



Woven together: An Iroquois Longhouse

The Iroquois people traditionally lived in longhouses, which were large, rectangular homes built to house multiple families. These longhouses were made from wood, with a framework of poles covered by sheets of bark. The longhouse got its name because of its rectangular (1)____, often extending over 100 feet in length.

Inside, the longhouse was divided into sections. Each section housed a different family, but all of them shared the same central (2)____, which ran down the middle of the building. This was used for cooking, gathering, and other community activities. Families had their own small areas on either side of the central space, separated by partitions made from bark or woven materials.

The heart of each family's space was the fire pit. These pits were dug into the ground and used for cooking and warmth. (3)____ holes were left in the roof directly above the fire pits, allowing smoke to escape. This system provided ventilation and kept the inside of the longhouse from getting too smoky.

Each family's area included sleeping platforms. These were made from wooden planks and raised off the ground to avoid the cold. The platforms were covered with (4)____ and furs to provide warmth during the colder months. Families stored their personal belongings in (5)____ under the sleeping platforms, keeping the space organized and free from clutter.

The walls of the longhouse were lined with shelves. These shelves were used to (6)____ food, tools, and other items needed for daily life.

The Iroquois people relied heavily on farming, so they needed to store large quantities of dried corn, beans, and squash, which were their staple foods. The food was stored in baskets or hung from the ceiling to keep it dry and safe from animals.

Lighting inside the longhouse was provided by the central fire pits, as there were no windows. However, the (7)____ from the fire also made the space warm and cozy. The longhouse was designed to be durable and could last for many years with proper care and maintenance.

Outside the longhouse, the Iroquois often had (8)____ where they grew vegetables. These gardens were essential for feeding the families living in the longhouse. Women were responsible for tending to the crops, while men hunted and fished to provide additional food.

The longhouse was not just a home; it was a (9)____ place where families came together for ceremonies, storytelling, and important decisions. The structure reflected the communal lifestyle of the Iroquois, where cooperation and shared responsibility were central values.

Overall, the traditional Iroquois longhouse was a practical, well-organized space that served the needs of multiple families. Its design maximized space and resources, making it a central part of Iroquois life and culture. The longhouse was more than just a shelter; it was a symbol of the community's strength and (10)____.

Word Bank

light, shape, baskets, smoke, store, space, mats, gardens, gathering, unity