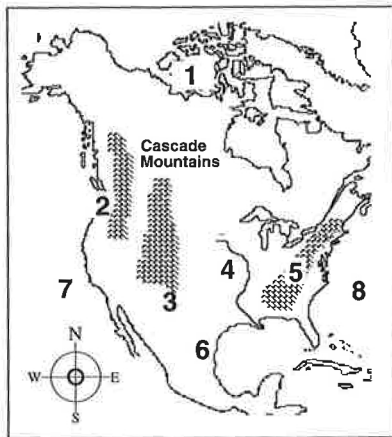
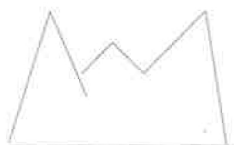
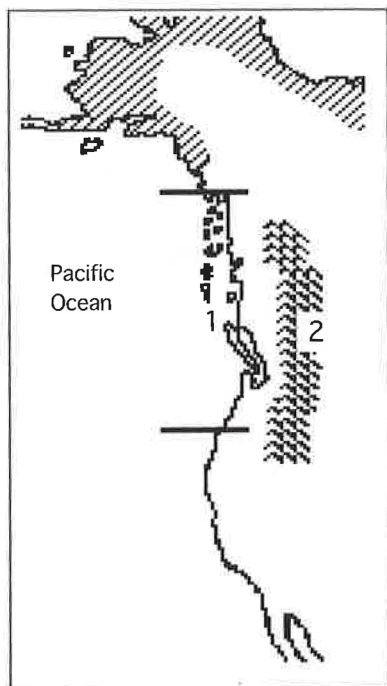


Figure 2.7 Regions of North America

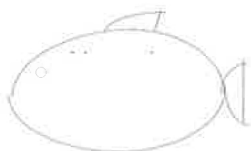


Climate

Figure 2.8 The Northwest Coast



Geography



Natural Resources

The Northwest Coast

The rest of this chapter discusses how Native American cultures developed in four other geographic regions shown on the map in Figure 2.7.

The Arctic was one region that you have already read about. A second region, 2 on the map, was the Northwest Coast, which had a rainy climate, with lots of trees and fish. A third region, 3 on the map, the Southwest, was very dry and mostly desert. The fourth region, 4 on the map, in the heart of North America, was the Great Plains Region, with almost no trees, but many bison or buffalo. A fifth region, 5 on the map, the Appalachian Mountain Region, was hilly with lots of trees.

- 22 Look at the map in Figure 2.7 and tell what number shows the:
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| a. Northwest Coast | e. Pacific Ocean |
| b. Appalachian Mountains | f. Mexico |
| c. Atlantic Ocean | g. Southwest |
| d. Arctic | h. Great Plains |

The Environment of the Northwest Coast

The climate of the Northwest Coast. Compared to the land of the Inuit, the climate of the Northwest Coast of North America was mild. The temperature seldom dropped below freezing. However, there was a great deal of rain.

- 23 What was the climate of the Northwest Coast?

The geography of the Northwest Coast. The Northwest Coast region is shown at 1 on the map in Figure 2.8. Being on the shoreline of the ocean was an important feature of the geography of the Northwest Coast because clouds carried moisture and rain from the Pacific Ocean east onto the land. Then between 150 and 200 miles inland to the east, the clouds ran into a high mountain range, the Cascades. The Cascade Mountains are at 2 on the map in Figure 2.8. The clouds had to rise to cross the mountains, producing a great amount of rain and snow. All the rain and snow in the mountains created many large rivers which emptied into the ocean along the Northwest Coast.

- 24 What was the geography of the Northwest Coast?

The natural resources of the Northwest Coast. The wet weather enabled many trees to grow. During the time before Europeans came, cedar trees were plentiful. The cedar wood was also relatively soft and easy to carve, so it was an important natural resource for the Native Americans of the Northwest Coast.

A second very important natural resource for the Native Americans of the Northwest Coast was fish, especially salmon. Salmon live in the ocean but must travel up the rivers of the Northwest each year to **spawn**, to lay eggs and reproduce. Each species of salmon, and several other kinds of fish, have a certain time of the year when they travel up river to spawn. During this time, called a run, powerful instincts drive the fish to swim up the rivers and streams against all obstacles. In the time before Europeans came to America, the salmon came by the millions up the rivers of the Northwest Coast to spawn. During the runs, the Native Americans on the Northwest Coast simply scooped the salmon out of the streams as fast as they could.

There were many kinds of wild edible plants in the Northwest, including several varieties of berries. There was also plenty of game in the forests of the Northwest. However, the most plentiful resources were trees and salmon.

- 25 What were the resources of the Northwest Coast?

