Land and Lives

Compare how Oklahoma's environment and cultural contact shaped human activity.

OKH.C.1 "Describe the state's geography and the historic foundations laid by American Indian, European, and American cultures. Describe the diverse physical features of Oklahoma and how the environment, ecological regions..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Part 1 READ AND MARK: Underline two ways the environment shaped people's activities, circle physical evidence of the distant past, and number two changes that followed European contact. Use your marks to compare causes and changes across time.

What the Land Offered

1. On a rainfall map, Oklahoma's wetter east contrasts with its drier west. Eastern river valleys and woodlands supported farming, while western grasslands favored bison. At the Cooper Bison Kill Site in northwestern Oklahoma, archaeologists found Folsom stone points among bison remains from hunts about 10,000 years ago. These finds are physical evidence that early Native people hunted here, not proof they belonged to any later named tribe. Historical maps of bison range and contemporary maps of cattle ranching describe a shift on western grasslands, from wild herds to livestock raised by people.

2. Along the Arkansas River in eastern Oklahoma, the Spiro Mound Builders constructed earthworks and participated in far-reaching exchange before European contact. Artifacts from Spiro include marine shells from the Gulf Coast and copper from distant northern regions. These objects are evidence of communities linked to trade networks. Farther south and east, Caddo farmers raised crops and made pottery in wooded river valleys. Wichita communities grew crops near rivers on the plains and also hunted bison. Both peoples exchanged goods across intertribal routes, but their settings supported different mixes of farming, hunting, and craft production.

3. European contact changed relationships with land and trade. European traders sought valuable goods and markets; Native communities sought useful goods, including metal tools, while defending their own interests. Introduced diseases caused devastating population losses, even where direct contact was limited. Horses, first brought by Europeans, spread through Native trade and made travel and bison hunting easier for many Plains communities. Later, American settlers often treated land as property to buy and divide into individual holdings. Native nations had varied ways of governing and using land; many recognized collective rights tied to community. These differences shaped conflicts over land and power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Part 2: How did the use of western grasslands change from the time of wild bison herds to the present?

2. Why is the Cooper Bison Kill Site evidence of early Native activity, and what can its finds not prove?

3. Compare how Caddo and Wichita communities used their environments. What activity connected both peoples with Spiro?

4. Compare what European traders and Native communities sought from trade. Name one way contact changed Native life.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Part 3 YOUR TURN: Write a 70 to 90 word museum label comparing a Caddo community in the east with a Wichita community on the plains. Explain how each used local resources, then connect one change from European contact or later settlement to Native life without suggesting that the environment alone defined either community.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Part 1 READ AND MARK: Underline two ways the environment shaped people's activities, circle physical evidence of the distant past, and number two changes that followed European contact. Use your marks to compare causes and changes across time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Part 2: How did the use of western grasslands change from the time of wild bison herds to the present?	**Wild bison once grazed western grasslands; today, people raise cattle on much of that land.**
2	Why is the Cooper Bison Kill Site evidence of early Native activity, and what can its finds not prove?	**Stone points found among bison remains show that early Native people hunted there. The finds do not prove that the hunters belonged to a later named tribe.**
3	Compare how Caddo and Wichita communities used their environments. What activity connected both peoples with Spiro?	**Caddo communities farmed and made pottery in wooded river valleys. Wichita communities farmed near plains rivers and hunted bison. Both exchanged goods through trade networks, as Spiro did.**
4	Compare what European traders and Native communities sought from trade. Name one way contact changed Native life.	**European traders sought valuable goods and markets, while Native communities sought useful goods such as metal tools. Introduced disease caused population losses, or horses changed travel and bison hunting for many Plains communities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In southeastern Oklahoma, Caddo communities farmed river valleys and made pottery. On the plains, Wichita communities grew crops near rivers and hunted bison. Their environments offered different resources, but neither community lived in isolation: both exchanged goods through networks that crossed many regions. After European contact, horses made travel and bison hunting easier for many Plains groups, while introduced diseases brought serious losses. These changes did not erase Native choices or the communities' knowledge, trade connections, and ways of governing.

Accept comparisons that accurately connect each community's activities to its setting and identify a supported effect of contact or settlement. The museum label should be 70 to 90 words and should not portray Native communities as passive products of their environments.