

PATHS OF LIFE

American Indians of the Southwest

The Navajo 6th Grade and Up Discovery Hunt



The Navajo call themselves *Diné*, meaning People. They are one of the largest tribes in the United States and they have the largest reservation. Their reservation is located across three states. What are those three states? Look at the map at the beginning of the exhibit to help you figure it out.



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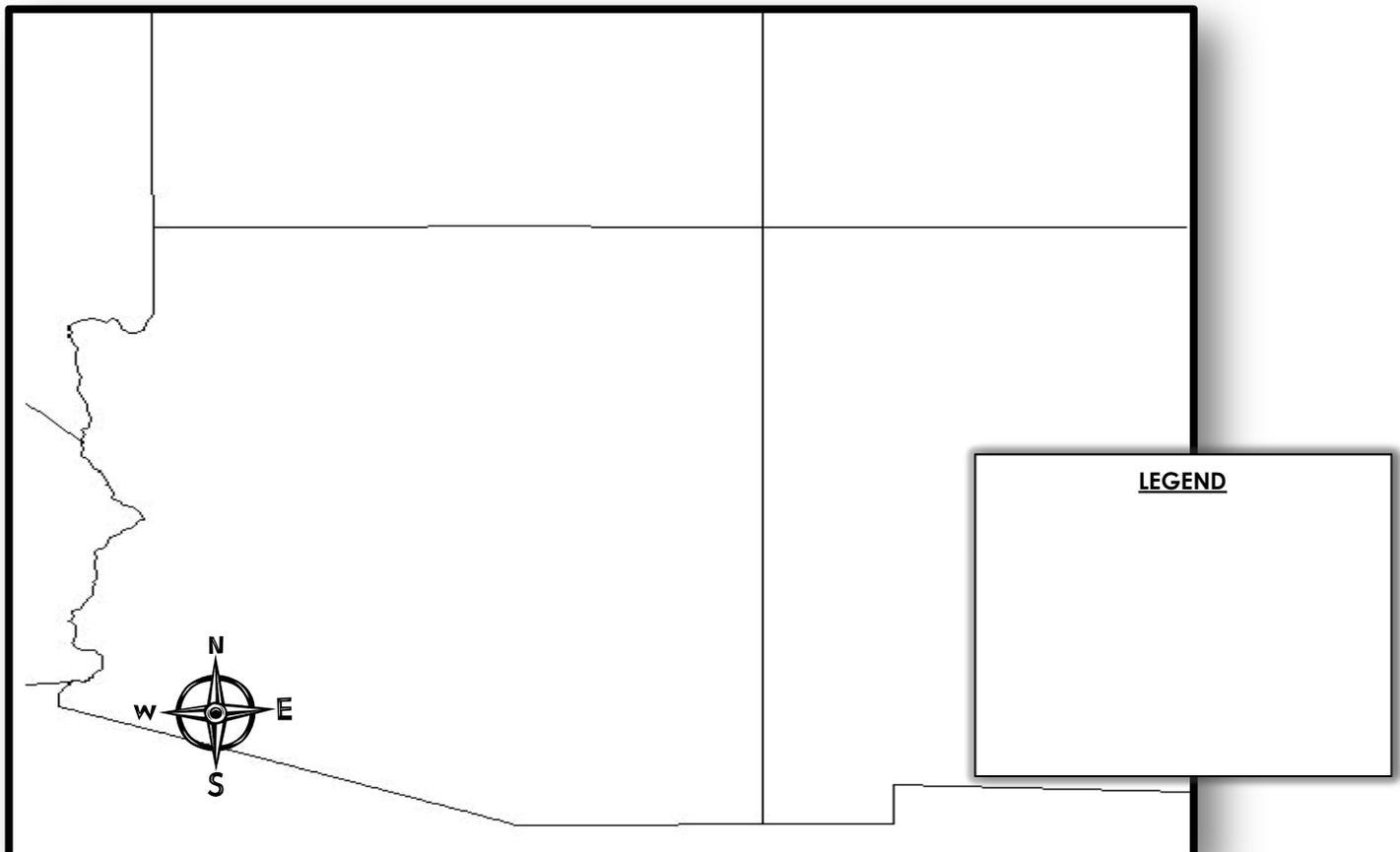
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The Navajo Homeland: Diné Bikéyah

The Navajo Reservation is the largest reservation in the United States. The Navajo's traditional homeland, Diné Bikéyah, included land in what are now the four states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. Today, the Navajo Reservation includes land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

Using the map at the beginning of the exhibit, complete the map below to help you understand the geography of the Navajo's land.

