

Click on the link to listen as you read the first chapter of *The American West*.

The First Americans: The Indians

The American Indians came from Asia about 40,000 years ago! They crossed **the Bering Strait**. Then they went down to North and South America. About 20 million Indians lived in America when the first explorers arrived. These Indians lived in many different tribes. Every tribe had a **chief**.



The Indians and the explorers were friends. The Indians taught the explorers how to grow corn, potatoes and tobacco. They taught them how to travel by canoe in the wilderness.

The explorers brought the Indians rifles, tools, **cattle** and horses. The explorers also brought illnesses. Many Indians died from these

illnesses.

The Indians of the Plains were expert hunters. They rode fast horses. They hunted the **buffalo** with bows and arrows or rifles.

These Indians followed the buffalo across the Plains. They used the buffalo for food, clothes and **tepees**.



The other American Indians were farmers. They farmed, fished and hunted small animals.

These Native Americans were happy people. They were strong, healthy and courageous. They loved and respected nature.

After many years, more new **settlers** and explorers went to America. They wanted to go to the West. They wanted to live there. They took the land from the Indians. The Indians were very angry and the Indian Wars started. Many people were killed.



The Indians lost their land and their way of life. They went to live on **reservations**.

Answer the following questions.

1. Where is the Bering Strait?

2. How many Indians lived in America before the first explorers arrived?

3. What did the Indians teach the explorers?

4. What did the explorers give the Indians?

5. Why did many Indians die after the arrival of the explorers?

6. What two kinds of Indians existed in those days?

7. What did the Indians use the buffalo for?

8. What were the Native American people like?

9. Why did the Indian Wars start?

10. What happened to the Indians?

Choose the word from the box and write under the correct picture.

buffalo cattle chief reservation rifle settlers teepee

