

PATHS OF LIFE

American Indians of the Southwest

The O'odham 6th Grade and Up Discovery Hunt



The O'odham have been living in southern Arizona and northern Mexico for hundreds of years. There are two similar yet different groups of O'odham: the Tohono O'odham and the Akimel O'odham. O'odham means People, Tohono means Desert, and Akimel means River. Why do you suppose the two groups are named in such a way? By the end of this hunt, you'll know the answer!





The O'odham Land

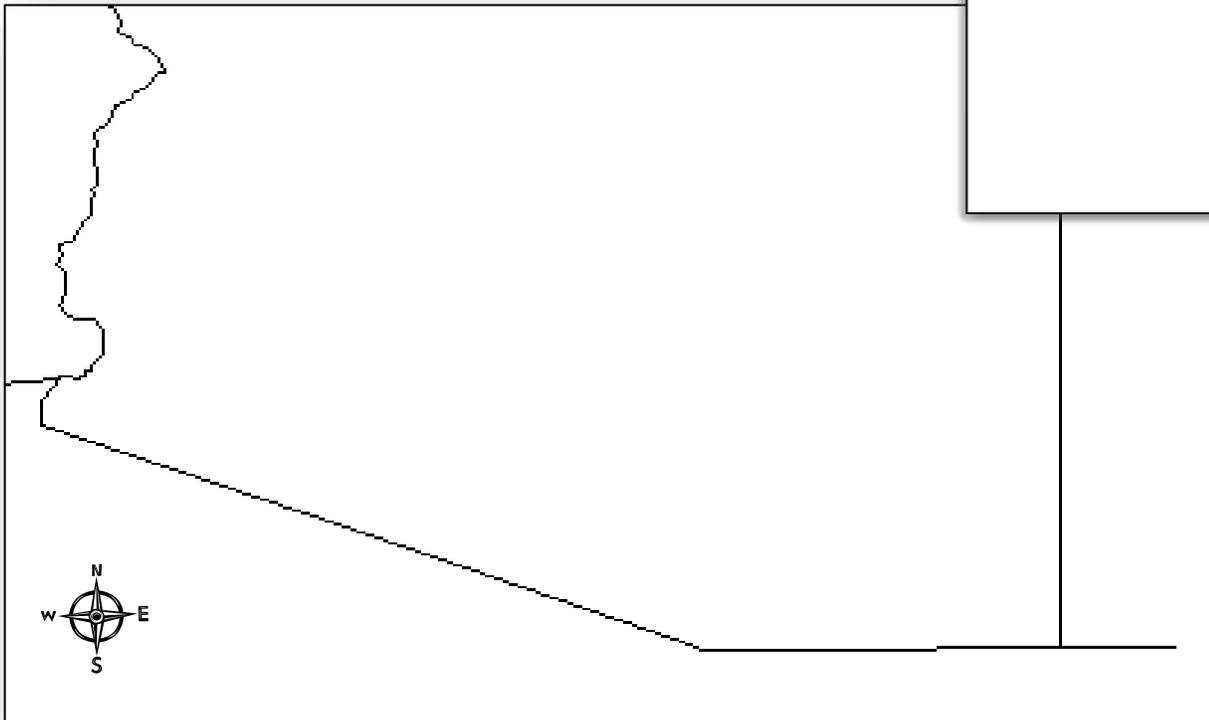
The O'odham traditional homeland begins a little north of Phoenix and extends down into northern Sonora.

Before the border was established between the United States and Mexico, the O'odham travelled freely throughout their homeland. Today, however, due to issues of illegal immigration and drug trafficking, the O'odham people experience much difficulty in crossing the border and thus visiting family and important cultural sites becomes complicated.

To better understand the geography of the traditional and present-day O'odham land, complete the map below using the map located at the start of the O'odham exhibit.

