

# Unit 2: Lesson Plans

**Time:** 7–10 hours

**Teaching Notes:** If you teach sixth grade or advanced readers, the readings included with this unit may be too basic for your students. If so, you may want to substitute excerpts from chapters 2 and 3 of *Montana: Stories of the Land* for the readings included with this lesson. You can find [PDFs of the chapters at our website](#).

Sixth grade teachers are encouraged to extend the unit with these two lessons, both available on the Montana Historical Society Educator Resources website:

- [Making an Atlatl](#) (a lesson on ancient technology); and
- [Virtual Tour: Neither Empty nor Unknown: Montana at the Time of Lewis and Clark](#)

You may wish to supplement this unit with a hands-on history footlocker. The footlockers “Montana’s First Peoples: Essential Understandings,” “Montana Indian Stories Lit Kit,” “Prehistoric Life in Montana,” and “Stones and Bones” are available to Montana educators for two-week periods. Footlockers can be [ordered from the Montana Historical Society](#).

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Native peoples have lived in Montana for thousands of years. Their history predates the “discovery” of North America. Even before Europeans arrived in the area we now know as Montana, Montana Indian nations were feeling the impacts of colonization. Native traditional beliefs persist today.

## PRE-UNIT PREPARATION

- If you live near Helena, schedule a tour of the museum.

- Preview the unit and review the suggested Additional Resources to decide if you want to add additional components to the exploration (for example, by ordering a relevant hands-on history footlocker).

## Part 1: Introducing Montana’s Earliest History

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**Time:** 2.5–4 hours

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Create a timeline.
- Measure accurately and create a scale.
- Read and summarize informational text.
- Make connections between the physical environment, material culture, and ways of life among Montana’s tribes.
- Explain that there are different ways of learning about the past including oral traditions and archaeology.
- Practice speaking and listening skills.
- Learn subject-specific vocabulary.
- Explain the centrality of the bison to Plains Indian lifeways.

**Teaching Note:** Chapter 2 of *Montana: Stories of the Land* provides a quick background on topics covered in these lessons. It is available [online](#).

## Lesson 1: How Long Ago Is 12,500 Years?

**Time:** 2–3 hours

### MATERIALS

- Paper or journal
- Pens or pencils
- Timer
- String or yarn
- Index cards

- Hole punch
- Paper clips
- Rulers/tape measure
- Masking tape
- Computer and projector
- Classroom sets of *Montana: A History of Our Home*, also available [online](#).
- *Greetings from Montana American Indian Students* video, available [online](#)

## ASSESSMENT: Index Cards

### PRE-LESSON PREPARATION

- Review the lesson plan and gather the materials listed above in the Materials section.
- Pull up the 3:41 video *Greetings from Montana American Indian Students* from [YouTube](#).
- Gain background knowledge by reading Chapter 2 of *Montana: Stories of the Land*, optional.

## Procedure

### Step 1: Hook

Show the YouTube video *Greetings from Montana American Indian Students*. Talk about the fact that these students are all *indigenous*. (Define “indigenous”: descended from the original inhabitants of the region.) Their ancestors were on this continent long before Europeans arrived here.

### Step 2: Write Your Way In (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to take out a pencil and their writing journals, or a sheet of paper, and date it. Let them know that they will be thinking hard and writing for five minutes nonstop, as soon as you say, “Go!” You will be using a timer and they must keep on going, not lifting their pencils until the five minutes are up. If they are stuck for what to write next, encourage them to write, “I am thinking!” until they think of more to say. Remind them they can use their imaginations! Create a sense of urgency! For this exercise, they should not be concerned with their spelling, etc. They should just think and pour out their thoughts on paper.
2. Provide students with the following prompt:

“What do you think Montana was like before non-Indians arrived here?”

3. When the timer goes off at the end of five minutes, tell students to draw a line where they stopped. (Gather their “Write Their Way Ins” and save them for the Wrap-up.)

### Step 3: How Long Ago Is 12,500 Years?

1. Have students list a few historical events they’ve heard of and find dates for them (American Revolution, Black Plague, building of the pyramids). Encourage them to find the oldest events they can identify years for. These are the first dates that students will locate on their timeline.
2. Tell students that the class is going to create a timeline.
  - a. Let students know that the first item on the timeline will be 12,500 years ago. People have lived in Montana at least this long. Tell students that people may have arrived before this, but this is the oldest physical evidence of humans living in Montana.
  - b. The last item on the timeline will need to be something in the news today.
  - c. Let students know that the timeline will need to have a standard scale. For example, if 1 foot=100 years, the timeline will need to be 120 feet long. (As a class, look at how long that is.) If that’s too long, have them experiment. How long will the timeline need to be if 6 inches = 100 years? How long will it be if 3 inches = 100 years?
  - d. As a class decide how long the string should be for the timeline, measure out the string, and place masking tape markers at 500-year intervals. For the most recent 500 years, add masking tape markers at 100-year intervals. Make sure they measure precisely. (**Teaching Note:** You can have students do this in small groups

and compare results before choosing one timeline to use as the class timeline.)

- e. Have students write the timeline events from the list the class made onto index cards and punch a hole in the top of each card so they can tie a string through it to hang it from the timeline. Make sure they include dates or date ranges prominently at the top of their cards.
- f. Have them estimate the placement of the historic events you brainstormed as a class, positioning them on the timeline as exactly as they can. Help them as needed convert dates to “years ago”—this becomes tricky with dates that occurred BCE (Before Current Era).
- g. If it hasn’t already been added, make and place the following cards:
  - **1492:** Columbus sails from Europe to the Americas (the Bahamas)
  - **1804–1806:** Lewis and Clark Expedition
- h. Display the timeline in class (and save so you can add information throughout the course of this unit).

#### Step 4: Read to Find Out

1. Read sidebar from the beginning of Chapter 2 of *Montana: A History of Our Home* together—“How We Know What We Know”—and discuss it.
2. Establish the purpose for reading (write on the board): “What was Montana like before the first non-Indians arrived? Who called Montana home and how did they live?”
3. Tell students they are going to read Chapter 2 of *Montana: A History of Our Home* to answer these questions and add information to the timeline.
4. Place students in pairs/triads and have them read about the Early Period together (allow

them to take turns reading out loud). After they’ve finished reading, have them work together to come up with two to three pieces of information to add to the timeline (for example, “End of the last ice age,” or “People hunted mastodons”). Have them write each piece of information on an index card.

5. Have them read about the Middle Period and complete the same exercise, creating two to three more timeline index cards.
6. Finally, have them read about the Late Period and create two to three more timeline index cards.
7. Come together as a class and have students share what they wrote on their cards to add to the timeline. Come to a consensus as to which cards should be added and hang them on the timeline. (Let students know that it is okay to hang the cards anywhere within the appropriate date range since they won’t have exact dates.)

## Lesson 2: Bison—The Staff of Life

**Time:** 30 minutes–1 hour

#### MATERIALS:

- Bison Worksheet and Uses for the Bison Answer Key (below, pp. 54-55)
- Exit Ticket (below, p. 56)

#### ASSESSMENT: Exit Ticket

#### PRE-LESSON PREPARATION

- Make copies of the bison worksheet, one per student

## Procedure

### Step 1: Activate Prior Knowledge

**Teaching Note:** Students should be able to answer these questions from their own lives and from what they’ve learned from reading “1,500 to 300 Years Ago (The Late Period),” in *Montana: A History of Our Home*, as part of Lesson 1. If you did not complete

Lesson 1, you will want to have students read that section as part of this lesson.

Ask and in class discussion answer the following questions:

- Where does your family get the things you need, for example, sewing needles, clothing, glue, paint brushes, containers, rope, cups, and dishes? (*The store*)
- Where do you think the people of the Late Period (1,500 years ago), got these things? (*People either traded with others for these things, or they made the things they needed from **natural resources**: plants, minerals, and animals.*)
- What do you think one the most important natural resources for the Plains peoples was? (*Bison.*)
- Does anyone remember some of the things that the bison provided people? (*Meat, tipi covers and clothing, pillows, waterproof bags, drinking cups and spoons, knives and other tools.*)
- Does anyone remember one of the ways that people would hunt the bison (this was in a time before there were horses in North America)? (*Sometimes they worked together to lure herds over cliffs in large communal group hunts.*)

### Step 2: Learn More about Uses of the Bison

1. Hand out the Bison Worksheet and have students read the text and try to complete the worksheet.
2. Share and discuss the actual the answers.
3. Let students know that bison was so important to the Plains peoples that many of their ceremonies and cultures centered around the bison. Explain that the bison remains important to Montana's tribal nations today.

4. Ask: What other questions do you have about the Plains peoples' relationship to the bison? How could we find the answers to those questions?

### Step 3: Reflection

Have students complete the Exit Ticket.

**Extension Activity:** Take a video tour of the Madison Buffalo Jump with Dr. Shane Doyle by watching these three videos: *Welcome to the Madison Buffalo Jump*, *Madison Buffalo Jump Tour*, and *Madison Buffalo Jump—Viewed from the Top*. (See Additional Resources, p. 303, for links.)

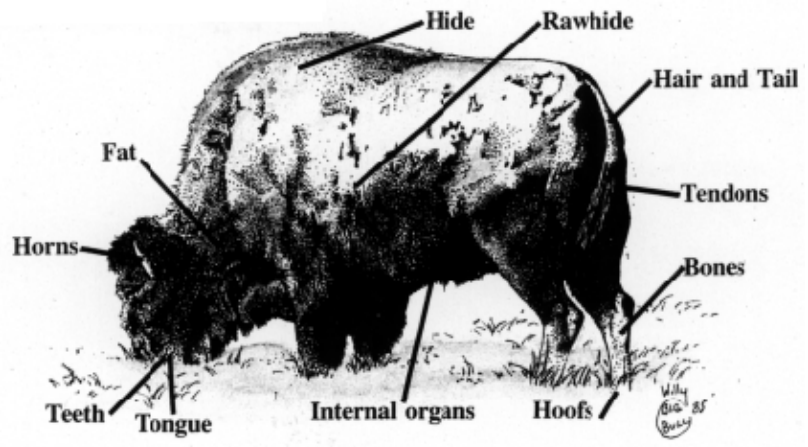
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bison Worksheet

Today members of the Assiniboiné and Sioux tribes who live on Fort Peck Reservation buy most of what they need at stores or through the internet. Before **colonization** (when Europeans took over the land), they traded with other tribes for **resources** (things they needed), but they got most of their supplies from the plants, animals, and minerals around them. Although the Assiniboiné and Sioux hunted other animals, the buffalo was the animal they relied on the most for their needs. It provided food, tipi covers, clothes (including mittens, caps, and moccasins), and bedding. Shields were made from the thick hide of the buffalo neck. They used rawhide to wrap their clubs and knives to

wooden handles. They used skins to sew bags for moving. Buffalo horns served as spoons and cups. The stomach made a tight water bucket. Sinew was used for thread, bow strings, and rope.

