

LESSON 4: Transport: Homes and Belongings

Time 30 minutes

Trunk Resources

Graphics

#9 Travois being pulled by a dog

#10 Cheyenne women with a travois

#31 Travois pulled by dog and travois pulled by horse

Object: Parfleche.

Worksheet

#12 Making a Parfleche.

Teacher Resources

Photocopy worksheet #12 Making a Parfleche for each student. Assemble scissors, markers, and 18" yarn or leather strip for each student.

Objectives

1. Students will design and construct a parfleche similar to that used by Native Americans.
2. Students will compare transportation used by Native Americans with transportation used today.

Historical background

Because the Plains Indians moved their camps during the hunting season, they had to have ways to move their tipis and belongings. Prior to the coming of the horse, the Plains Indians used domesticated dogs to help move heavy loads.

When moving camp, all able-bodied men and women, along with all children big enough to keep up, walked. Mothers carried infants on their backs. Men, carrying only their weapons, protected the flanks and rear. Women, children, and dogs formed the center of the moving camp. Each family transported its own belongings. The tipi, made of buffalo hide and poles, was the heaviest family possession. It was hauled by the dogs.

Dogs either carried loads on their backs or were trained to draw a "travois." The travois consisted of two poles whose front tips converged for attachment at the dogs' shoulders while the butt ends dragged along the ground. Midway was attached a frame either in ladder form or made of a hoop with a netting of thongs and to this frame the load, sometimes sixty pounds or more was tied. Dogs also were used to carry firewood, buffalo meat from the hunt, and various other things. Travel would be relatively slow. The travois pulled by a dog would average about 5 miles a day. The meat to be transported was dried on pole racks. Once dry, it was packed into parfleches between layers of dried peppermint leaves. The mint was eaten with the meat. Some women

preferred to dry the meat in the air and sun until it was half-dry and then build a brisk fire and finish drying over the coals. A parfleche is made from raw hide. Often times they were decorated, the Plains Indians often used large geometric designs. The parfleche was used much like we use a bag or possibly a suitcase. Food, belongings, and supplies may have been stored in the parfleche.

In 1541 Francisco Vasquez de Coronado came to North America. It was on this expedition that the horse was introduced to the Indian people.

After 1630 the Plains Indians began using horses. Horses were obtained from the Spanish settlements in present New Mexico through barter, theft, and capturing the horses that had gotten loose from other owners. The travois was adapted to the horse, which could carry much heavier loads.

The introduction of the horse changed the lives of the Plains Indians. As the horse could carry more, tipis became larger. Indian hunters quickly became expert horsemen, hunting buffalo on horse back, keeping up with the herds, and killing them more easily.

Sources: William Unrau, *The Kansa Indians*; Robert Lowie, *Indians of the Plains*

Vocabulary

Belongings – Something you own or possess

Coronado – Francisco Vasquez de Coronado from Spain explored southwest America. In 1541 he marched north of the Texas Plains into what is now central Kansas

Nomadic – To move or wander from place to place

Parfleche – A leather bag, often decorated, used for storage

Tipi – A portable house made of tanned hides sewn together and stretched over a framework of poles

Travois – A carrier pulled by a horse, dog, or person. Two poles are crossed and tied at one end, a leather pad is attached to the other

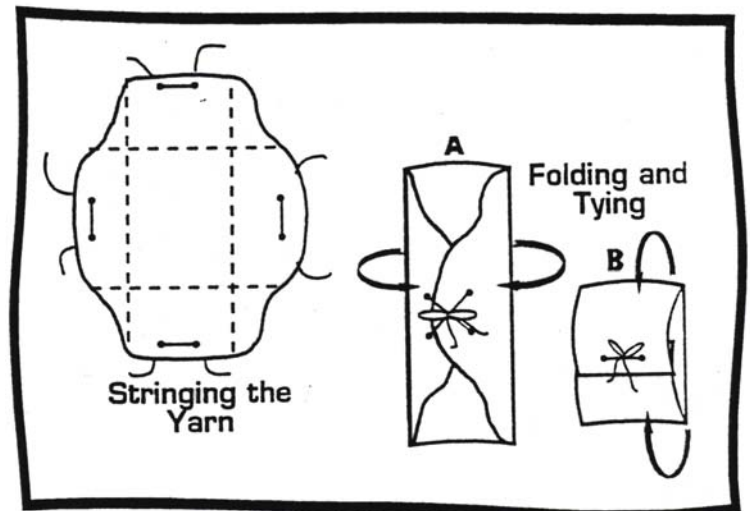
Activities

1. Tell students that some Plains tribes were nomadic (meaning they moved often). Ask students if they have ever moved. If so, did they move their homes? If so, what kind of home was it (mobile home), and how did they move it? Ask students to name types of housing we use today that would be easy to move (camping trailers, tents, etc.). Then ask those who have moved, but did not move their house, how they moved their belongings (moving van, mini van, pickup truck).
2. Ask students how they think Indians moved their belongings from one place to another (one response may be: by horse). This is a correct answer. However,