1. Label Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.
2. Outline the traditional Navajo territory with a dotted line.
3. Outline the modern Navajo territory (the Navajo Reservation) with a solid line.
4. Outline the Hopi Reservation with a solid line and label it.
5. Place a dot to locate the following cities and label them: Tuba City, Teec Nos Pos, Shiprock, Mexican Hat, Rough Rock, Chinle, Ganado, Window Rock, and Holbrook.
6. Create the legend using the symbols you used to create the map.
For example: - - - - - = traditional Navajo territory.



Navajo Sandpaintings

Look at the panel titled “Spiritual Journeys.” The Navajo use sandpaintings to tell stories and for healing those who are ill. When someone is in need of spiritual, emotional or physical healing, a Navajo Medicine Man performs a ceremony and creates a sandpainting on the ground. The sandpainting is believed to capture the person’s sickness and, at the end of the ceremony, the sandpainting is destroyed to get rid of the sickness.

The sandpainting you see on the panel tells stories of Diné Bikéyah and how the Navajo emerged into the Fourth World. Read the information on the panel to understand more about what the sandpainting is telling you.

Using what you just learned about the sandpainting on the panel, complete the activities below.

What four directions are represented on the sandpainting?

What color is associated with each direction?

What plant is associated with each direction?

1. The Navajo lived in _____ other underworlds before emerging into the _____.
2. What does the circle represent in the middle of the four sacred colors? _____
3. Towards where are the four directions stretching?

4. Choose one of the four pictures that surround the sacred directions, colors and plants, and describe what you see. What story do you think the picture is telling? (Hint: Think of how the Navajo understand creation.)

“The Long Walk”

In 1863, Colonel Kit Carson of the U.S. Army launched a “scorched earth” campaign. Navajo homes, crops, and livestock were burned and destroyed and Navajo men, women and children were forced to walk for many, many miles to Ft. Sumner, New Mexico. Many Navajo did not survive the journey, which is called “The Long Walk.”

While at Ft. Sumner, the Navajo had to learn new ways of life that were different from what they were used to. After five hard and challenging years at Ft. Sumner, the Navajo were allowed to return to their homeland, although only a portion of it. Study the panels titled “The Long Walk” and “Sheep Are Our Life” to help you answer the questions below and learn more about the history of the Navajo.

1. How many Navajo were forced on “The Long Walk?” _____
2. How many miles did they have to walk? _____
3. How many Navajo died during “The Long Walk?” _____
4. Do you think that today, “The Long Walk” is an event that is hard for the Navajo to talk about? Explain your answer.

5. What are some of the new skills that the Navajo learned while at Ft. Sumner?

6. In 1868, the Navajo returned to Diné Bikéyah. What document allowed them to return? _____
7. What else did the treaty promise the Navajo besides being allowed to return to their homeland?

8. What state was not included during the expansion of the Navajo Reservation from 1868-1990? _____
9. In rebuilding their culture and lifestyle after 1868, the Navajo continued to live a pastoral (herd and raise animals) life. They were such good sheep herders that they were able to multiply their original number of 15,000 sheep to _____ sheep. Impressive!

Navajo Weaving

Find the display case that contains many Navajo rugs. The Navajo process of making rugs is a long one and it involves many steps.

To make a rug, the Navajo must first remove the wool from the sheep using a pair of shears (they give the sheep a haircut!). Then, they clean the wool using carders. After that, they dye (color) the wool using plants they find around their homes or using dyes that they buy at the store.

After the wool is dyed, then the Navajo spin the wool into yarn using a spindle. Finally, they start to weave their rug or blanket using a loom. Can you find shears, carders, and a spindle in the display case? Read the labels to help you find them.

Now, take a look at the map in the bottom middle of the display case. Different regions of the Navajo Reservation are known for different styles of rugs. Pick two rug styles and draw them in the rectangles on the right. Then write the name of each style on the line below.







Look for a display of a family inside a room. They are in a hogan, a traditional Navajo house with 8 sides. The family lives both a traditional and a modern way of life. They mix old ways of living with new ways of living. What things in the hogan might you find in your own home and what things might you find only in a Navajo home?