

Georgia Before Contact

Read closely to identify culture, food, tools, and shelter.

SS8H1.a "Describe the characteristics of American Indians living in Georgia at the time of European contact; to include culture, food, weapons/tools, and shelter."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about culture, food, weapons or tools, and shelter. Write C, F, W, or S beside each detail to show its category.

Life in Georgia Communities

- ① When European explorers reached what is now Georgia in the 1500s, American Indian communities lived in towns and smaller settlements. Many people spoke languages that later became associated with the Muscogee, or Creek, and Cherokee peoples. In many communities, leaders guided political and religious life. Towns often included a central plaza for gatherings, ceremonies, games, and trade. Families belonged to clans, kinship groups that shaped duties and relationships. Ceremonies, stories, pottery, and basketry carried cultural knowledge between generations.
- ② Georgia's fertile river valleys supported farming. People grew maize, beans, and squash, often called the Three Sisters because these crops could be grown together. They also raised sunflowers and tobacco in some areas. Gardens did not provide every meal. Hunters used bows and arrows to take deer, turkey, and smaller animals. Fishers caught fish in rivers and streams, while gatherers collected nuts, berries, fruits, and wild plants. This mix of farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering helped communities use Georgia's forests, fields, and waterways throughout the year.
- ③ People made useful objects from stone, wood, bone, clay, plant fibers, and shells. Bows and arrows served as hunting weapons, while clubs and spears could also be used in conflict or hunting. Dugout canoes, made from hollowed tree trunks, allowed travel on rivers. Shelter designs differed among communities and places. Many houses had wooden pole frames and coverings of bark, reeds, or clay. Some towns included larger buildings for community purposes. These homes and shared spaces reflected local materials, climate, and the needs of each community.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What were two features of community culture described in the passage?

2 How did people get food besides growing crops? Name two ways.

3 What weapon was used for hunting, and what tool helped people travel on rivers?

4 Describe one way many houses were built, according to the passage.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine a Georgia American Indian town at the time of European contact. Write four sentences describing its culture, two ways people got food, one object and its purpose, and one shelter detail.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about culture, food, weapons or tools, and shelter. Write C, F, W, or S beside each detail to show its category. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What were two features of community culture described in the passage?	Answers may include central plazas for gatherings, ceremonies, games, and trade; clans that shaped duties and relationships; leaders guiding political and religious life; or stories, pottery, and basketry carrying cultural knowledge.
2	How did people get food besides growing crops? Name two ways.	They hunted animals, fished in rivers and streams, and gathered nuts, berries, fruits, and wild plants. Any two are correct.
3	What weapon was used for hunting, and what tool helped people travel on rivers?	Bows and arrows were used for hunting. Dugout canoes helped people travel on rivers.
4	Describe one way many houses were built, according to the passage.	Many houses had wooden pole frames covered with bark, reeds, or clay.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At River Town, families gather in the plaza for ceremonies and games. They grow maize and beans, and hunters use bows and arrows to take deer. A dugout canoe carries people on the river. Their home has a wooden pole frame covered with bark.

Accept accurate descriptions drawn from the passage and combined into a coherent fictional town profile. The response should include culture, two food sources or methods, an object with a passage-supported purpose, and a shelter detail.