1. Label Arizona and Mexico.
2. Outline the O'odham traditional land with a dotted line.
3. Outline the modern O'odham land (reservations) with a solid line. Label the different reservations.
4. Locate the city of Sells with a star and label it. (Sells is the capital of the Tohono O'odham Nation.)
5. Locate with a dot the following cities and label them: Phoenix, Tucson, Salt River Community, Sacaton, Florence, Ak Chin, Ajo, and Quitobaquito Springs.
6. Locate with a cross the San Xavier del Bac Mission and label it.
7. Create the legend using the symbols you used to create the map.
For example: - - - - - = O'odham traditional land

LEGEND



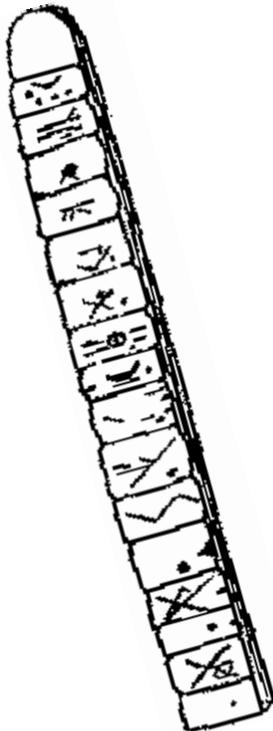


Rain and the Saguaro

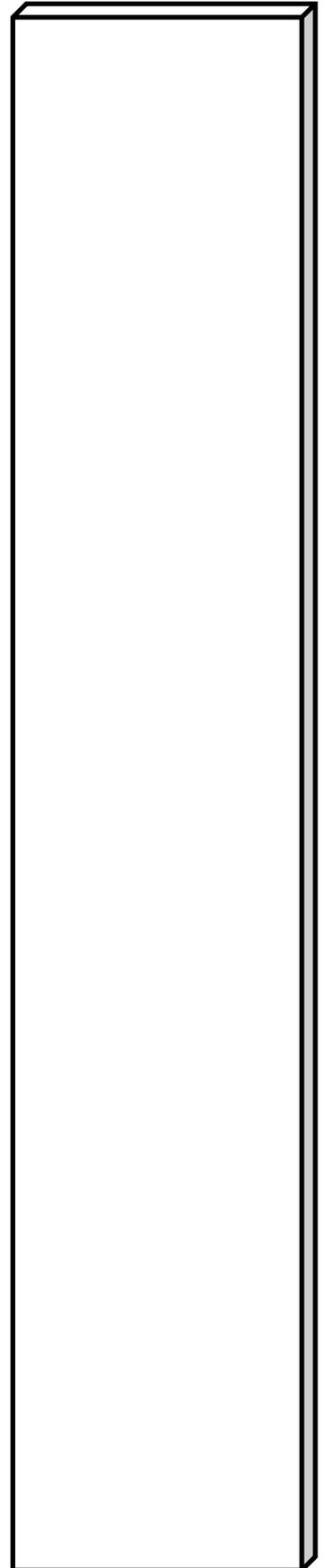
In the early summer, here in southern Arizona, we experience the monsoon rains. And, it is during the early summer that the O'odham hold the Nawait ceremony. It is a special ceremony during which the O'odham drink nawait, a wine made from the saguaro cactus fruit, and sing. They believe that the ceremony ensures that the rains come, for, as the O'odham say, "the world would burn without rain."

Study the case located directly to the left of the photo illustrating a thunderstorm. This case explains how the O'odham make nawait. What tool is used to remove the fruit from the cactus? How is it used? What is used to make the tool?

The O'odham year begins with the harvesting of the saguaro fruit. Calendar sticks are a traditional record-keeping device of the O'odham. Each rectangle on the stick represents one year and within each rectangle a symbol is inscribed. The symbols represent important events in the life of the person who is creating the calendar stick.



