

# A comparison of two cultures

## Understanding #5: Prairie Indian Cultures: Script

### FRAME 1:

Before the coming of the Europeans there was considerable diversity among the various Native people living in Saskatchewan. The slide pictures you will be seeing depict a variety of Indian cultures from about 1500 A.D., when North America was first visited by Europeans to the present before large scale settlement of Canada.

In the area now called Saskatchewan quite a few differences between the Bushland (Northern), Woodland (Central) and Plains (Southern) people existed. The lifestyles and cultures of those groups of people now known as Indians were based on the natural resources of the area in which they lived. Food, shelter, clothing, means of transportation, arts and religion were a direct expression of their surroundings.

### FRAME 2:

Women were the labourers. The Cree woman on the left carrying a bundle of sticks is dressed plainly in a shawl. Cree people used very little or no decoration on clothing or homes. The Cree lived in the central and northern areas of Saskatchewan where wood was plentiful - hence the sticks for firewood. Plains Indians, where trees were scarce and buffalo plenty used buffalo chips for firewood.

The Assiniboine woman on the right is wearing more decorative clothing. Plains Indian people used more decoration possibly because they had easier access to painting materials such as colored clays found on or near the surface of the earth.

FRAME 3:

Indian men were hunters and protectors. The two men pictured here are Chipewyan from the Athabaskan Culture. These people lived in what is now Northern Saskatchewan. Their clothing was simple with very little decoration. Note the fur hood on the man's jacket which indicates a cold climate. It also shows that fur-bearing animals lived in the environment.

FRAME 4:

These two pictures show religious symbols of two different Indian cultures. The picture on the right is a bear skull with symbolic decoration. To hunt a bear required the skill of a lone hunter. The hunter felt that the bear he was having to kill was a kindred spirit. He believed that the bear was giving him a gift of his skin and meat so that he could survive. The skull represented the bear which was to be hunted and was used as a symbol of the live bear. Before going on the hunt the hunter apologized to the bear and thanked him for his gifts.

The decorated buffalo skull on the left was also used as a religious symbol. Buffalo were plentiful on the Plains. They were hunted by groups of hunters because they were large, swift animals living where there were open spaces to run in. Men had to work together to be able to hunt them. The religious ceremony centering around the skull was a group ceremony asking for a successful hunt.