

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

WORK SHEET
Middle School

1. Where is the Plateau region located? What is its main geographical feature south of the Canadian border? What cultural regions are to the east of the Plateau region?

2. Which Montana tribes are Plateau tribes?

3. Name at least three other Plateau tribes, including one that frequently came to Montana to hunt and to trade with Plains tribes (in particular with the Crow):

4. What are two 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 two of the art forms common among Plateau tribes *before* they acquired beads:

7. Plateau artists used many different materials (**media**) for decorative and artistic expression. List three different materials used to *make* traditional arts:

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

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

9. Beadwork styles from which other tribes/peoples influenced most of the Plateau tribes before 1880?

10. What are the names of two sizes of beads often used as trade items?

11. Indigenous peoples of the Plateau incorporated other European and/or Euro-American materials into their art in the 19th century. Give two examples:

12. List three of the reasons why beads quickly became very popular in Plateau (and Plains) art.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

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

13. The establishment of the Plateau reservations in the 1850s lumped people of many tribes together in smaller areas with limited resources. How do you think this affected Plateau arts and the materials available for the artistic/aesthetic expression of tribal cultures?

14. What **design style** is used in the decorations on cornhusk bags and basketry of Plateau tribes?

What design style is most common on the beaded bags of Plateau tribes? Why? (What did beads allow the artist to do that could not easily be done with plant fibers, for instance?)

15. What is a **motif**?

What are some examples traditional motifs used on twined Plateau-style bags, such as cornhusk bags?

What are three common motifs found on beaded Plateau bags between 1880 and the 1940s?

16. List and describe three of the major non-Indian influences on the motifs seen in Plateau beadwork at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century:

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

18. What is **false embroidery** (or *imbrication*) and what kind of bag is it used to decorate? What materials were traditionally used for false embroidery and what new material was used beginning in the reservation era on the Plateau (after 1855)?

19. Describe **contour beading**:

20. Define **curvilinear**:

21. 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, tell what you like about this particular bag.

22. In what ways does the use of both new and traditional materials to create Plateau bags demonstrate continuity of cultural identity?
