



As you read about how different Native Americans built homes, pay attention to how the author uses comparisons and contrasts to help you understand. Look for clue words to help you.

The Longhouse and the Tipi

by Joseph Bruchac



In the old days, wherever Native American people lived, their homes reflected their way of life. The traditional houses of the Iroquois of the northeastern woodlands are very different from the dwellings of the Lakhotas of the Great Plains.

The Iroquois called themselves Haudenosaunee (how-dee-no-SHO-nee), "People of the Longhouse." Their homes were long buildings made of wooden poles sunk into the earth, lashed together, and covered with overlapping shingles made of pieces of elm bark. In contrast, the Lakhotas lived in homes made of buffalo skins fastened around a cone-shaped frame of tall poles tied together. These skin lodges were called tipis (TEE-pee-z).

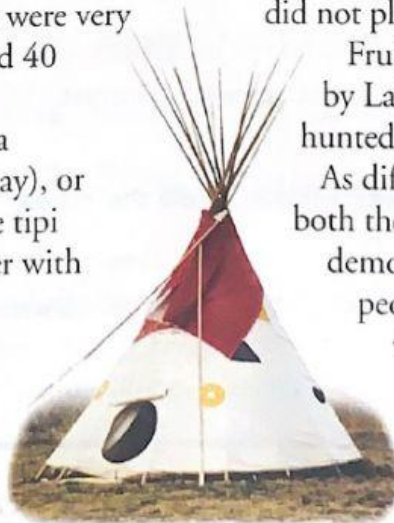
Each Iroquois longhouse held a number of families, who shared the cooking fires in the center. Some longhouses were very large, up to 200 feet long and 40 feet wide. A Lakhotas tipi, however, was built to house a single tiyospaye (tee-YO-shpay), or extended family. The average tipi was about 20 feet in diameter with 25-foot-high tipi poles.

Longhouse villages were built close to rivers, where the soil was good for farming. Stockades were sometimes built around these villages to protect them from enemies. Because the Iroquois relied both on hunting and on the corn, beans, and squash their gardens yielded, their villages would remain in one place for a decade or more. When game became scarce or the soil was no longer fertile, they would construct a new village in another location.

The Lakhotas relied mainly on shifting herds of buffalo for their food, so their houses had to be easily movable. An entire tipi village could be set up or taken down in a matter of hours. Tipi poles would be fastened to either side of a horse to make a travois (trah-VWAH) that could be used to drag away their possessions. The Lakhotas did not plant gardens as the Iroquois did.

Fruits and edible roots were gathered by Lakhotas women, while the men hunted game animals for food.

As different as they were, the homes of both the Iroquois and the Lakhotas demonstrate how each of these native peoples adapted to the natural world.



Checking Comprehension

1. Why did the Iroquois and the Lakhota set up homes in new places?

2. How did the materials used to build a home reflect where the Iroquois and the Lakhota lived?

Practicing Comprehension Skills

Read each question. Fill in the circle next to the best answer.

3. How were the traditional ways of the Iroquois and Lakhota alike?

- ☐ Both hunted for food. ☐ Both lived in wooden houses.
☐ Both planted gardens. ☐ Both depended on the buffalo.

4. Which is a difference between the Iroquois and Lakhota?

- ☐ The Lakhota lived in family groups, but the Iroquois did not.
☐ The Iroquois gathered and ate fruits, but the Lakhota did not.
☐ The Iroquois stayed in one place, while the Lakhota moved around.
☐ The Lakhota lived in longhouses, but the Iroquois lived in tipis.

5. Longhouses were built near _____

- ☐ plains ☐ rivers ☐ buffalo herds ☐ stockades

6. Tipis were set up near _____

- ☐ gardens ☐ stockades ☐ rivers ☐ buffalo herds

STRATEGY: Comparing and Contrasting



Complete the chart. Write contrasting details from the article in each column.

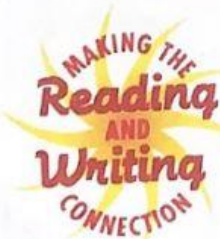
	Iroquois Longhouses	Lakhota Tipis
How were their homes built?	7. _____ _____ _____	8. _____ _____ _____
How big were their homes?	9. _____ _____ _____	10. _____ _____ _____

Practicing Vocabulary

Choose the word from the box that best matches each definition.
Write the word on the line.

demonstrate diameter pieces possessions reflected stockades yielded

- _____ 11. belongings
- _____ 12. bits or parts
- _____ 13. show or prove
- _____ 14. fences or walls
- _____ 15. produced
- _____ 16. width of a circle
- _____ 17. formed a picture of



Writing a Compare and Contrast Paragraph

On another sheet of paper, write a paragraph about two people, two things, or two places you know or have read about. Tell how they are alike and how they are different.

