First Encounters

Pre-Program Activity

Courtesy of the Witte Museum

Courtesy of the Texas Memorial Museum
WARM UP:

Imagine you were living in a world without supermarkets, malls, machines or electricity. How would you survive?

- What things do you need to survive?
- How could you make them?
- What materials would you need?
- Where would you get them? How?
This world you have imagined yourself in was a reality for most humans throughout history, including the American Indians here in Texas.
Without stores and machines, you have to make everything from things found in nature.
You might also have to find all of your food in nature: hunter-gatherer.

So, you would need to move frequently to follow your food: nomad.
OR

You might stay in **one place** in order to **grow** your food: **farmer**
Depending on where you live, nature can be very different!
So, how did the geography of Texas influence the way American Indians lived?
Look closely at the pictures to make predictions about each region. Try to find clues that will tell you about:

• plants
• animals
• climate
Share Out:
What is your prediction?

• What kind of plants did you see?

• What kind of animals do you think live here?

• What do you think the climate is like?
Mountains and Basins Characteristics:

**Climate:** hot by day and cool by night in the desert, very dry (only 8-20 inches of rain a year)

**Landscape:** mountains, basins, valleys, desert

**Plants:** cactus, brush/short grass, yucca, pine, oak, maple trees

**Animals:** bison, coyote, elk, prairie dog
How do these characteristics influence the way American Indians lived in this region?
Share Out:
What is your prediction?

- What kind of *plants* did you see?
- What kind of *animals* do you think live here?
- What do you think the *climate* is like?
Great Plains Characteristics:

**Climate:** mostly dry (15-28 inches of rain per year) northern areas colder in the winter, southern areas get more rain, dust storms

**Landscape:** canyons in NW, flat grasslands in SE, limestone and granite, caves, aquifers

**Plants:** cactus, mesquite, cedar, cottonwood trees

**Animals:** bison, owl, prairie dog, badger, deer, antelope
How do these characteristics influence the way American Indians lived in this region?
North Central Plains
Share Out:
What is your prediction?

- What kind of plants did you see?
- What kind of animals do you think live here?
- What do you think the climate is like?
North Central Plains

Characteristics:

Climate: wide ranging temperatures (hot summers, cooler winters) 20-30 inches of rain per year, risk of tornadoes

Landscape: rolling plains, short grasses and brushy plants

Plants: oak, mesquite, pecan, walnut trees

Animals: bison, hawk, beaver, quail, deer, armadillo
How do these characteristics influence the way American Indians lived in this region?
Coastal Plains
Share Out:
What is your prediction?

➢ What kind of plants did you see?

➢ What kind of animals do you think live here?

➢ What do you think the climate is like?
Coastal Plains Characteristics:

**Climate:** Semi-tropical, warm and humid, rarely freezes, 30-60 inches of rain per year

**Landscape:** flat, low, prairie grasslands, sand beaches, marshes, bays, barrier islands

**Plants:** Pine forests, oak, mesquite, willow and hickory trees

**Animals:** Fish, shellfish, fox, deer, bison, otter, alligator
How do these characteristics influence the way American Indians lived in this region?
American Indians in Texas

Which region has the most American Indian groups?

Why do you think more groups settled here?
So, how did the geography of Texas influence the way American Indians lived?
During the distance learning program, we will learn more about the Karankawa of the Coastal Plains and their first encounters with the Spanish Conquistadors.