

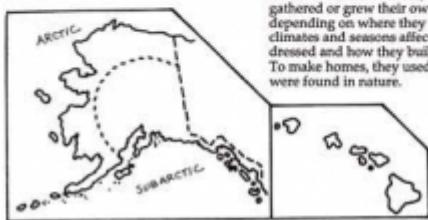


Welcome to the United States of America.
This country is part of the North American continent. The U.S. is bordered by Canada to the north and Mexico to the south.

The U.S. is made up of 50 individual states. Two of these states are separate from the lower 48 and are shown in insets below the main map. The largest state, Alaska, is next to Canada in the northwest. Hawaii, a group of islands, lies to the west in the Pacific Ocean.



This map also shows the regions where native Americans lived for many thousands of years before the settlers came to North America from Europe. They were incorrectly called "Indians" by Christopher Columbus, who thought he had reached the West Indies.



Geography affects how we live today, but try to imagine how it influenced native Americans who lived directly on the land. Native Americans fished, hunted, gathered or grew their own food, depending on where they lived. The climate and seasons affected how they dressed and how they built their homes. To make homes, they used materials that were found in nature.

MAP of the MONTH

United States of America
and Regions of Native American Culture



Although life in each region was different, all native people respected the land and living things. Prayers and rituals were a part of daily life, reminders of how their actions affected nature and each other. They killed animals when necessary, wasting nothing. Skins were used for clothing and shelters. Even bones were made into tools or ornaments.

All native Americans created arts and crafts from materials at hand. In regions where life was easier and food abundant, there was more time for decorative arts. In harsher regions, survival took up most of their time.

Now there are only a few native Americans compared to the past. Unfortunately, settlers, although often welcomed, disrupted the lifestyles of these people. Today, many are struggling to hold on to their traditional ways. For more information about their culture, past and present, look for books in your library. We can learn from them how to better appreciate and respect the land of the 50 states today.