The Chinook¹ tribe. Most of the many different tribes lived along the shoreline of the ocean or the rivers in the Northwest Coast region. The tribe you will read about is the Chinook tribe. Some of the other tribes of the Northwest Coast region were the Tlingit², the Kwakiutl³, the Tillamook⁴, and the Nootka⁵.

The tribes who lived along the Northwest Coast did not all speak the same language or have exactly the same culture. However, the overall environment of the area made their cultures similar.

The Chinook Culture's Solutions to Basic Problems

The Chinook and the need for food. The Chinook knew that the best time to catch the salmon was during the runs when the salmon left the ocean to go up the rivers to spawn. The Chinook would work so hard during the salmon runs that the tribe would catch enough salmon to last all year. The salmon were cleaned and then smoked or dried to preserve them as food for the rest of the year.

26 How did the Chinook solve the problem of keeping fish for the entire year?

Salmon was the main source of food for the Chinook. However, the Chinook wanted to have something to eat besides salmon all the time. Another way the Chinook got food was by gathering food from edible plants in the forests, especially blackberries which grow wild in the region.

There was a third way of getting food, besides fishing and gathering, on the Northwest Coast. The men also hunted game, but that was a much less important source of food than fishing.

27 What was the main way the Chinook solved their need for food?

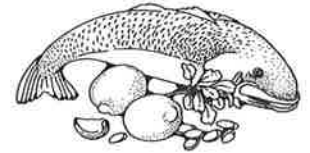
The Chinook would also go out to sea and bring back other kinds of fish and even whales to eat. The Chinook were similar to the Inuit because they both lived near the sea and got food from the sea. The Chinook were also like the Inuit because they both needed boats of some kind to use to go out to fish in the sea and also to travel from village to village. The Chinook were different from the Inuit because the Chinook had plenty of trees in their environment. Because they had trees, the Chinook did not need to make boats and canoes out of animal skins. The Chinook used the plentiful forests along the Northwest Coast to get wood to make their canoes and boats. The largest boats were 60 to 70 feet long. These huge boats were hollowed out of a single trunk of one of the huge cedar trees in their forests.

The Chinook and the need for clothing. The northernmost tribe in the Northwest Coast, the Tlingit, made use of tailored garments of deerskin, with leggings, or pants, and moccasins, a style of clothing that was common throughout North America.

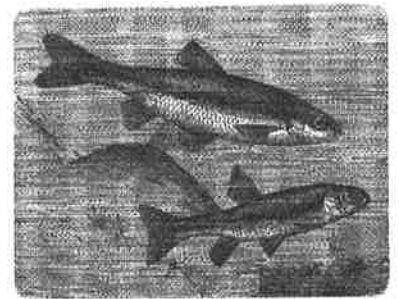
The milder temperature of the rest of the Northwest Coast region meant that the Chinook did not need as much clothing as the Tlingit. The Chinook wore minimal clothing, usually deerskin shirt and breechcloth. The Chinook also made clothing from the bark of trees. The soft stringy inner bark of cedar trees was softened and then made into clothing. That softened cedar bark was also used to make blankets.

28 How did the Chinook meet their need for clothing?

The Chinook and the need for shelter. Because of the plentiful forests in the Northwest Coast region, the Chinook made many things from the trees in the forest. They used wood to construct buildings that were large enough for



Food



Clothing



Shelter

¹Chinook
is pronounced shin-oók; rhymes with "book."

²Tlingit
is pronounced tling-git; rhymes with "fling-kit."

³Kwakiutl
is pronounced kwah-key-oót-ul; rhymes with "futile."

⁴Tillamook
is pronounced till-uh-mook; rhymes with "Luke."

⁵Nootka
is pronounced noót-kuh; rhymes with "boot-the."

several families to live in at the same time. The wooden buildings were organized into villages of as many as 1,000 people.

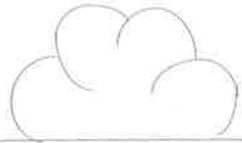
29 How did the Chinook meet their need for shelter?

2. NORTHWEST COAST

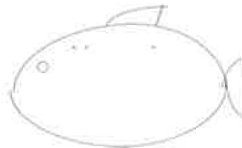
rainy
shoreline
Chinook
salmon
cedar bark
trees



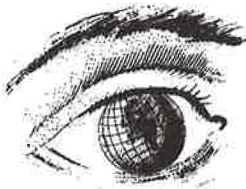
Geography



Climate



Natural Resources



World Views



Test

Question 2: How did the environment of the Northwest Coast influence the culture of the Native American tribes who lived there? Describe the climate and geography of the Northwest Coast; then describe how one tribe of Native Americans in that region met their three basic needs. Begin with a general statement.