Create your own version of a calendar stick! Mark 12 rectangles on the calendar stick to represent the 12 months in a year. (Start with January at the top and move down until you finish with December.) Draw a symbol in each rectangle that reminds you of something you do during that month that is important to you. For example, draw a picture of yourself in the month you were

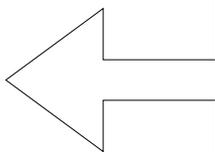
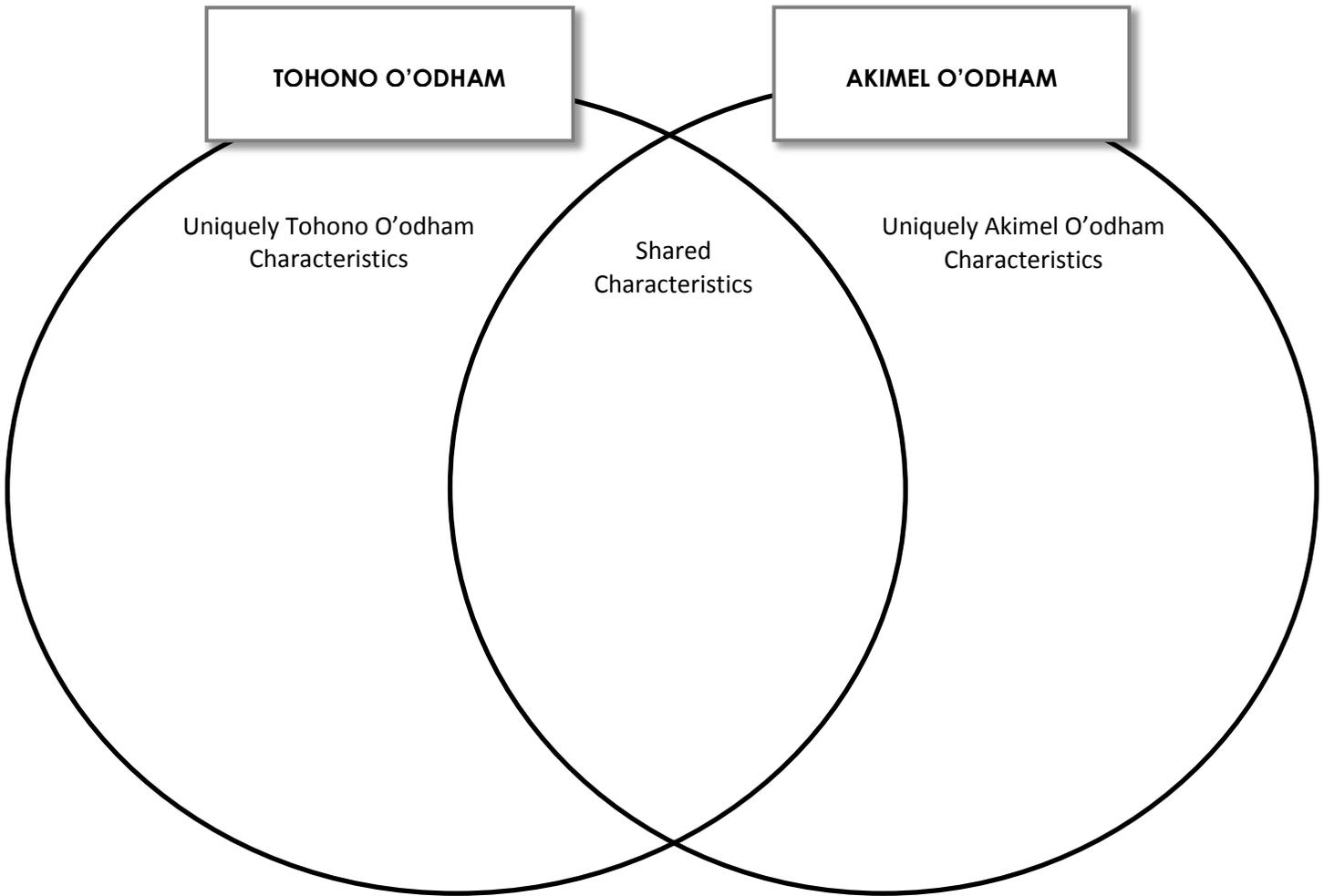




Tohono O'odham and Akimel O'odham

There are many similarities and differences between the Tohono O'odham and the Akimel O'odham. Study the panels titled "Akimel O'odham: The River People" and "Tohono O'odham: The Desert People" to learn more about these two groups of O'odham.