Guess the uses of each part of the bison.



Hair and Tail

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Internal organs

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Fat

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Tendons (sinew)

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Tongue

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Hide

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Bones

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Teeth

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Rawhide

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Hoofs

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Horns

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## Uses for the Bison Answer Key

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### **Hair and Tail**

Headdress ornaments  
Fly switch  
Saddle stuffing  
Bridles  
Lodge ornaments  
Ball stuffing  
Rope

### **Tendons**

Ropes  
Bow strings  
Bow backing  
Snowshoe webbing

### **Bones**

Arrow straighteners  
Awls  
Dice  
Fleshing tools (shin, thigh)  
Paint brushes (hip, shoulder)  
Sled runners (ribs)

### **Hoofs**

Glue  
Rattles

### **Internal organs**

Containers for food, water  
Buckets, cups, basins  
Cooking vessels  
Yellow pigment

### **Tongue**

Comb  
Communion at Sundance

### **Teeth**

Necklaces  
Clothing, ornaments

### **Horns**

Headdress ornaments  
Powder flasks  
Spoons  
Medicine flasks  
Ladles  
Cups  
Quill flattener  
Horse mask  
Arrow points  
Tobacco flasks  
Dishes

### **Fat**

Polishing substance  
Mixture for paints  
Softening hides  
Pemmican

### **Hide**

Lodge covers  
Doors  
Linings  
Moccasins  
Leggings  
Ropes  
Clothing  
Bedding  
Ceremonial mask  
Snowshoes  
Armor  
Saddles  
Harness  
Winter clothing  
Floor mats and rugs  
Ceremonial dress  
Buffalo dress for hunting

### **Rawhide**

Moccasin sole repair  
Meat storage  
Pounders  
Bullet pouches  
Tobacco pouches  
Drumheads  
War clubs  
Mauls  
Kettles  
Thread  
Cinches  
Saddle frame covering  
Bridles and ropes  
Saddle-rigging strap  
Picket ropes and hobbles  
Saddle bags  
Travois hitches  
Watering troughs  
Rattles  
Shields  
Headdresses

### Exit Ticket

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Write one thing you learned that surprised you about life in Montana before the first non-Indians arrived.

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What is a question you still have about life in Montana before the first non-Indians arrived?

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### Exit Ticket

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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What is a question you still have about life in Montana before the first non-Indians arrived?

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## Part 2: Introduction to the Early Contact Period

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**Time:** 5–7 hours

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Use maps to investigate tribal homelands and compare them to a map of today’s reservations.
- Write and take notes to assimilate information.
- Understand that each Montana tribe has a unique history.
- Make connections between the physical environment, material culture, and ways of life among Montana’s tribes.
- Practice speaking and listening skills.
- Learn subject-specific vocabulary.

### Lesson 1: Investigating Tribal Homelands

**Time:** 2 hours

#### MATERIALS

- “Introduction to the Early Contact Period” [Slides](#).
- Maps (below, pp. 60-69)
- Group Worksheets (below, pp. 70-87)
- Transparency film
- Index cards
- Pencils or pens, hole punch, string or yarn
- Timeline from Part 1
- Classroom sets of *Montana: A History of Our Home*, also available [online](#)
- [Montana: Stories of the Land](#), by Krys Holmes (Montana Historical Society Press, 2008) and [Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#), developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Unit (revised 2019), optional

#### PRE-LESSON PREPARATION

- Preview the lesson and gather materials listed above in the Materials section.
- Download and preview “Introduction to the Early Contact Period”.
- Print the ten maps, provided below, onto

overhead transparency film (you can buy transparency film at any office supply store).

- Divide class into nine groups.
- Print the nine worksheets, one worksheet per group.
- Gain background knowledge by reading Chapter 3 of *Montana: Stories of the Land* and the *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*, especially EUs 1, 3, 4, and 5.

### Procedure

#### Step 1: Learning the Basics

1. With their reading partners, have students read about the Early Contact period in Chapter 2 of *Montana: A History of Our Home*, pp. 18-21. After they’ve finished reading, have them work together to come up with three more pieces of information to add to the timeline created in Part 1 and write each piece of information on an index card.
2. Discuss the reading as a class. Ask:
  - What disturbed or confused you?
  - How do you think European diseases arrived in the region before Europeans themselves? (*Diseases passed from tribe to tribe via trade networks.*)
3. Choose index cards to add to the class timeline created in Part 1.
4. As a class, read the section “Tribes of Montana.” Tell students that they are going to learn more about the indigenous people who were here around 1800. (Remind students of the definition of *indigenous*: the original inhabitants of the region.)
5. Show “Introduction to the Early Contact Period,” using the slides to discuss the concepts of tribal homelands, tribal use areas, and seasonal rounds.

**Slide 1:** Introduction

**Slide 2:** During the next activity we are going to



look at maps that show tribal homelands and tribal use areas to learn more about the many different people who lived here around 1800, before Europeans arrived in the region but after horses and European trade goods had made their way here. The maps will look like this. The area labeled “tribal homeland” is where the tribe spent most of its time. The area labeled “tribal use area” is where members of the tribe went to harvest particular resources.

**Slide 3:** But first we need a little background. In 1800, the region’s indigenous peoples were hunter-gatherer-traders. They did not live permanently in one place. They moved from place to place to gather plants, hunt bison, and trade with one another. Trade networks extended far beyond the borders of present-day Montana.

**Slide 4:** The **Plateau tribes** mostly lived in the high plateau region west of the Rocky Mountains. They fished for salmon and trout on the west side of the Continental Divide—western Montana, northern Idaho, and British Columbia. In summer and fall, they traveled to the east side of the divide to hunt bison. One place some of these tribes went is Flathead Lake, shown here in this painting.

**Slide 5:** East of the Rocky Mountains, bison formed the cornerstone of the economies and ways of life for Montana’s indigenous peoples. **Plains tribes** (those who stayed mostly on the Plains) depended on bison for food, shelter, tools, and many other aspects of their survival.

**Slide 6:** Each tribe followed its own seasonal round—moving from place to place according to the natural resources available during different seasons of the year. Hunting, fishing, harvesting, trade, and ceremonies had their own proper time and place. Families might go their separate ways in summer but come together again as a tribe in the fall for bison hunting.

Talk about the diagram. Ask: What did the Salish gather in the spring? In the summer? In the fall? What did they do in the winter?

**Slide 7:** Seasonal movements were not random. They were based on an expert knowledge of climate, animal behavior, and plant growth. Here’s an example of the seasonal round of one band of Blackfeet. Roots and berries ripen at specific times, and bison occupied regular territories during certain periods. Since tribes relied on the same resources year after year, their patterns of travel were similar year to year.

Study the map—what resources did they gather? When? Where?

**Slide 8:** Each of Montana’s indigenous nations has its own language, unique history, and distinct customs, even though they share some cultural traditions. Let’s learn more about the native nations listed here. [Stop the slideshow here and conduct activity. After the activity, show slide 9.]

## Step 2: Comparing Maps and Sharing Information

1. Divide the class into nine groups. Tell each group that they are going to share information about a particular tribe with their classmates. Give each group a transparency showing that tribe’s homeland and traditional use areas and the worksheet specific to the tribe. Keep the current reservation map transparency for yourself. **Teaching Note:** In the interest of time, you may not want to require students to learn about all nine tribes, but all students should compare their tribes’ territory to the current reservations.
2. Have students read over the information about their assigned tribe and give them a chance to ask you about any words they don’t know or can’t pronounce. (Refer to the slideshow for a guide to pronouncing tribal names).
3. Pair groups (the ninth group will work with you). Have each group share information:
  - Group A reads its information out loud to Group B. Group B takes notes on its worksheet.

- Group B reads its information to Group A while Group A takes notes.
- Groups A and B place their maps on top of each other to see if the homelands or traditional use areas overlap. Both groups record their findings on their worksheets before finding another group and repeating the process (giving all students a chance to read out loud).
- Have the group that works with you read its information to you before comparing their map to the current reservation map and recording their findings on the worksheet.

**Teaching Note:** Not all the tribes have reservations in Montana. If a group's assigned tribe does not have a Montana reservation, have them use a computer or iPad to find out where the tribe is headquartered.