Basic Answer: The environment in which a Native American tribe lived influenced their culture. The climate of the Northwest Coast was mild and rainy. The geography where the Chinook lived was the shoreline. The Chinook had salmon for food, cedar bark for clothing, and trees for shelter.

Exemplary Answer: The environment in which a Native American tribe lived influenced their culture. The climate of the Northwest Coast was mild and rainy. The geography where the Chinook lived was along the shoreline of the ocean and the rivers. The Chinook met their need for food primarily by fishing for salmon, but also by gathering berries, and some hunting. The Chinook met their need for clothing with deerskin and by weaving cloth from the inner bark of cedar trees. The Chinook met their need for shelter by building large homes of wood from the plentiful trees in their forests.

Practice

Test Question: How did the environment of the Arctic influence the culture of the Native American tribes who lived there? Describe the climate and geography of the Arctic; then describe how one tribe of Native Americans in that region met their three basic needs. Begin with a general statement.

The effect of the Chinook solutions. The Chinook and the other tribes of the Northwest Coast **accommodated** to their environment by making the plentiful supply of salmon their main food, and by making excellent use of the plentiful cedar trees for clothing and shelter. As a result of adapting to their environment, the needs of the Chinook were well met. The effect was that the Chinook had more free time for celebrations and for artistic works. The artistic works of the Chinook developed a unique style. The art of the Chinook is still prized today.

Native American World Views

Three beliefs of the Chinook. Remember that in general, the Native American **world view** held that when Native Americans acted correctly the environment provided abundant natural resources. One example of this world view was the belief of the Chinook that the salmon left the ocean for the purpose of feeding them. The Chinook performed a special religious ceremony called a **ritual** with the first salmon they caught each year. This first salmon of the run was treated with great care and honor. This honor was intended to make the salmon happy and make sure that all the salmon would come again to feed the people the following year. The Chinook believed that by performing this **ritual** of thanksgiving to the salmon, they could be sure that the environment would provide abundant food.

30 Explain the Chinook belief about how the ritual with the first salmon helped to meet the basic needs of the Chinook tribe.

A second belief in the world view of the Chinook was that each family, or a group of families called a clan, was connected in a special way to certain animals, called **totems**. **Totems** are animal figures which are special symbols of a family or clan. In front of each house was a tall, carved, wooden pole called a

totem pole, which was carved with animal symbols, such as salmon, killer whales, bears, or other figures. Usually there were stories about a special experience or supernatural encounter between this totem animal and an **ancestor**. An **ancestor** is a family member from the past. Generally these stories would tell of how the totem had shared some of its unique powers with the ancestor and had given the clan the right to use its form as their totem. In this way, the various figures on the totem poles in front of a house told visitors the history of the family's ancestors. The totem pole was a type of sign, telling whose house it was, and something about their family history.

"Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors--the dreams of our old men, given them in the solemn hours of nights by the Great Spirit...and [religion] is written in the hearts of our people."

Chief Seattle, 1786-1866.

- 31 What is a totem ?
- 32 What is an ancestor?
- 33 What was a totem pole?
- 34 What was a second belief in the world view of the Chinook?

A third and very important belief in the world view of the Chinook was the importance of celebrating important events by having **potlatches**. **Potlatches** were a combination of religious ceremonies and parties, which lasted for days. The person giving the potlatch, called the host, would invite people to a feast and give away many presents to everyone. The main activity at potlatches, besides feasting, was giving away large amounts of blankets and other goods. The more the host gave away, the more honor and importance the host received. Potlatches were given to celebrate putting up a totem pole, finishing a new house, a marriage, or simply to celebrate how much wealth the host had accumulated. There were also special ceremonial dances in which the dancers wore gigantic masks representing the family totems. They honored the ancestors and brought their spirits into the village.

- 35 What were potlatches?
- 36 What was a third belief in the world view of the Chinook?

