Communities Before Contact

How four North American peoples built thriving communities

4.C.3.1.A "Explain that North America is the home to well-developed societies and cultures (e.g., Inuit, Puebloan, Mississippian, Haudenosaunee) who flourished prior to European arrival."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the names of four peoples, then underline one detail about each that shows how people built a community before Europeans arrived.

Many Ways to Build a Community

1. Long before Europeans arrived in North America, many peoples built communities suited to the places where they lived. In Arctic regions, Inuit families traveled across ice and water to hunt and fish. They made warm clothing from animal skins and shared knowledge of safe routes. In the Southwest, Puebloan peoples built homes of stone or adobe, often with many rooms. They grew crops such as corn in a dry climate.

2. Near the Mississippi River, Mississippian peoples built large towns centuries before Europeans arrived. At Cahokia, in what is now Illinois, workers raised huge earthen mounds by carrying baskets of soil. Some mounds held important buildings. Farmers grew corn, beans, and squash, helping feed the town. Paths and open spaces connected places where people gathered. Building and feeding a town like Cahokia took planning and teamwork.

3. In the Northeast, the Haudenosaunee formed a confederacy of nations before Europeans arrived. Leaders met in councils to make decisions together. Families lived in longhouses, which could hold several related families. People farmed corn, beans, and squash and also hunted and gathered food. Across North America, these societies developed different ways to build, get food, and make decisions. Their cultures did not disappear when Europeans arrived. Their descendants live today.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did sharing knowledge of safe routes help Inuit families live in Arctic regions?

2. What details show how Puebloan peoples built communities in the dry Southwest?

3. What work at Cahokia shows that Mississippian peoples planned and worked together?

4. How did Haudenosaunee nations make decisions together before Europeans arrived?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a three-sentence museum label comparing two peoples in the passage. Tell one way each built a community before Europeans arrived, then explain what the two examples show about North America at that time.

ANSWER KEY

Communities Before Contact

GRADE 4 · 4.C.3.1.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the names of four peoples, then underline one detail about each that shows how people built a community before Europeans arrived. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did sharing knowledge of safe routes help Inuit families live in Arctic regions?	**Sharing knowledge of safe routes helped families travel across ice and water to hunt and fish.**
2	What details show how Puebloan peoples built communities in the dry Southwest?	**They built many-room homes of stone or adobe and grew crops such as corn.**
3	What work at Cahokia shows that Mississippian peoples planned and worked together?	**Workers carried soil to build huge mounds, while farmers grew food that helped feed the town.**
4	How did Haudenosaunee nations make decisions together before Europeans arrived?	**They formed a confederacy, and leaders met in councils to make decisions together.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before Europeans arrived, Mississippian peoples built large towns and raised earthen mounds through teamwork. Haudenosaunee nations met in councils to make decisions together. These examples show that North America was home to different, well-organized societies with their own ways of working together.

Accept other passage-based details that explain how each society built a community. The museum label should name two distinct peoples and use both examples to support a broader point about North America before European arrival.