4. After all groups have completed their worksheets, debrief as a class.

- What did you learn?
- What surprised, disturbed, confused, or interested you?
- Which Montana tribes didn't we learn about? (*Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Little Shell Chippewa*) Why? (*In 1800, these tribes mostly lived farther east—they were pushed into this region by Euro-American settlement.*)

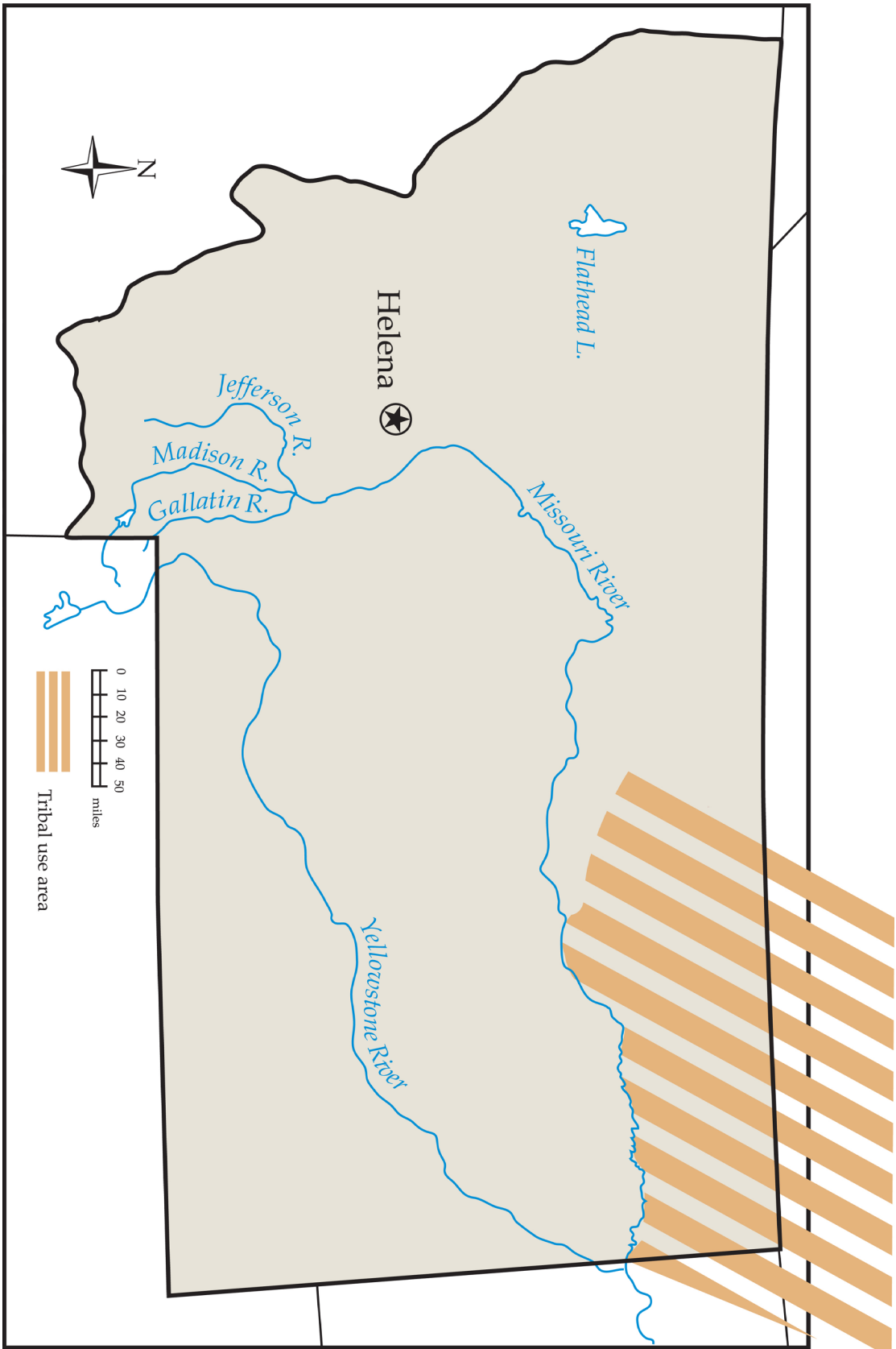
5. Look at the current reservation map on the "Introduction to the Early Contact Period"

Slide 9.

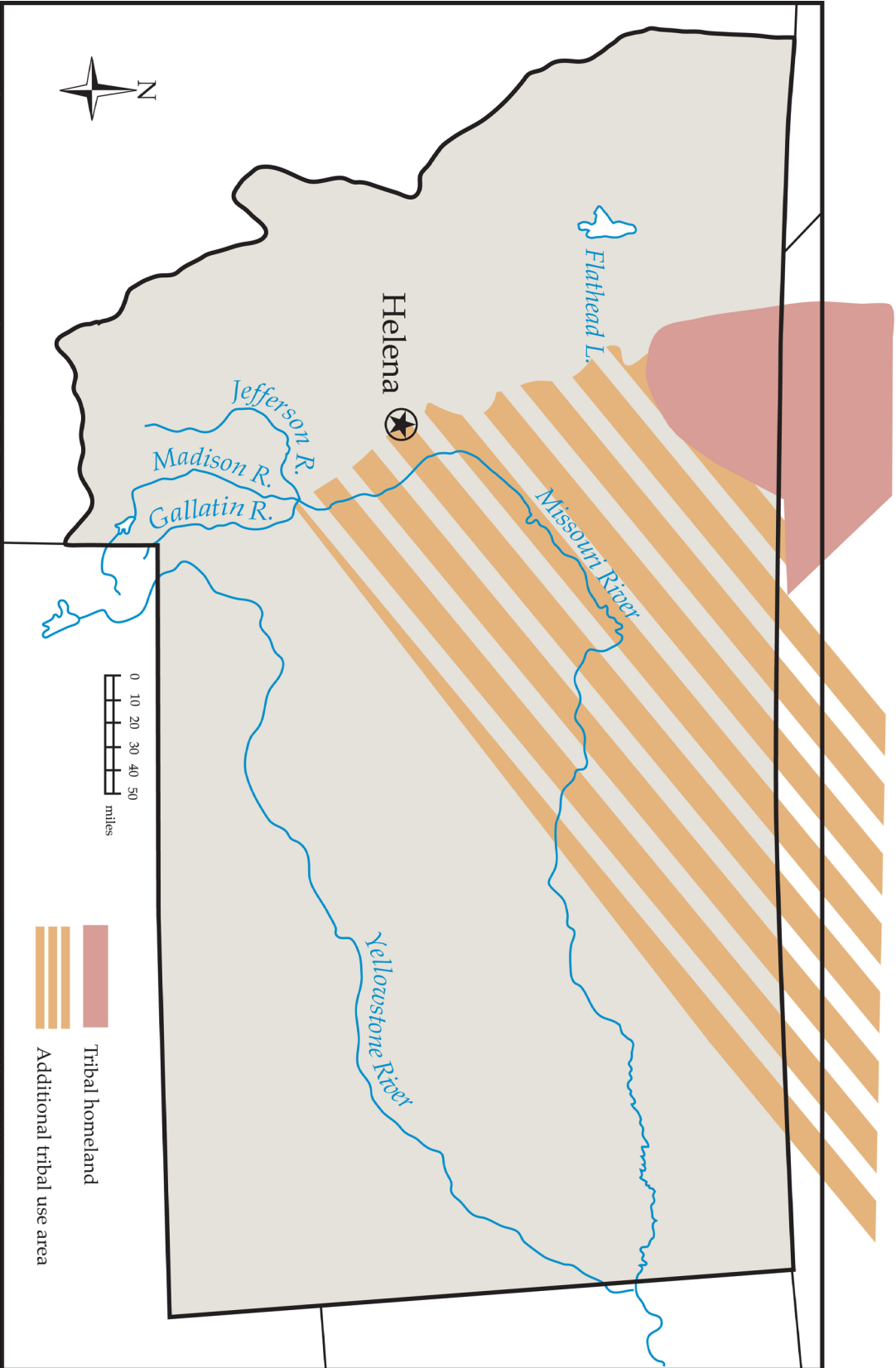
- How does the territory reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties (today's **reservations**) compare with the territory the tribal nation you were assigned used circa 1800?

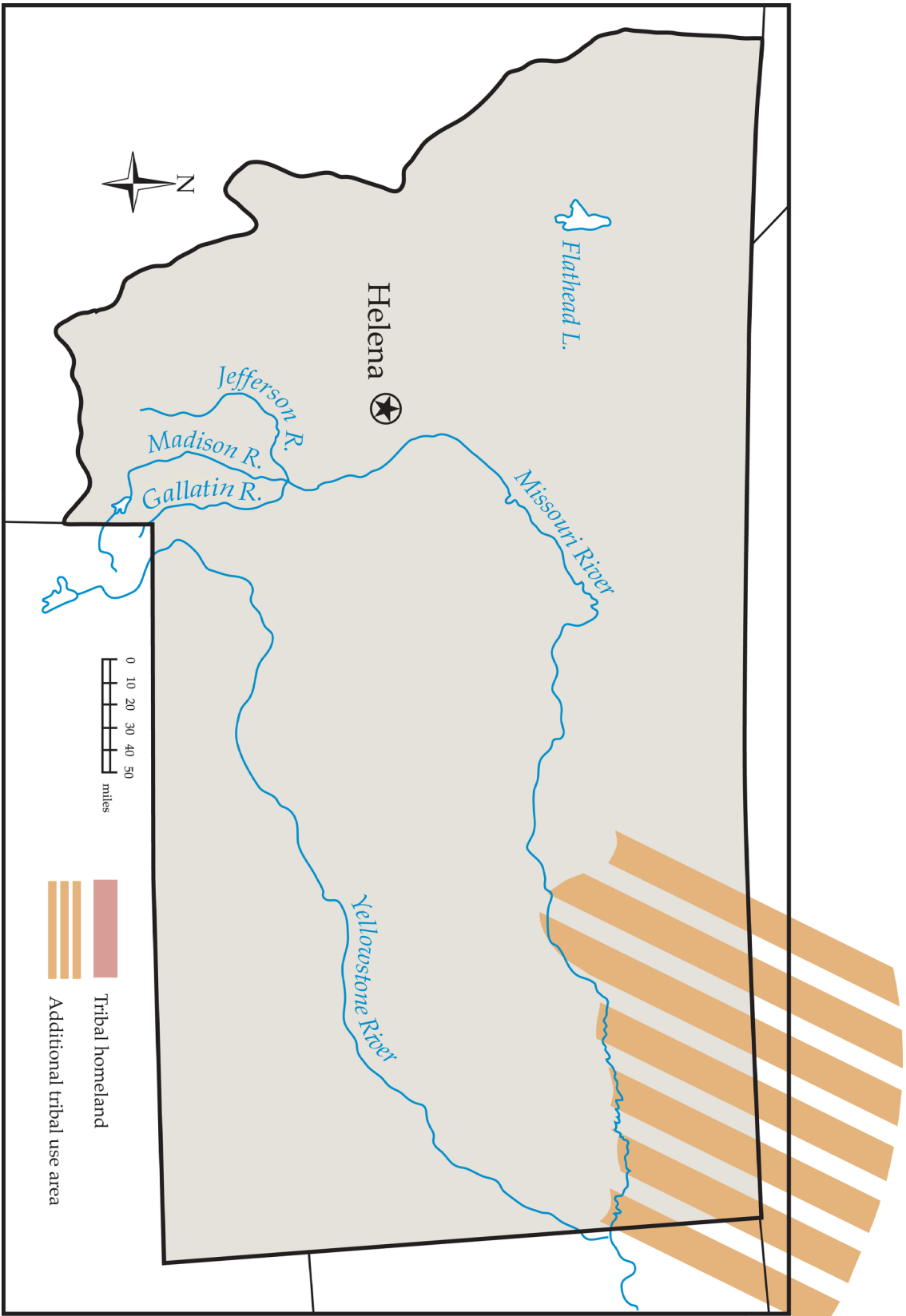
- How do you think this change in land mass affected the tribes during the reservation period, particularly their economic activities (e.g., gathering resources and trading goods)? (*It made them much poorer; they were no longer able to gather and hunt for all they needed.*)
- How else do you think this change in land mass affected the tribes? (*They were forced to learn new ways of making a living—for example, ranching. They were no longer able to visit certain ceremonial sites. In the early reservation period, they no longer encountered people from other tribes as frequently.*)

