reach?

2. Where would you place the Olmec heartland in relation to the present-day United States and the Gulf of Mexico?

3. Which Olmec center was farther west, San Lorenzo or La Venta? Name the present-day Mexican state where it stood.

4. Starting at a Woodland riverside home, where did some families travel with the seasons, and where did they go afterward?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

In the box, sketch a simple map showing northeast Asia, northwest North America, the Gulf Coast of southern Mexico, and eastern North America; label Beringia, the Olmec heartland, and the Woodland regions. Draw one arrow for the early route through Beringia and a separate two-way arrow for seasonal travel within a Woodland region, then label what each arrow means.

ANSWER KEY

Paths Across America

GRADE 7 · SS24.7.10a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentences that tell where the Olmec or Woodland communities lived. Write 1 beside the early migration route through Beringia and 2 beside the Woodland seasonal travel route so you can compare these two kinds of movement. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where did the early route through Beringia begin, and what part of North America did it reach?	**It ran from northeast Asia to northwest North America.**
2	Where would you place the Olmec heartland in relation to the present-day United States and the Gulf of Mexico?	**South of the present-day United States, along the Gulf Coast of southern Mexico.**
3	Which Olmec center was farther west, San Lorenzo or La Venta? Name the present-day Mexican state where it stood.	**San Lorenzo was farther west. It stood in present-day Veracruz.**
4	Starting at a Woodland riverside home, where did some families travel with the seasons, and where did they go afterward?	**They traveled to nearby places to hunt or gather food, then returned to their riverside homes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The sketch places northeast Asia left of northwest North America, with Beringia labeled between them. It places the Olmec heartland on the Gulf Coast of southern Mexico and the Woodland regions in eastern North America. An arrow from northeast Asia through Beringia into northwest North America is labeled "early migration." A short two-way arrow within a Woodland region, between a riverside home and a nearby hunting area, is labeled "seasonal travel and return."

Accept approximate locations on the student's sketch if the regions are correctly placed relative to one another. The two arrows should show different scales of movement, not a migration from the Olmec heartland to Woodland regions.