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USING THE TEACHING GUIDE AND RESOURCE BOOK

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RESOURCE Book includes:

Student Sheets, Team Sheets, Transparencies, and Documents
Game Cards, Assessments, and Library and Media Resources

SAMPLE

Lesson 4
The Hunters and the Hunted
Chapter 4

Theme

Archaeologists, historians, and scientists continue to search for the reason why large mammal and bird species went extinct at the end of the Pleistocene era and what part humans played in that early mystery.

Overview

During the last Ice Age, all kinds of now extinct animals roamed the North American continent. At the end of the Pleistocene era—between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago—these large, exotic mammals disappeared. Scientists do not know what caused the mammals to die off although many theories exist to explain the Pleistocene extinction. The hottest debate continues between archaeologists who favor climatic changes at the end of the Pleistocene and those who support the over-kill theory.

Supporters of the overkill theory argue that climatic changes occurred more than once during the Ice Age and that large animals experienced changing environments at those times without dying out. The only unique event, the overkill supporters claim, that occurred at the time of the extinction was the movement of people over the Bering Strait land bridge into the heart of North America. The animals made easy prey for they had not adapted to human attackers and so did not fear people. As humans kept expanding and hunting, they eventually over-killed the large mammals.

Archaeological evidence supports the spread of people at this time, and that they hunted large animals.

Nevertheless, other scientists reject the overkill theory for lack of clear-cut evidence showing a connection between the now-extinct animals and human hunters. Scientists have found few archaeological sites in which human weapons or other artifacts coexist with extinct animal bones. And although a few mastodon and mammoth sites like that exist, fossils from other extinct mammals have not been found in sites that clearly show that hunting occurred there.

Many overkill supporters maintain that the lack of site evidence may just mean that kill sites were rare and therefore hard to find, or that the quite small human population killed off the animals in a relatively short period of time. But critics find stronger issues with the overkill theory. Some mammals appear to have gone extinct before overkill is supposed to have occurred. Even more problematic is evidence that a large number of North American birds went extinct at the same time as the large mammals. And although the overkill theory maintains that humans primarily hunted large mammals, it does not really explain the disappearance of these bird species.

The climate-change theorists maintain that their theory better explains the extinction of both mammals and birds. At the end of the Pleistocene, seasonal temperature became more varied with less rain and snowfall. This affected vegetation and thus animals throughout North America. Smaller

mammals, able to alter their ranges, adapted to changing conditions, but larger mammals could not, and so many died out.

Today, most scientists favor the climate-change theory, but no one yet knows what happened for certain. Other scientists believe that the two factors—climate change and overkill—together brought about the end. And some researchers suggest that extinction might have resulted from disease or genetic problems. Until scholars uncover more evidence, the mystery remains unsolved.

The early Paleo-Indians who hunted the large animals also raise unanswered questions for scientists. The long-held theory that the earliest humans arrived by way of the Bering Strait land bridge, eventually following paths between mile-high glaciers until they spread throughout the continent is challenged by new evidence of an earlier arrival, perhaps by boat. As scientists attempt to find new site evidence, they are hampered by the fact that the land bridge now lies under the sea—as perhaps do the earliest sites. Many archaeologists believe the best sites may be on high ground that overlooked the plains of Beringia or in the mountain passes of Alaska. A caribou bone hide-scraper tool discovered in the Canadian Yukon was carbon dated at 27,000 years old; although scientists question its age saying that while the bone is that old, the human work on it might be of more recent origin.

Most scientists, although uncertain of how long ago the first humans arrived in North America, generally agree that the first Americans were nomadic hunters and skilled tool makers who used fire, hunted big game, and moved about in search of their prey. They followed the herds of caribou, mammoth, and musk-oxen that were the mainstay of their lives. The animals provided meat for food, bones for tools, and hides for clothing and shelter. When the animals moved, the hunters followed.

As archaeologists uncover more sites of nomadic hunting groups and use new tools like carbon dating and DNA analysis, they may gain answers to the mysteries of prehistoric America.

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The Lesson

Focus Activity – 5 minutes

Notes

Note to the Teacher: Be sure each student has a partner with whom to work. The partners sit together. Each student has a number, one through four, from the Student Sheet: *Numbered Heads*.

1. Explain to the students that historians and scientists have many unanswered questions about the mysteries of ancient North America. Two such mysteries concern the extinction of huge animals and birds and when the first humans arrived.
2. Working with their partners, students review questions about the first Americans raised in the previous lesson.

Circulate and Monitor: As the students list the questions, visit the partnerships to encourage each student's participation in the discussions.

3. Use **Numbered Heads** for the partnerships to share questions about the very first Americans such as:
 - Who were the first Americans?
 - When did they arrive?
 - From where did they come?
 - How did they get to the New World?

Teaching Activity – 20 minutes

1. Use information from the Overview to briefly explain the disappearance of large mammals at the end of the Ice Age.

Describe the overkill and climate-change theories of archaeologists and scientists. Use a graphic organizer format to outline the merits and shortcomings of each of the theories to explain large mammal extinction.

Ask the students which theory they prefer and why.

2. Use information from the Overview to briefly describe what scientists generally agree about the first humans in

America. List the characteristics of these Stone Age people on the chalk board.

3. Explain the reading task and introduce the Vocabulary Words to Remember.
4. **Reading for a Purpose:** Students **Partner Read** Chapter 4, “How the First Americans Became Indians” in *The First Americans* to list the accomplishments of the first Americans. The partners work together to find this information in the text and record the information in one list.

Circulate and Monitor: As the students read the chapter and create their lists, visit each partnership to help with the reading and the assignment and to check that students work together to complete the task.

Student Team Learning Activity – 20 minutes

Sharing and synthesizing information

1. Remind the students that historians work together to discuss and share information.
2. Explain the Student Team Learning Activity.
3. Join the student partnerships into teams of four students to discuss the information that each partnership listed while reading the chapter.
4. The teams consider both partnerships’ lists of contributions and synthesize the information into a team web.

Circulate and Monitor: As the students share and synthesize their lists, visit each team to check that students work together to complete the task.

5. Use **Numbered Heads** for the students to briefly share results of their teamwork with classmates.

Reflection and Review Activity – 15 minutes

1. Tell students they are going to read a rap song written about this time period. While they will not know all the names, events, and phrases listed in the rap now, they will know them after reading this book.

The First Americans Resource Book

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How Do You Know What You Know? Examining the Evidence

I believe the Vikings were the first Europeans to explore and settle in North America because...

Archaeology

EVIDENCE

Literature

EVIDENCE

Anthropology

EVIDENCE

Zoology

EVIDENCE

I Speculate that the Vikings stopped coming to America because...



Encounter Frame

for

*Account of the First Two Days in America from the
Letter of Columbus Published Upon His Return*

Columbus	Tainos
What were Columbus' goals ?	What were the Tainos' goals ?
What were Columbus' actions ?	What were the Tainos' actions ?
<p data-bbox="452 995 1136 1030">How did Columbus and the Tainos Interact?</p> <p data-bbox="643 1070 945 1104">Conflict Interactions</p> <p data-bbox="606 1215 982 1249">Compromise Interactions</p> <p data-bbox="609 1360 979 1395">Cooperative Interactions</p> <p data-bbox="206 1524 771 1798">What were the results of the interactions for Columbus?</p> <p data-bbox="817 1524 1381 1798">What were the results of the interactions for the Tainos?</p>	

Pre-Columbian Cultures Map