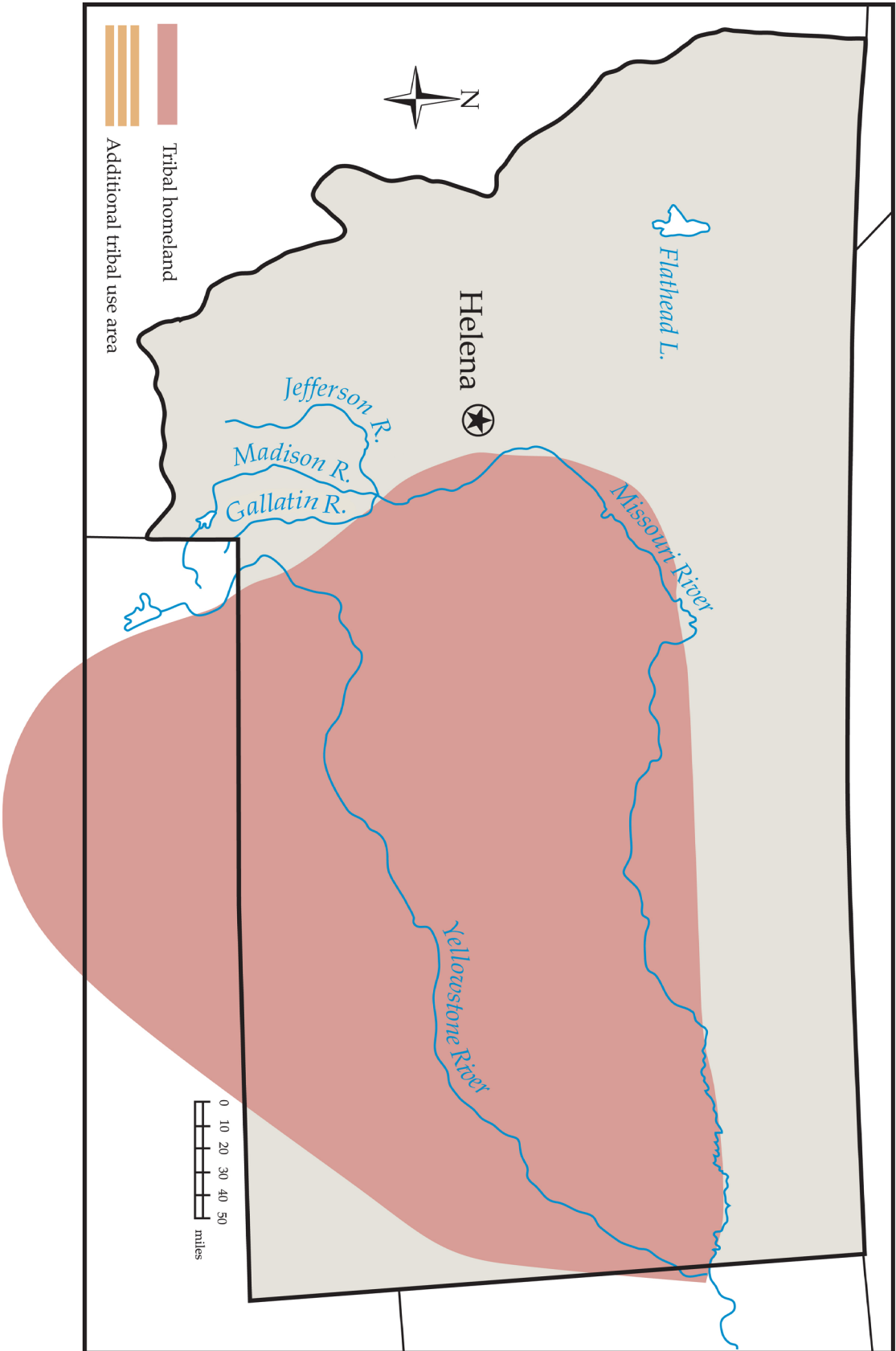




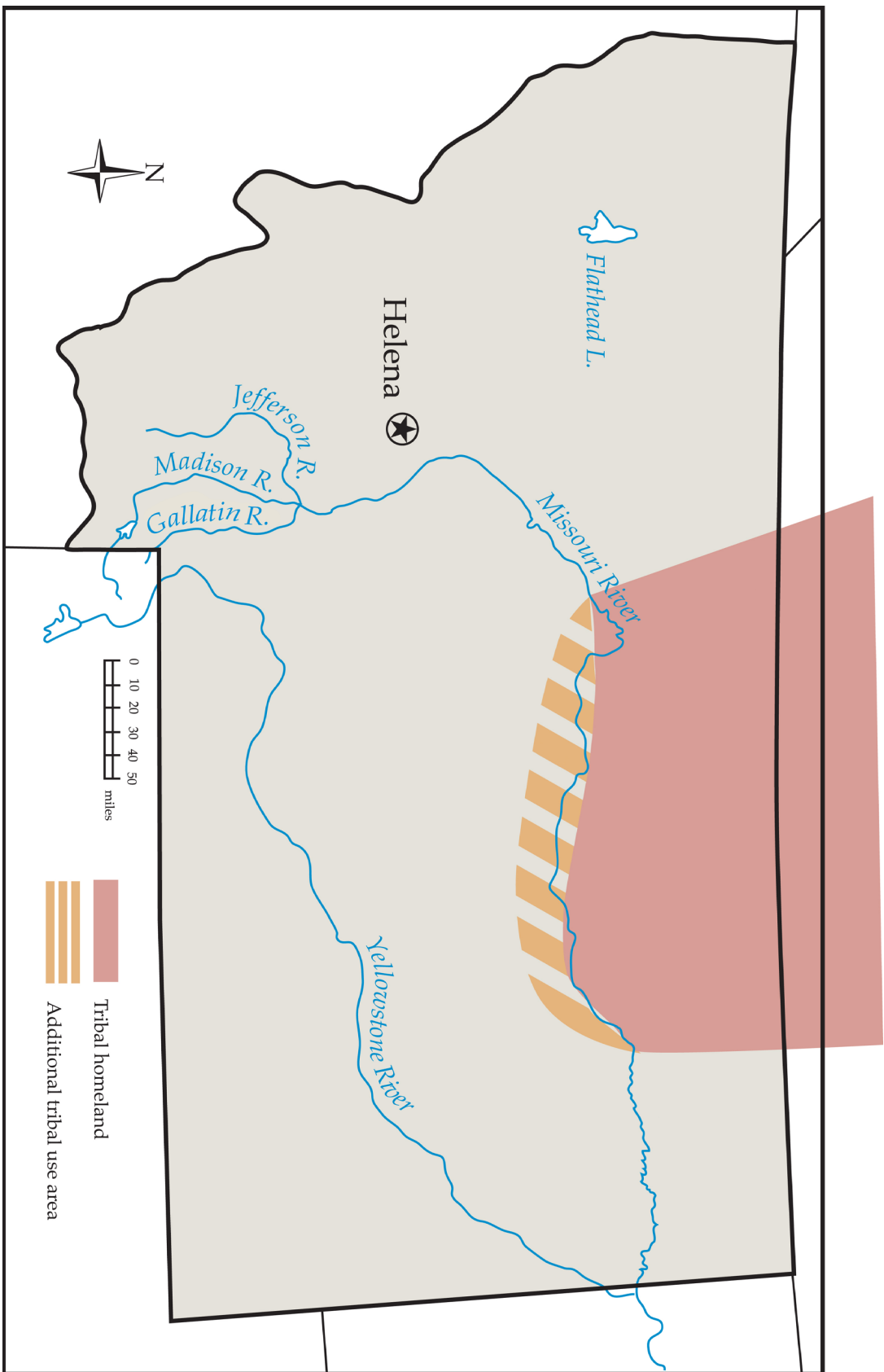
Blackfeet (Pikuni)