before the arrival of the horse, they used dogs to transport their belongings. They would attach a travois to the dogs' backs. A travois consisted of two poles, the front tips converged for the attachment to the dogs' shoulders, while the butt ends dragged along the ground; midway was attached a frame either in ladder form or made of a hoop with netting of thongs. Sometimes sixty pounds or more was tied. Dogs also carried firewood and buffalo meat from the hunt and various other things. Show students graphic #9 Travois Pulled by a Dog.

3. Tell students that a travois pulled by a dog was a very slow way to travel. Five or six miles a day was about average.
4. After 1630 the Plains Indians were introduced to the horse. Explain that a new travois was made to fit the horse. Show students graphics #10 Cheyenne Women with a Travois and #31 Travois Pulled by a Dog and Travois Pulled by a Horse. Ask students if they think the horse would be an improvement over the dog? Why or why not? (Yes, it was an improvement as horses could carry heavier loads therefore the Indians could build bigger tipis, horses could move at a faster pace, and horses were distracted less than dogs.)
5. Show students the parfleche. Ask them if they know what it is and what it may have been used for. Explain that a parfleche is made from rawhide and can be made in different sizes. Often times they were decorated, the Plains Indians used large geometric designs. The parfleche was used much like we use a bag or possibly a suitcase. Food, belongings, and supplies may have been stored in the parfleche. Ask students if they think the parfleche would have made moving easier? (Yes, it would have made moving easier as you could pack more than one item in the parfleche making it easier to transport many items.)

6. Hand out to each student a copy of worksheet #12 Making a Parfleche. Have students cut out the parfleche and decorate it with large geometric designs. Students should look at the parfleche from the trunk for one example of a design. Once the parfleche has been cut out and decorated, students can lace it together with either a leather strip or yarn.



Extended Activities

1. Map exercise

Teacher Preparation

Locate a map of Kansas or a county map

Objectives

1. Students will calculate the distance between two locations.
2. Students will calculate the time taken to travel between two locations.

Activity

- a. Using a map, ask students to figure out how long it would take to get from one city to the next traveling at the speed of five miles per day. (Note: The cities should be designated by the teacher. It would be a good idea to use locations familiar to the students.)
- b. Students will need to carefully study the scale and measure the distance between the two locations. The total distance measured should be multiplied by the scale. For example, if the scale was one inch to ten miles and the distance on the map was ten inches, the total distance would be one hundred miles.
- c. Students should be reminded that Indians using a travois pulled by a dog traveled about five miles each day. How long would it take for them to travel to the designated location. For example, if the distance was one hundred miles, students would have to divide the distance (one hundred miles) by the number of miles traveled each day (five miles). The number of days would be twenty.

2. Decision making exercise

Have students pretend they are moving and can take only ten items because of limited space in the moving van. Have the students make a list of ten items that they would take. Why would they take those particular items? How would they feel about leaving other things behind?

3. Quillworker and the travois

Trunk resources

Book: *Quillworker, A Cheyenne Legend* by Terri Cohlene.

Graphics

- #9 Travois being Pulled by a Dog
- #10 Cheyenne Women with a Travois
- #31 Travois Pulled by Dog and Travois Pulled by Horse

Activity

- a. Read the story *Quillworker, a Cheyenne Legend*, by Terri Cohlene to the students.
- b. Show students graphics of the travois pulled by the dog and the horse. Graphics #9, #10, and #31.
- c. Have students write their own story. They should imagine they are Native Americans many years ago, about to move (maybe on a hunt). They should

People of the Plains: Native Americans in Kansas Traveling Trunk
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mention how they travel, how they use the travois, whether it is pulled by dogs or horses, and describe the events of their journey. In their stories the students should include the sights, smells, and sounds they experience during their trip to help them express their feelings.

- d. Have students draw pictures of a scene from their stories. Have each student explain his or her picture to the rest of the class.
- e. Display students pictures on a bulletin board.
- f. Have students act out scenes from one or more of the stories.