In the Venn diagram below, compare and contrast the Tohono and Akimel O'odham.



Don't forget to check out the case displaying beautiful examples of the O'odham's basketry and pottery...

Can you find the basket with the *Man in the Maze* design on it? The *Man in the Maze* design is the symbol of the Tohono O'odham Nation. It represents the choices we make and the experiences we have in life.

In life, we follow a path, sometimes traveling up, sometimes traveling down, and sometimes arriving at a place where we have to turn around and go in a different direction. We keep going and going until we reach the center and have learned many things about ourselves and the world in which we live.



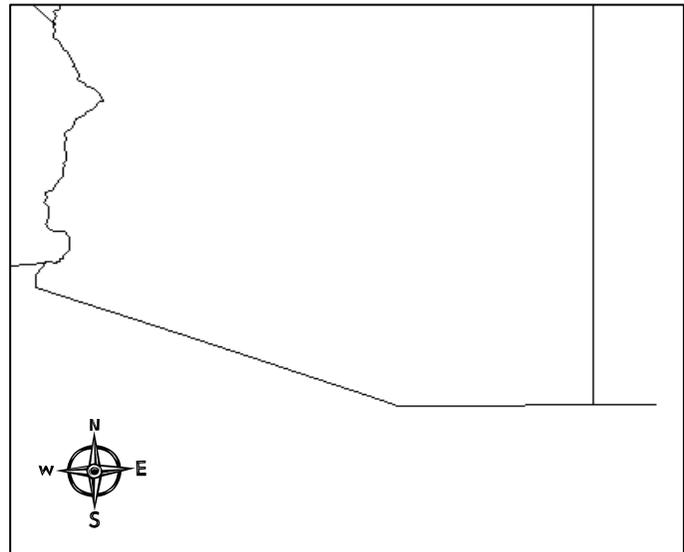
O'odham Water Rights

The Akimel O'odham were agriculturalists and practiced effective irrigation techniques. They hand-built small canals from major river systems and did not disrupt the main rivers' natural flows. They traded and sold crops with the Anglos that traveled through their lands during the mid 1800's.

The Anglos learned how agriculturally rich the O'odham's land was. The Anglos used advanced technology to create larger fields. But, larger fields meant a greater consumption of water. The Anglos' intensive use of the water made it nearly impossible for the O'odham to obtain the amount of water they needed and their use also changed the natural flow of the rivers, which soon disappeared in the 1900's.

Study the panels titled "When Anglos Took Their Water..." and "Water: The Key to Survival in the 21st Century" to learn more about the history of Arizona's rivers and the O'odham's and Anglos' use of them. Then, complete the map and answer the questions found below.

1. Label Arizona, California and New Mexico.
2. Locate with a dot the cities of Tucson and Ft. Yuma and label them.
3. Draw in the following rivers: the Gila, the Salt and the Santa Cruz.
4. Draw in the Gila Trail with a dotted line.
5. Outline and shade in the area of the Pima (Akimel O'odham) villages.



What was the Akimel O'odham's most successful crop? In 1870, how many pounds of this crop did they sell and trade with the Anglos? _____

Why were the Anglos eager to get to California in the 1850's and what trail did they follow out there?

In what ways did the Anglos divert the flow of the rivers?

How did such diversion affect the O'odham's farming activities?

How is the law being used to help the O'odham receive and maintain access to water?