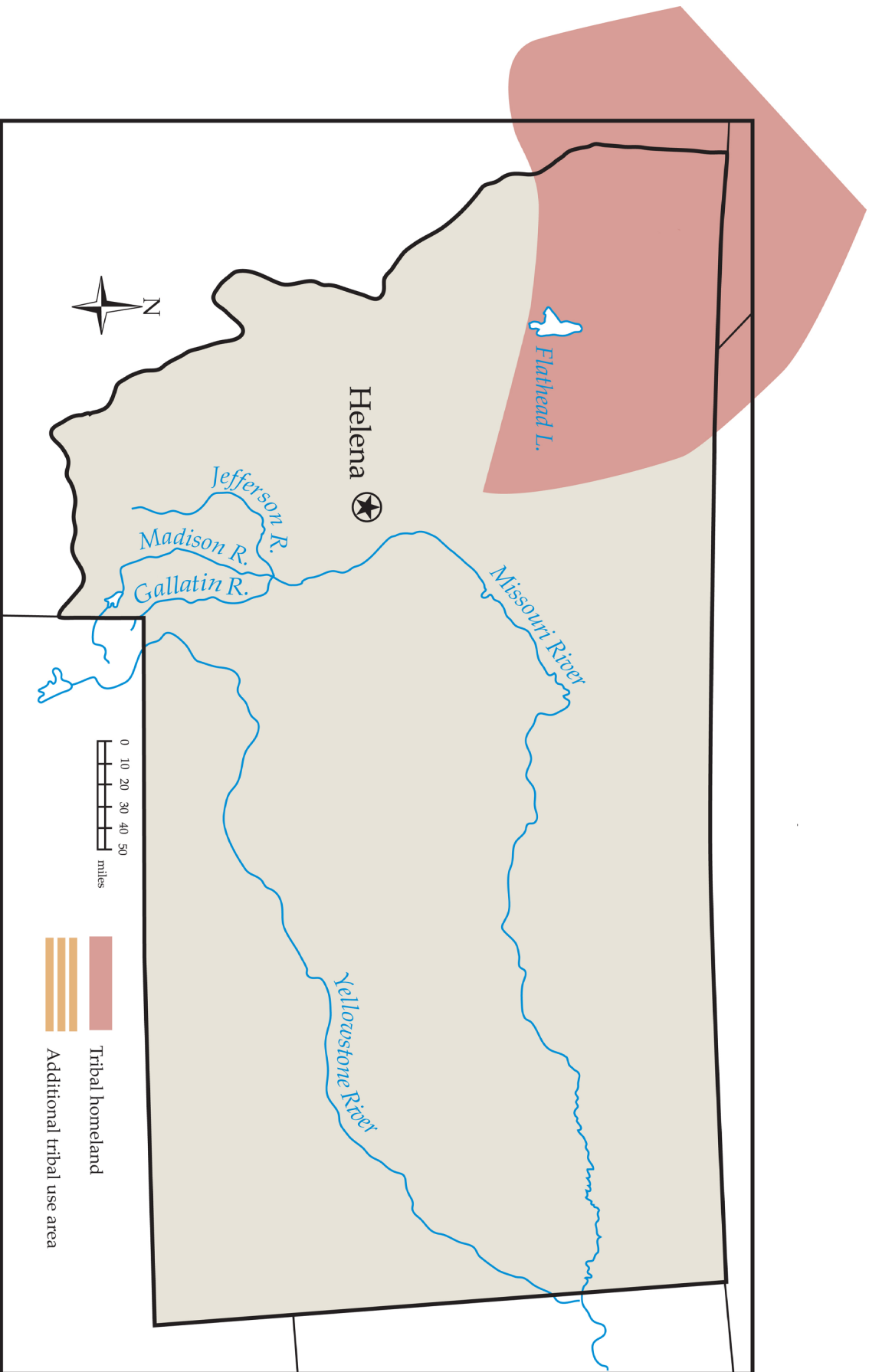


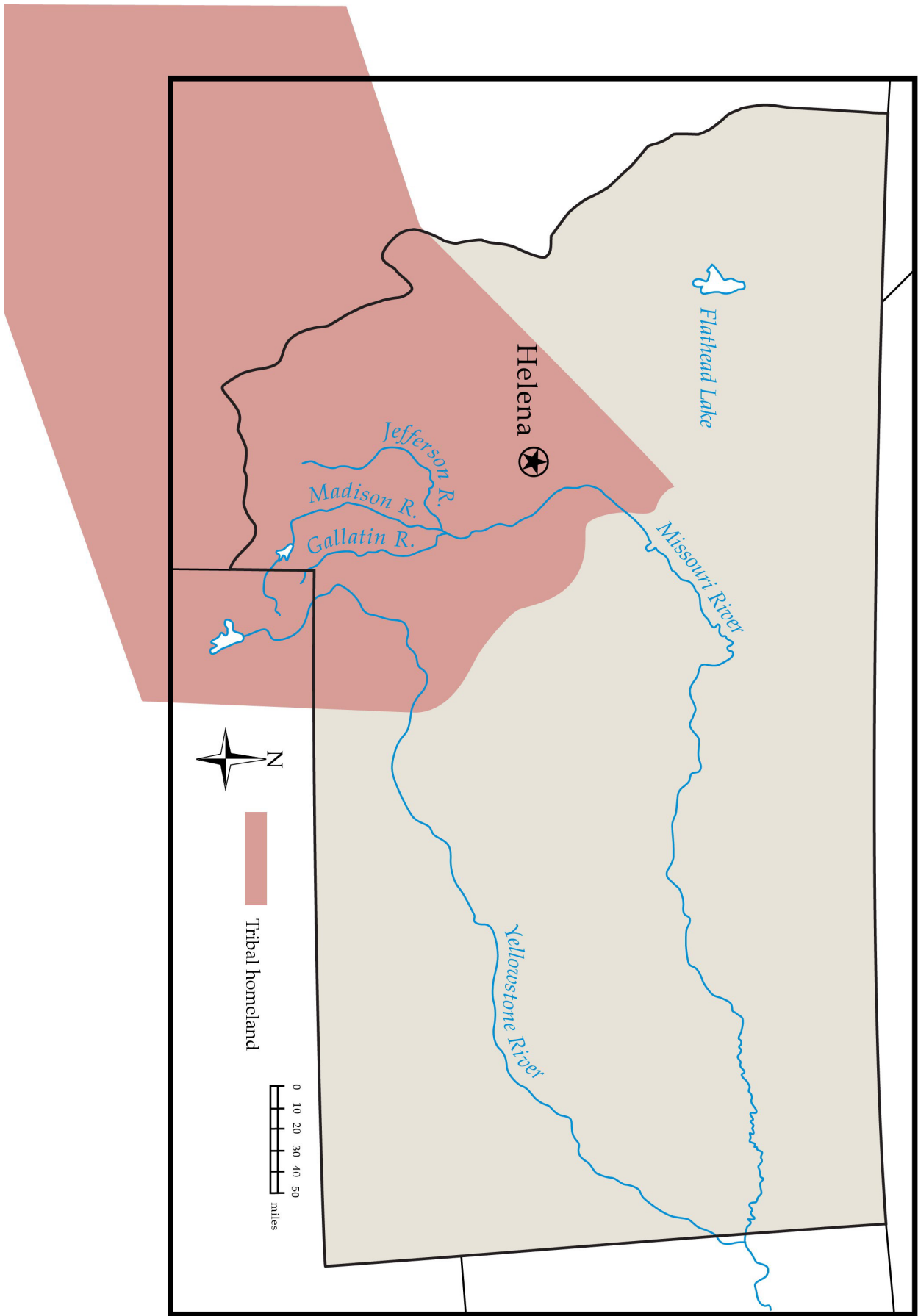




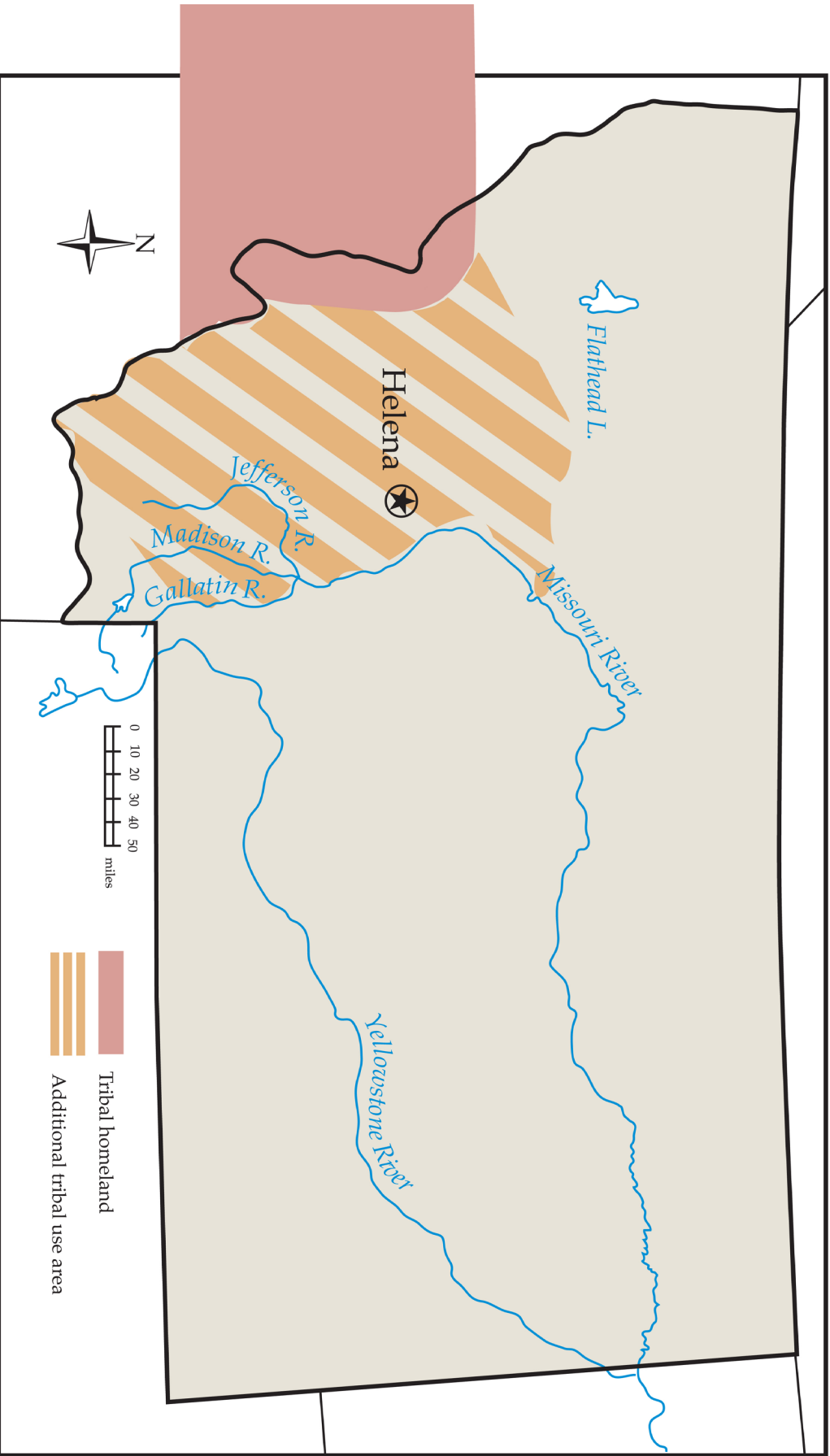


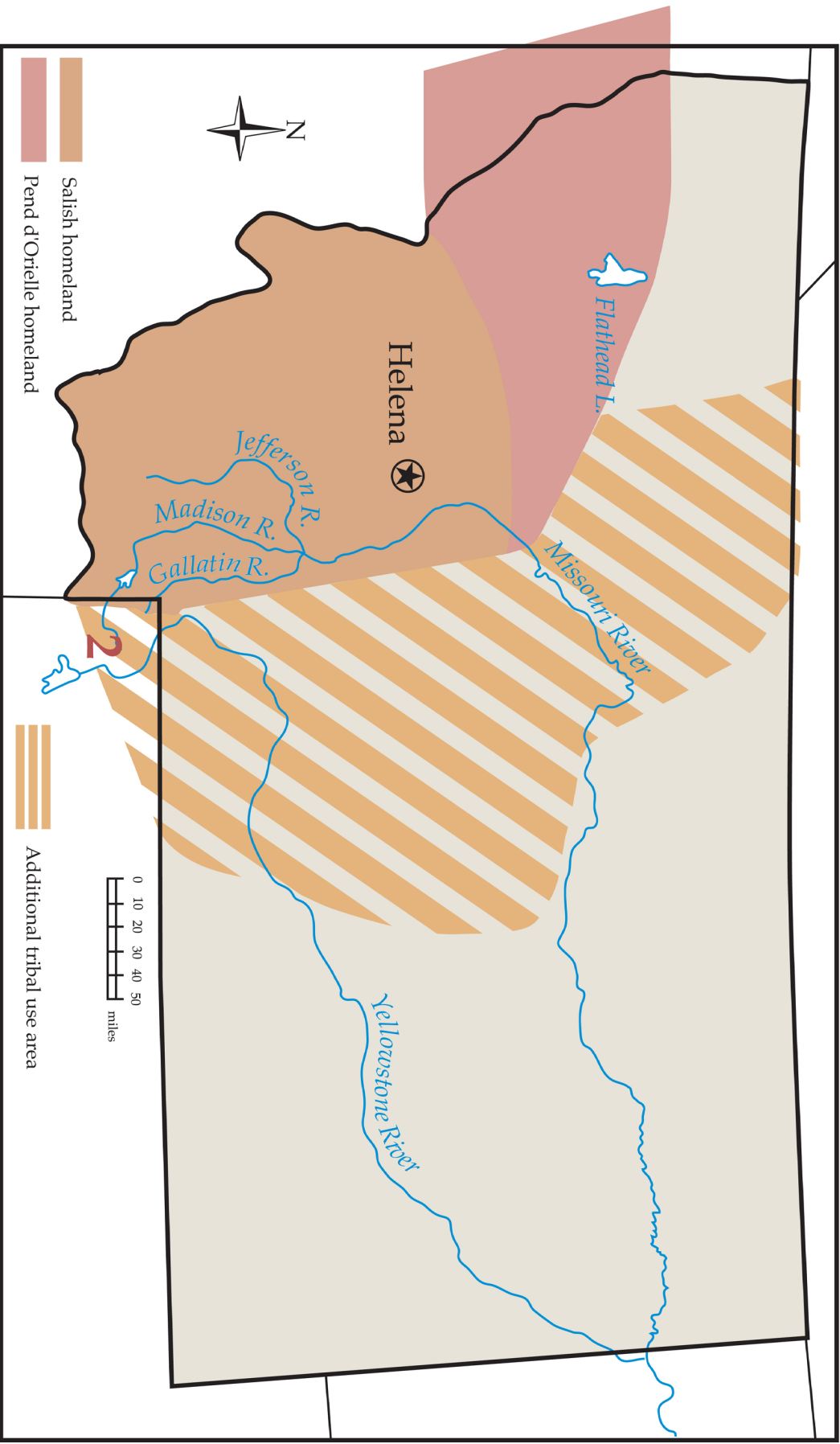
Kootenai (Ksanka)





Nez Perce (Nimiipuu)





Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Assiniboiné (Nakoda). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Assiniboiné's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Assiniboiné (Nakoda):** The Assiniboiné, or Nakoda, were originally from south-central Canada. By the late 1600s, they often hunted in what is now northeast Montana. They were some of the last Plains people to give up their work dogs for horses. The word Assiniboiné means "those who cook with stones." The Nakoda would heat stones in a fire, and then use the hot stones to boil water for cooking. Today many Nakoda live on the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Reservations.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Cree (Neyiowahk). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Cree's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Cree (Neyiowahk):** The Cree were active fur traders and bison hunters. They came to what is now Montana in the 1730s to hunt bison. They made the bison into pemmican (a nutritious food made of dried meat, fat, and berries). They traded the pemmican to French and British fur companies, who used it to feed their workers. They were part of a powerful alliance that included the Assiniboine, Chippewa, and Métis. Today, some Cree live on Rocky Boy's Reservation.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Crow (Apsáalooke). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Crow's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Crow (Apsáalooke):** In ancient times, the Crow lived in the upper Great Lakes area of Canada and the United States. About 1450, the tribe began to move west. By about 1600, they lived along the Missouri River in present day North and South Dakota. They grew corn and made their homes in earthen lodges. The Crow then moved into what is now Montana. Because eastern Montana was not as good for farming, they became hunter gatherers.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Gros Ventre's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Aaniiihnen means "White Clay people" or "an upright person." The Plains Indian sign language called the tribe "People of the Rapids," using a sign for waterfall. French traders misunderstood the sign. They translated it as *Gros Ventre*, French for "big belly." Many Aaniiihnen died in a 1780 smallpox epidemic. Today many tribal members live on the Fort Belknap Reservation, which they share with the Nakoda (or Assiniboine).

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Blackfeet (Piikuni). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Blackfeet's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** The Blackfeet have lived on the Northern Plains for thousands of years. Two of the main bands still live in Canada. The third came to Montana in the 1700s. The Blackfeet traded bison hides to Cree and Assiniboiné traders. These traders took the hides back to the Hudson's Bay Company in northeastern Canada, where they traded them for many items, including guns. As a result, the Blackfeet were one of the first Montana tribes to acquire guns.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboiné (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Shoshone-Bannock (Newe). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Lemhi Shoshone's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** The Shoshone and Bannock today maintain their government headquarters on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Idaho. They adapted their lifestyles to each region of their homeland and bands took their names from important resources. They call themselves Rabbit-Eaters, Elk-Eaters, and Camas-Eaters. In Montana, Shoshone and Bannock Sheep-Eaters, Bison-Eaters, and Salmon-Eaters thrived. Ancestral seasonal subsistence practices continue today throughout the Shoshone and Bannock homeland, which includes areas of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and beyond.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Salish and Pend d'Oreille's homelands/traditional use areas with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** The Salish and Pend d'Oreille are the most eastern Salish-speaking tribes. The two tribes are closely connected. According to tribal tradition, they have always lived in Montana. Both fishing and bison hunting were important to their diet. The people also made baskets and gathered different types of plants for food and medicine. Many Salish and Pend d'Oreille live on the Flathead Reservation, which they share with the Kootenai.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Kootenai (Ksanka/Ktunaxa). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Kootenai's tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Kootenai (Ksanka):** There are seven bands of the Kootenai (Ktunaxa) Nation. Most live in Canada. The Ksanka band has lived in western Montana since time immemorial (as long as anyone can remember). Unlike most languages, the Kootenai language is not related to any other language in the world. The Kootenai were known as excellent boat-builders and canoeists. Today many tribal members live on the Flathead Reservation, which they share with the Salish and Pend d'Oreille.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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Student Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to the Early Contact Period Worksheet