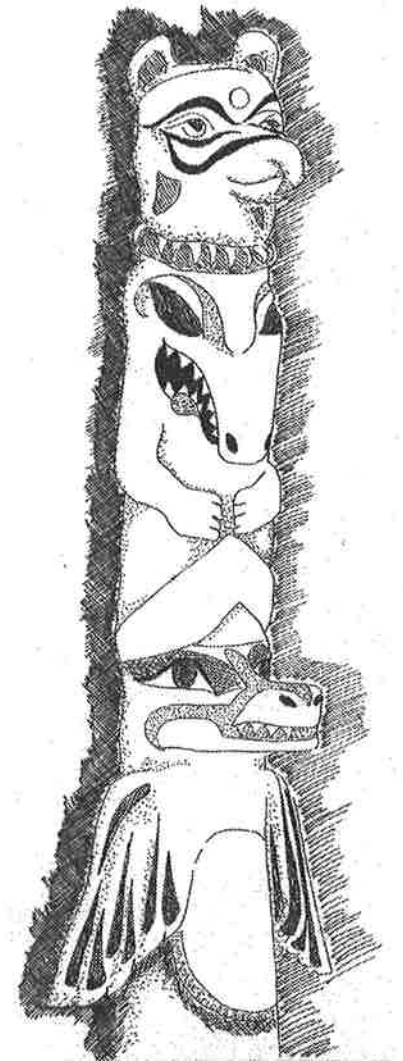
General points about Native American world views. The potlatch ceremony, totem poles, and the ceremony honoring the return of the salmon show something about the **world view** of the Chinook. Native Americans felt that how they acted had an influence on their environment. Native Americans believed the entire world was **moral**. **Moral** means knowing right from wrong behavior. Native Americans believed that when they acted correctly, the world provided abundant natural resources. But when the Native Americans acted badly or wrongly, then the environment might stop providing what the tribe needed.

- 37 What does moral mean?

Discussion How might the world view of the Chinook make them unhappy if they lived today in a big city?

Many Native beliefs had parallels with the beliefs of the Greeks, the Hebrews, and other peoples. Native beliefs about the origins of the universe, the powers of a god, the gifts that gods gave particular tribes, and the relationship between what was real and imaginary are not so different from what has been taught by other religions. While specific beliefs differed between tribes, other beliefs about creation, Nature and human responsibility were generally very similar. The similarities allow us to make some general statements about Native American beliefs about life.

Native Americans believed that a life force pulsed through the universe, and could be seen in animals, plants and in themselves. This life force was not only physical but also **spiritual**. **Spiritual** means having to do with the unseen



World Views

"From Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, there came a great unifying life force that flowed in and through all things--the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals--and was the same force that had been breathed into the first man. Thus all things were kindred, and were brought together by the same Great Mystery.

Chief Luther Standing Bear,
1868-1939

world of god or the spirits. This life force was spiritual because it came from a god who had a moral purpose for all that he created. In this sense, Native people considered this life on earth to be just as spiritual or sacred as what happens after death. Native Americans felt that their whole environment would either reward or punish them depending upon whether they lived good lives in harmony with nature. In the next section, you will read about the beliefs of another tribe, the Hopi¹.

38 What does spiritual mean?

End-of-Section Questions: The Northwest Coast

Part A: Core Test Questions

1. How did the environment of the Arctic influence the culture of the Native American tribes who lived there? Describe the climate and geography of the Arctic; then describe how one tribe of Native Americans in that region met their three basic needs. Begin with a general statement.
2. How did the environment of the Northwest Coast influence the culture of the Native American tribes who lived there? Describe the climate and geography of the Northwest Coast; then describe how one tribe of Native Americans in that region met their three basic needs. Begin with a general statement.

Part B: Supplemental Questions

3. **Vocabulary.** Write the vocabulary word for each lettered definition:
 - a. a family member from the past, usually one who died long ago.
 - b. having to do with the unseen world of god or the spirits.
 - c. flat, treeless plain with thin soil in the Arctic.
 - d. culture where the people move around and do not live in one place all the time.
 - e. knowing right from wrong behavior.
4. List three beliefs of the world view of the Chinook.

5. **Map question:** Look at the map in Figure 2.9 on the next page and tell what number shows the:
 - a. Arctic
 - b. Appalachian Mountains
 - c. Pacific Ocean
 - d. Atlantic Ocean
 - e. Northwest Coast
 - f. Great Plains
 - g. Mexico
 - h. Cascade Mountains

Part C: Challenge Questions

6. **Compare and contrast.** Compare and contrast the Inuit and the Chinook. When you compare, you tell how things were similar or the same. List the ways the Inuit and the Chinook were the same; for example, both tribes used canoes. When you contrast, you tell how things are different. List the ways the Inuit and Chinook were different; for example, Inuit kayaks were made of animal skins, while Chinook canoes were made of cedar logs. After you have a list for same and a list for different, you're ready to write your answer. First, begin with a general statement that tells what question you are answering; for example, "The Inuit and Chinook were similar and different in many ways." Second, use your list about similarities to write some sentences. Last, use your list about differences to write some sentences.
7. In general, Native Americans met their needs by accommodating to their environment. Write a paragraph that explains this statement using an example from the Chinook and an example from the Inuit.

¹Hopi
is pronounced hóe-pee.