

Native American Life—Potawatomi Profile

Common Core Anchor Reading Standard 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

The prairie is a place where plants have lived for hundreds of years. If you see a natural prairie in different seasons, you see bright flowers and tall grasses. In early spring you see shooting stars and violets, and the spring grasses begin to grow. The prairie is very wet then since winter snows melt and leave ponds. There are two kinds of prairie grasses, one that grows a lot in spring, another that grows a lot in summer.

In summer the grasses are so tall you can't see low-growing flowers, but you do see the tall black-eyed Susan. Summer was the prairie's biggest season. In summer, there was so much tall grass that people called it a sea of grass that grew as tall as people. When pioneers were in the prairie, sometimes they got lost and would use a very tall plant called the compass plant to find their way. The compass plant's leaves turned during the day to follow the sunlight. Thousands of animals lived in this grassy area, including bison that grazed on the plants.

In autumn, more flowers bloom—the asters brighten the prairie. The leaves of many prairie plants turn gold in autumn as the grasses dry. In autumn, when the grasses are dry, natural fires take place. Those fires start by lightning. Acres and acres of prairie can burn in one natural fire. When the grasses burn, the native prairie plants do not die. In fact, the fires help the grasses keep the prairie for themselves. Most plants, especially trees, depend on their tips to grow. You'll see that trees have new buds in spring, and that is where they grow. If a tree loses its branches, it will not grow again. But grasses do not need their leaves to grow back. They grow from their roots, and the fires do not burn those roots. So every year, the lightning fires are like gardeners weeding the prairie of plants that do not grow there. The prairie plants were like gardeners, too, because as their leaves died they fertilized the soil.

Some prairie animals migrate in winter to warmer places where they will find food. Some stay in the prairie through winter. And some hibernate. For example, some frogs dig holes under the ground and sleep through the cold prairie winter. Thousands of bison and hundreds of birds and other animals that used to live in this area are gone, but they did not migrate. They left because their habitat was destroyed. There is hope for the prairie, those animals will be able to live in this area again. People are restoring the prairie at Midewin National Tallgrass prairie. One day that area will look as it did when the bison lived there and the Potawatomi hunted here.

READ CLOSELY

What do you think the main idea is of this passage? Underline or list five facts that support it.

THINK MORE

Illustrate the passage. Draw pictures that show what each paragraph explains.

THINK CLEARLY

The following page includes multiple choice questions based on this reading. Answer the questions. As you answer each one, put the number of that question with the evidence that supports your answer.

Native American Life—Potawatomi Profile QUESTIONS

Read the questions. Re-read the text. Then think through the answers.

Choose the **best** answer for each item. After you answer the questions, check with another student to learn and why they chose their answers.

1. In which season do the Potawatomi grow much of their food? a. winter b. spring c. summer d. autumn	2. Why did the Potawatomi leave this area? a. There was not enough fishing. b. Homesteaders settled their land. c. The winters were too harsh. d. There were no more buffalo.
3. Why might a Potawatomi child talk a lot about getting food? a. They hunted in every season. b. Sometimes it was difficult to get food. c. Everyone needs food. d. There was so much food in every season.	4. Which of the following is the best way to describe the lives of the Potawatomi? a. They live the same way in different seasons. b. They adapt to the seasons. c. They have many homes. d. They travel most of the time
5. What might a Potawatomi mother have said to her child in summer? a. We have to get ready for winter. b. This is a time to get the sap from the trees. c. We have a wonderful family. d. Bring the fish you catch back to the wigwam.	6. Why would the family move to a place where they would find more animal tracks? a. To get near more people. b. To have more chance of finding food. c. To be where there are more trees. d. To see animals.
7. Which of these is the best adjective to describe the life of the Potawatomi? a. unchanging b. colorful c. easy d. natural	8. Which member of the family is most likely to have said this: "We have had a long, difficult winter." a. the mother b. the father c. the sister d. everyone

Write History

Tell the story of a day in a Potawatomi family. Choose one season and tell what they saw, what work they did, and how they felt about their environment.

Illustrate history. Add a drawing that shows what the prairie would have looked like on that day. Use details in your drawing to show the facts in your history.