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### Instructions:

1. Read over the information about the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu). Make sure you understand it and can pronounce all the words.
2. Find a group studying another tribe.
  - a. Compare maps. Did the homelands or traditional use areas overlap? Record your findings.
  - b. Read your information to them. Then listen to them read their information to you.
  - c. Note something you learned.
3. Find another group and repeat the process. (Make sure you switch readers so everyone in your group has a chance to read.)
4. Compare the Nez Perce tribal homeland/traditional use area with the current reservation map and record your findings.

**Nez Perce (Nimiipuu):** The Nez Perce lived in villages west of the Rocky Mountains. They fished for salmon, hunted game, and harvested many different types of plants for food and medicine. After they acquired horses in the 1700s, the Nez Perce made fall trips east of the Rocky Mountains to hunt buffalo. On hunting trips, they lived in tipis like other Plains tribes. Today, the tribe's headquarters is in Lapwai, Idaho, on the Nez Perce Reservation.

**Current Reservation Map:** Is the tribe's current reservation in their historic homeland? YES NO

Which is bigger, the current reservation or the historic homeland?

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**Assiniboine (Nakoda):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Blackfeet (Piikuni):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Cree (Neyiowahk):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Crow (Apsáalooke):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Gros Ventre (Aaniiihnen):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Kootenai (Ksanka):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Shoshone-Bannock (Newe):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about this tribe.

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**Salish and Pend d'Oreille (Séliš and Qlispé):** Do the territories overlap? YES NO

Write one thing you learned about these tribes.

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## Lesson 2: Winter Count: Marking Time

**Time:** 3-5 hours

**Teaching Note:** This lesson plan is modified from a lesson created by Marina Weatherly, an artist and art educator from Stevensville, Montana, in 2012, which was part of a larger unit published by the Montana Historical Society: “The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Perspectives.” MHS donated curriculum packets to all Montana public school libraries. The material necessary for the unit is also available to download from the Montana Historical Society’s [website](#).

### MATERIALS

- Scrap paper, pencils
- Sharpie, markers, crayons, oil pastels, or tempera paint (and brushes)
- Large piece of paper, cloth, or canvas
- Computer, projector, and internet connection
- [Tribal Homelands, 1855](#) (Map)
- Current Montana Reservations Map (see p. 60)
- [Northern Cheyenne Reservation Timeline](#).
- “Medicine Bear, Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux) Winter Count” [Slides](#)
- Exit Ticket (below, p. 95)
- “[Northern Cheyenne Flag Song Lane Deer version](#),” sung by Conrad Fisher
- First 3:45 minutes of “[Gary Small \(Northern Cheyenne Musician\)](#)”
- [Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#), developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Unit (revised 2019), optional

### ASSESSMENT: Winter Counts and Exit Ticket

#### PRE-LESSON PREPARATION

- Preview the lesson plan and gather materials listed above in the Materials section.
- Read about Essential Understanding 2, in *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*, pp. 7-8, optional.

- Download and preview “Medicine Bear, Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux) Winter Count”.
- Download the first page of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation Timeline. Cut the timeline into eight strips (starting with “Traditional Life & Homelands” and ending with the “1770-1790” entry.)
- Gather scrap paper, pencils, art supplies (your choice of Sharpie, markers, crayons, oil pastels, or tempera paint and brushes) and a large piece of paper, cloth, or canvas.
- Arrange to project maps (see Materials).
- Preview YouTube videos.

