



## THE FIRST AMERICANS

North America is a large and varied land with great resources and beauty. No one knows for sure when the first people inhabited this land, but scientists believe it was thousands of years before Columbus and any explorers came along. It has been determined that many groups of Native Americans lived in North America. These groups of people lived in tribes. They developed their own ways to meet their needs for food, shelter, and clothing.

North American tribes did not leave written records. Archaeologists have had to depend on the items they left behind. These items are called artifacts. Artifacts can share clues as to how these early settlers lived. Some of these tribes lived near water while others lived in the desert. Each group of people had to learn different skills to survive.

Each of these tribes or groups of people had their own name. There were four main North American Indian groups. These groups were the Pacific Northwest Indians, the Southwest Indians, the Plains Indians, and the Eastern Woodland Indians. These groups of Native Americans had rich cultures and traditions that were passed on through the generations.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. Who were some of the first people to live on the American continent?
  - a. Columbus and his crew
  - b. Eastern Europeans
  - c. Native Americans
  - d. British Soldiers
  
2. The scientists who study these early cultures are called . . .
 

a. biologists.	c. geologists.
b. archaeologists.	d. sociologists.
  
3. After reading the passage, what can you infer about how scientists are able to learn about these early cultures?
  - a. by studying the foods and traditions of each group
  - b. by studying the systems of government
  - c. by reading the written history
  - d. by studying the artifacts