

The Hohokam

The Hohokam Indians lived for hundreds of years in the Sonoran Desert along the rivers of southern Arizona. They were farmers who built irrigation canals and used water from the rivers to grow crops. In addition to the crops they grew, they used many desert plants for food, clothing, shelter, and other objects. They used natural resources to satisfy their basic needs.

One desert plant used was the saguaro cactus. The fruit of the saguaro was picked in the summer, cooked, and made into a drink. Saguaro seeds were ground into flour for eating. The ribs of dead saguaros were the long poles needed to pick saguaro fruit from the top of the cactus and were also used to cover the roofs of their houses.

Mesquite trees were also useful to the Hohokam. The pods, or beans, which grow on these trees in the spring, were ground into flour. Wood from the mesquite tree was used in building the Hohokam houses and also used for fuel.

Another important plant used by the Hohokam was the agave also known as the century plant. The leaves of the agave plant were used to make string, rope, and nets. Leaves could also be made into baskets and mats. These mats had several uses, including as a mat for sleeping. The stem of the agave plant is very sweet and was baked in a pit and eaten.

These are just a few of the many ways the Hohokam used natural resources to satisfy their basic needs. To have successfully lived in the desert for hundreds of years, the Hohokam needed to rely on desert plants.

The Hohokam
Student Worksheet

Name _____

Use the reading about the Hohokam to answer the following questions.

1. Where did the Hohokam live?

- A. in the Mohave Desert
- B. along the Colorado River
- C. in the mountains of Arizona
- D. along the rivers of the Sonoran Desert

2. Name one way the Hohokam used water from the rivers to survive in the desert.

3. Name one desert plant the Hohokam used and explain how they used it to provide for a basic need like food or shelter.

4. Name one plant that was used as a tool.

5. In the space below, make a bar graph showing the number of ways the 3 different desert plants were used by the Hohokam.

_____ (title)

Number of Uses	7			
	6			
	5			
	4			
	3			
	2			
	1			

Kind of Plant

Use your bar graph to answer the following questions.

6. What is the title of your graph?
7. What are the 3 kinds of plants?
8. What two desert plants had the most uses?
9. How many uses did the mesquite tree have?

The Hohokam
Student Worksheet **Answer Key**

1. D
2. for irrigation to grow crops
3. Any one of the following:
 - saguaro - fruit into a drink, seeds into flour, poles to gather saguaro fruit, roof beams
 - mesquite - beans into flour, build houses, fuel
 - agave - string, ropes, nets, baskets, mats (for sleeping), stem baked for eating
4. saguaro - pole used to gather saguaro fruit
5. Titles may vary. Should have these 3 desert plants and this number of uses.
 - saguaro- 4
 - mesquite- 3
 - agave – 6
6. Answers may vary
7. saguaro, mesquite, agave
8. saguaro and agave
9. 3