### Procedure

#### Step 1: Present Learning Objectives

Explain: By looking at artwork from other cultures we can learn something about the people of that culture. Culture is the lifeways of a group of people.

We will be looking at a winter count—a type of calendar—made by Medicine Bear, a member of the Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux). By looking at maps first, we will learn where and how some tribes, including the Dakota, lived a long time ago. We will also locate a few present-day Montana Indian tribes and reservations on another map.

The winter count hide will tell us how the Yanktonai Dakota thought about time and how they told time. It will also tell us how they kept track of important events in their life that happened over a period of time, using picture writing or symbols that mean something. By talking about the materials used for the winter count, you will also learn about the close relationship traditional tribes had with the natural world.

We will learn about some important events in the history of a different tribe (the Northern Cheyenne) that occurred before non-Indians arrived in Montana and will create a winter count recording these events.

## Step 2: Show Traditional Homelands Map

1. Review the ancestral homelands and traditional lifeways (pre-1800s). Emphasize:
  - Dependence on the natural world for survival by hunting and gathering.
  - Migration: Tribes moved according to the availability of animals and plants, change of seasons, and neighboring tribal territories.
  - Tribes were not necessarily located where they are today.
2. Explain that there are many branches of Dakota/Sioux tribes. The Yanktonai Dakota are a subtribe of the Dakota/Sioux. Using a U.S. map, find the reservations on which members of the Yanktonai Nation reside:
  - Yankton and Crow Creek Reservations in South Dakota
  - Standing Rock and Fort Totten Reservations in North Dakota
  - Fort Peck Reservation in Montana

## Step 3: Show “Medicine Bear Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux) Winter Count” Slideshow.

Show the slideshow, pausing for discussion as noted in the script.

**Slide 1.** The Montana Historical Society has many objects (artifacts) that can help us learn about the history of Montana’s First Peoples. Let’s take a look at a type of historical calendar known as a winter count and see what we can learn together.

**Slide 2.** This winter count was made by Medicine Bear, a chief of the Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux). Like many winter counts, it is drawn on hide. Traditionally, women and girls would scrape and tan the hide, and the record keeper, usually a man, would draw the symbols. Later, winter counts were drawn on fabric or paper. Hides were large, so they could hold a lot of information—but they were also strong and easy to roll up for traveling.

Winter counts helped bands keep track of their history. Each symbol represents a particular year.

For the Yanktonais and many other Plains Indians, the yearly cycle began with the first snowfall of the year and lasted until the first snowfall of the following year.

**Ask and discuss:** Why do you think the Yanktonai year started with the first snow? How is that different from our modern calendar?

**Possible answers:** Our calendar is tied to specific dates. Halloween always happens on October 31. New Year is always January 1. But the first snow comes at a different date each year. Because the Indians’ lives were so closely tied to the seasons and the natural world, it made much more sense to them to shape their calendar around natural events (like the first snowfall) than an exact date.

Near the end of each year, the elders would gather to discuss the significant things that had happened that year. They would pick one event to represent the year, and that year would then be named, forever, after the chosen event. An artist would then draw a symbol representing that event on the hide. The band did not always choose the most important event of the year. But they did choose one that stood out and would help them remember other events.

The job of keeper of the winter count was often passed down through the generations from father to son. If the images on the winter count became faded or worn, the keeper would make a new copy to preserve the history. That’s why this winter count is drawn with ink (a modern material) even though the first year it documents is around 1823, when the band probably did not have access to ink.

**Ask and discuss:** What type of materials do you think record keepers used to draw the symbols before they could buy ink?

**Answer:** Record keepers used paint made from natural ingredients, like plants, charcoal, or minerals, and “brushes” made from small bones or the frayed end of sticks.

**Slide 3.** The count starts on the upper left and circles around, ending in the middle of the deer hide with a symbol representing the year 1911. Notice how the symbols go in a circle and are placed on a line that curves around? And notice how symbols stay on the line, so that some of the symbols appear upside down? Events are not placed on a straight line, like many timelines today.

**Ask and discuss:** Why do you think that the events follow a circle rather than a straight line?

**Possible answers:** We don't really know, but many things in nature move in circles or are shaped like circles, and circles were a big part of the Plains Indians' spiritual and material life. For example, tipi rings are also shaped like circles.

Some of the important events recorded on this winter count include flooding, smallpox epidemics, stolen horses, battles, encounters with white people, and the deaths of important people such as Sitting Bull.

Let's investigate some of the symbols we see here.

**Slide 4. Ask and discuss:** What do you think this symbol represents? Why? What shapes and kinds of lines did the artist use to make this symbol?

**Answer:** The symbol of the circle with a cluster of Xs inside represents a great meteor shower that is known as the year "that the stars fell." This meteor shower took place on November 12, 1833.

**Ask:** Was this a natural event or did humans cause it to happen?

**Answer:** Natural.

**Ask and discuss:** Now that you know what the symbol stands for, does it look like that to you? How would you represent that event?

**Ask:** Do you think that this is the only winter count that documented this meteor shower? Why or why not?

**Answer:** Many winter counts documented this same event using similar symbols.

**Slide 5. Ask:** What is going on in this drawing? What do you see that makes you say that?

**Answer:** This picture refers to a winter camp on the Heart River in 1834 that was frequented by a bear. The bear stayed with the camp all winter long.

**Ask:** Now that you know what the symbol represents, do you think it looks like what it means?

**Slide 6. Ask:** What do you think this symbol represents? Why?

**Answer:** This image refers to the second year of a devastating smallpox epidemic. It began in 1837 and continued into 1838. Many tribal members died.

**Ask:** What do you see in this symbol that could represent the disease?

**Answer:** Dots.

**Ask (upper grades):** Does anyone know why smallpox was so dangerous to American Indians?

**Answer:** The disease was common in Europe and Asia, but not in the Americas. Because the Indians had never been exposed to the disease before, their bodies had no resistance to it, and many people died.

**Slide 7. Ask:** What do you think this picture symbolizes?

**Answer:** These horse tracks refer to the capturing and/or killing of many prized Sioux horses by their enemy, the Crows, in about 1860 or 1861.

**Ask and discuss:** How do we know that the symbol represents the Crows stealing Sioux horses, instead of the other way around?

**Answer:** We know this because of the oral tradition. Remember, the elders of the band talked about what events they wanted to record. The record keeper then came up with a symbol (often using common figures) to represent that event. That

symbol became a tool to help people remember the stories they wanted to tell. They would talk about the event and pass down the stories of the event through the generations.

**Ask and discuss:** Think about symbols we use today (like a stop sign, McDonald's arches, or the number 2). Would an alien from outer space know what those symbols stand for just by looking at them?

**Possible answer:** No. Symbols don't necessarily look like what they are representing. We know what a symbol means because we are told that is what it means. It stands for a larger idea. The same is true for symbols on the winter count.

**Ask and discuss:** Can you think of another symbolic way to represent a horse? What about a number of horses? How did this symbol work to relate a lot of information in a small space?

**Slide 8. Ask:** What do you think this picture symbolizes?

**Answer:** This symbol refers to "a withering year" (wither means to dry up and die). We don't know for certain if it represents hard weather or is a reference to the fallout of the Battle of the Greasy Grass, the Sioux name for the Battle of the Little Bighorn. 1877 was a hard year. Although the Sioux and their allies won the Battle of the Greasy Grass in 1876, they lost the war and many of the people were forced onto reservations. This year marks the first of the remaining entries to include a palisade (a tall fence) before the figure. This represents the "prison" era, or the beginning of the reservation period.

**Ask and discuss (upper grades):** Why can't we say for certain what the symbol represents? When this winter count was being used by the Yanktonais, would they have known what the symbol meant?

**Possible answer:** During the reservation and boarding school periods, tribes lost a lot of traditional knowledge, including how to read some of the winter count symbols. Before that time, the tribe would have talked about the symbol and the

event when they read the winter count. Stories would have been passed down from generation to generation, including the meaning of this symbol.

**Slide 9. Ask:** What do you think this symbol represents?

**Answer:** This image refers to the return of Gall and his band from Canada. Gall, along with Sitting Bull, was an important chief, who wanted to keep the Great Plains for the Sioux. He helped lead the resistance against the U.S. military, which wanted to disarm the Sioux and confine them on a reservation. His band fought many battles against the U.S. government before fleeing to Canada in 1877. In 1880 Gall brought his band back from Canada. This image shows Gall's lodge along the Tongue River near Miles City, where in 1880 he, along with his band, surrendered at Fort Keogh on the Tongue River near Miles City. Sitting Bull and other band members surrendered in July 1881 at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. All were ultimately transferred to the Standing Rock Reservation, which straddles the border of North and South Dakota.

**Slide 10.** This symbol tells us what happened to Sitting Bull about ten years after he and his people returned from Canada. Sitting Bull was shot and killed in December 1890 by Indian police who were attempting to arrest him on the Standing Rock Reservation.

**Ask (upper grades):** Based on what you know, why would this be an important event to document for the Sioux?

**Possible answers:** Sitting Bull was a very important leader and a symbol of resistance. He wanted to keep the Great Plains for the Sioux and helped lead the resistance against the U.S. military, which wanted to disarm the Sioux and confine them on reservations. His death marked the end of an era.

Now that we've looked at some of the winter count symbols the Yanktonai used, let's talk more about them.



**Ask and discuss:** What types of events did the band choose to record on their winter count? Why don't the symbols look more like a realistic painting of actual events? How did the record keeper utilize the space to record a period of eighty-eight years?

**Possible answers:** Some of the events were sad (smallpox), but not all of them. Some were caused by nature (meteor shower) and some by humans (death of Sitting Bull). What they had in common was that they were always memorable. One of the reasons that record keepers used symbols instead of realistic paintings was because, by using symbols, they could pack a lot of information into a small space.

**Ask and discuss:** Why were winter counts important to the tribes in historic times? Why are they important today?

**Possible answers:** The pictographic symbols helped people remember their history. They remain important, especially to American Indian communities, because they continue to strengthen tribal ties by reminding people who they are and where they came from. They are important to everyone—both Indians and non-Indians—because they help us understand how people lived long ago and how our world has changed.

**Slide 11.** This production is provided through a partnership between the Montana Historical Society and Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Division. Unless otherwise noted, all objects are from the collections of the Montana Historical Society.

