

A Beautiful Tradition: Adaptation and Ingenuity in a Century of Plateau Women's Art

WORKSHEET
High School

1. Where is the Plateau region located? What is its main geographical feature south of the Canadian border? What other tribal regions are located to the west, north, east and south of the Plateau region?

2. Which Montana tribes are Plateau tribes?

3. List two reasons why Plateau tribes regularly traveled east of the Rockies. Be specific.

4. What are three general cultural differences between the tribes of the Plateau and those of the Plains?

5. What are two cultural similarities between Plateau and Plains tribes?

6. List at least three of the art forms common among Plateau tribes *before* they acquired beads:

7. Plateau tribes use many different materials from their environment for decorative and artistic expression. List four different media used in traditional Plateau art:

8. List three media used to *decorate* Plateau arts before Europeans and Euro-Americans came to the region:

9. Where did glass beads come from? How and when did Plateau tribes acquire them?

10. Beadwork styles from which other tribes/peoples influenced most of the Plateau tribes. Why?

11. Beads quickly became very popular in Plateau art. List four reasons why:

- (a)

- (b)

- (c)

- (d)

(Use an additional sheet of paper if more room for answers is needed.)

12. The materials and decorative media used in traditional Plateau arts reveal one way in which Plateau people utilized resources in their environment. How did the establishment of the reservations in the 1850s and the lumping of many tribes together affect Plateau art?

13. What design style is used in the decorations on twined bags and coiled baskets of Plateau tribes?

What design style is often used on Plateau beaded bags?

14. What did beads allow the artist to do that could not easily be done by twining or coiling? How did this ability change the composition and style of Plateau designs?

15. What is a **motif**?

What motifs are often used on twined Plateau-style bags, such as cornhusk bags?

16. What are four common motifs on beaded Plateau bags between 1880 and the 1940s? How are they similar or different to those decorating cornhusk bags?

17. List three of the major non-Indian influences on Plateau beadwork between 1880 and 1940. What do these events tell us about how American Indians were participating in American society in these decades?

18. What is the difference in **function** between traditional cornhusk bags and later beaded flat bags of the Plateau region?

19. Define or describe the following terms as applied to various beading **techniques** and/or design **styles** in beadwork or twined Plateau bags:

contour beading:

imbrication:

curvilinear:

20. Describe one of the Plateau bags you like best. In your description, remember to discuss the bag's **style**, **function**, and **composition** (media used, design style, motif, colors, etc.). Also, mention which of the materials/media are indigenous and which were introduced from outside of this continent. Consider in your evaluation the time period in which this bag was made and the resources the maker might have had available.

21. In what ways does the utilization of both new and traditional materials by women artists of the Plateau demonstrate continuity of cultural identity? How and why is art part of identity?