#### Step 4: Discuss/Review

After the slideshow, review what you have learned about winter counts. Particularly, students should remember:

- To decide what important event to use for a certain year, the elders would get together at the end of a year and talk about all the important events that happened in the past year. They would choose one event that would represent

that year, and the year would be named after that event forever. For many people to choose one main event would require cooperative decision-making, and the elders would have to reach a consensus.

- The job of record keeper, the man who drew the winter count, was passed down through generations from father to son. The record keeper would draw the symbols on animal hide, and later, as it became available, heavy fabric and paper. The women and girls in the tribe would scrape and tan the hides, and in this way helped the men in creating the winter count.
- The hide, even though it was large, was very easy to roll up for traveling. It was very portable. They would use animal bones or the frayed end of sticks for a paintbrush and pigment (paint colors) made from plants, charcoal, and minerals (natural materials). The artists of this time period respected their natural materials and took care of them.
- The winter count helped people remember their history, and today winter counts remind people who they are and where they come from. Looking at an Indian tribe's winter count helps all of us understand the story of a people and their culture during a specific period in time.

#### Discuss:

- Why is it named a winter count? (*Because it was made in the winter and counted the years*)
- Which tribe created this winter count? (*Yanktonai Dakota, also known as the Sioux*)
- Where did they live a long time ago? (*Minnesota and North and South Dakota*)
- Do they have a reservation in Montana now? (*Yes. The Fort Peck Reservation. They also have reservations in the Dakotas.*)
- What are different ways the Indians in Montana told time and kept track of important events? (*The weather and the seasons, oral tradition, winter counts*)
- How do we tell time and record time and events today? (*On a calendar or timeline*)

- What symbols do we use today for time? (*Clock, numbers*)
- What symbols do we use today for other things? (*Stop signs, McDonalds arches, emojis, etc.*)
- Why are the symbols for the winter count painted on a hide? (*Hides were readily available. They were large so could hold a lot of information. They were also durable (strong) and easy to roll up and carry.*)
- What materials did the Indians use to paint? (*Plants, charcoal, minerals and brushes made from small bones or the frayed ends of sticks. Later, when it was available, they used ink*)
- What colors can you find in the winter count? (*Black, brown, tan, and red*)

### Step 5: Reflect

Ask students to complete the Exit Ticket.

### Step 6: Create Winter Count Symbols

1. Tell students that studying Medicine Bear's winter count gave them some information about the culture of the Yanktonai Dakota (Sioux). Tell them that they are going to learn some of the early history of a different tribe, the Northern Cheyenne, and will be creating their own winter count to record that history. (Emphasize that the Northern Cheyenne and the Sioux are different tribes, each with their own languages and traditions.)
2. Find the Northern Cheyenne Reservation on a contemporary map.
3. Divide the class into eight groups. Give each group one item from the first page of the Northern Cheyenne timeline "Time Immemorial" through 1790. (The first item doesn't have a date. It is headed "Traditional Life & Homelands.")
4. Give students time to read and understand their event. If it mentions a place, or movement from one place to another, encourage students to use maps and pictures of the landscape to gain an understanding of their

event. **Teaching Note:** The Cheyennes are made up of two distinct groups of people, the Tsétséhéstàhese (which is sometimes spelled Tsitsistas) and the Suhtaio (sometimes spelled So'taahe). Share that information with the group that has the 1750-1790 entry.

5. Using scrap paper, have each group work to come up with a symbol to represent their timeline entry.
6. Have student groups make a human timeline, with the group that has the first entry on the left and the group that has the last entry on the right. Challenge students to create this human timeline SILENTLY, using only gestures (and their written material) to communicate.
7. Once groups are in chronological order, have a representative from the first group present its timeline event and explain its symbol. Have the rest of the groups follow in turn.

### Step 7: Create a Winter Count

1. Remind students that the events will be placed spatially as in the Yanktonai winter count, with the earliest event starting in the left corner and spiraling in on a curved line. (Show image of winter count.)
2. Before starting the formal winter count, discuss how the materials the students have available are different from the materials the Yanktonais used. For example: "The Yanktonais used materials they had on hand, like hide, to make a winter count. Instead of painting on animal hide with natural, gathered materials or ink that we got through trade, we will be using paper and tools that we have on hand in our school."
3. Have students choose a record keeper (vote), who will draw a spiral line that ends in the middle of the paper. Make sure the students leave room for the symbols and that the symbols are equally spaced on the line. They



will turn the paper as they go, so each symbol is sitting on top of the line, and some of the symbols will be upside down or sideways.

4. Have each group choose someone to add their symbol to the winter count.
5. After the winter count is complete, get a volunteer to use it to recount the Northern Cheyenne tribal history between time immemorial and 1790.

### Step 8: Add to Class Timeline

Have the students hang the slips of paper with their timeline entries on the larger timeline created in Part 1 of this unit.

### Step 9: The Northern Cheyenne Today

1. Remind students that they looked at a few aspects of the Northern Cheyennes' early history.
2. Explain that the Northern Cheyennes experienced many changes and challenges and hardships at the hands of the U.S. government in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but that the people survived.
3. Tell students that many Northern Cheyennes live on the reservation but not all of them do. Remind them that just as there is great diversity among tribal nations (the Northern Cheyenne are different from the Sioux), there is great diversity among individual American Indians. Tell them you are going to introduce them to two Northern Cheyenne singers, musician Gary Small and vice president of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe (2016-2020) Conrad Fisher.

4. Show the first 3 minutes and 45 seconds of the video *Gary Small (Northern Cheyenne Musician)*.
5. Discuss: Who is Gary Small? What is his tribal affiliation? What did you find interesting? Surprising? Confusing?
6. Have students stand respectfully and show the 1:55-minute video *Northern Cheyenne Flag Song Lame Deer version*, sung by Conrad Fisher.
7. Have students compare/contrast the music of Gary Small and the flag song. Make sure that students understand that both singers are proud members of the Northern Cheyenne tribe.
8. Explicitly teach Essential Understanding 2: "Just as there is great diversity among tribal nations, there is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by entities, organizations, and people. There is no generic American Indian."

**Exit Ticket**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What is a winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did Medicine Bear create one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn about the Yanktonais from looking at Medicine Bear’s winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Exit Ticket**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What is a winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did Medicine Bear create one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn about the Yanktonais from looking at Medicine Bear’s winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Exit Ticket**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What is a winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did Medicine Bear create one? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn about the Yanktonais from looking at Medicine Bear’s winter count? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part 3: Wrap-up

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### Lesson 1: Write Your Way Out

Time: 15 minutes

#### MATERIALS

- The students' "Write Your Way In" free writes
- Pens or pencils
- Timer

#### ASSESSMENT: Quick Writes

#### PRE-LESSON PREPARATION

Retrieve the "Write Your Way Ins" that students created at the beginning of the unit.

#### Procedure

1. Pass out students' "Write Your Way In" free writes. Tell them that they will be writing below the line they drew earlier for this next five-minute nonstop writing period.
2. Tell students that they are going to do another quick write, writing nonstop from the moment you say "Go!" until the timer goes off. Remind them of the procedure: they must write the entire time. They do not need to worry about spelling, grammar, or punctuation. If they are stuck for what to write next, encourage them to write, "I am thinking!" until they think of more to say. Create a sense of urgency!
3. Set the timer and provide the prompt: "Now what do you think life in Montana was like before non-Indians arrived here?"
4. After students finish writing, give them time to read their "Write Your Way Ins." Hold a group discussion.

- Direct your students' attention back to the timeline. Ask what they notice. (*There are a lot more events in the later years. We have specific dates for later events.*)
- Emphasize that history was happening in earlier times—it's just that we don't know very much about it because it wasn't written down.
- Compare the length of the string before Lewis and Clark traveled through Montana to the length of the string after the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Ask: Which is longer? (*Before!*) Note how long Indigenous people have lived in the area we now know as Montana long before Europeans came to the region.
- What are other takeaways from the unit? How did their understandings change?
- What questions are they left with?
- Where could they find out the answers?

## Unit 2 Content Standards and Essential Understandings

	Unit 2 ►	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
<b>Montana State Standards for Social Studies</b>				
<b>Skills</b>				
<b>SS.K12.4.</b> Use sources to gather evidence to develop and refine claims			X	
<b>SS.K12.5.</b> Communicate conclusions			X	X
<b>Civics</b>				
<b>SS.CG.4.2.</b> Practice deliberative processes when making decisions as a group		X	X	
<b>Geography</b>				
<b>SS.G.4.1.</b> Examine maps and other representations to explain the movement of people			X	
<b>SS.G.4.2.</b> Identify and label the tribes in Montana and their indigenous territories, and current locations			X	
<b>SS.G.4.3.</b> Investigate the physical, political, and cultural characteristics of places, regions, and people in Montana			X	
<b>History</b>				
<b>SS.H.4.1.</b> Understand tribes in Montana have their own unique histories			X	
<b>SS.H.4.2.</b> Identify events and policies that have impacted and been influenced by tribes in Montana			X	
<b>SS.H.4.3.</b> Explain how Montana has changed over time given its cultural diversity and how this history impacts the present		X	X	
<b>English/Language Arts Standards » Reading Informational Text » Grade 4</b>				
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2.</b> Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.		X	X	
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3.</b> Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. Include texts by and about American Indians.		X	X	
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4.</b> Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.		X	X	

## Unit 2 Content Standards and Essential Understandings (continued)

Unit 2 ►	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7.</b> Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.	X	X	
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9.</b> Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.		X	
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.10.</b> By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.		X	
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 4</b>			
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10.</b> Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	X		X
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Speaking &amp; Listening » Grade 4</b>			
<b>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.</b> Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	X	X	X
<b>English Language Arts Standards » Reading Fundamentals » Grade 4</b>			
<b>CCSS.ELA.RF.4.4.</b> Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.	X	X	
<b>IEFA Essential Understandings</b>			
<b>Essential Understanding 1.</b> There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.		X	
<b>Essential Understanding 2.</b> There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by entities, organizations and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.		X	

## Unit 2 Content Standards and Essential Understandings (continued)

	Unit 2 ►	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
<b>Art Anchor Standards</b>				
#1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work			X	
#2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work			X	
#3. Refine and complete artistic work			X	
#6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work			X	
#7. Perceive and analyze artistic work			X	
#8. Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work			X	
#11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding, including artistic ideas and works by American Indians			X	