

Student Handout Meet the Mogollons



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How do we know about people from long ago? Why do we want to know about them? How did they live long ago? Where are they today? These are some questions historians and archeologists often ask about the Mogollon, Hohokam and Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi). These three cultures are part of our Southwest heritage. These cultures also represent the start of farming, living in larger villages and the creation of civilizations in the Southwestern United States. Today we are going to learn about the lives of the Mogollon people. We will learn about their location, agriculture, housing, art and trade networks.

The Mogollon's location included the territory from Little Colorado River in Arizona south to Chihuahua, Mexico. It went from the Pecos River in New Mexico west to the Verde River in Arizona. If you go to eastern Arizona or southern New Mexico, you can see ruins of the Mogollon culture at Casa Malpais and the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The Mogollon lived in this area from about 200 B.C. until about 1450 A.D. Their land consisted of woods, hills and valleys, and deserts. They used the Gila River and the Little Colorado River for their water needs along with rainfall. The land was mountainous with fir and pine trees. Lower elevations contained cactus such as prickly pear. Valleys were often used for growing crops as they had streams and springs for water. Wildlife included bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer and jackrabbits. Check out the Prehistoric Cultures of the Southwest map for their location in the United States.



Picture by Mike Nice – Mogollon environment

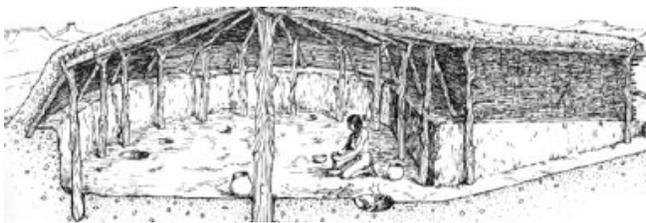
In order to feed their families, the Mogollon grew corn, squash, beans, and amaranth (a grain like wheat). They also grew cotton for clothing. They gathered piñon seeds, walnuts, acorns, prickly pear, wild tomato, and sunflower seeds. These grew naturally in their environment. They hunted turkey and deer. Sometimes they ate dog when food was scarce. Corn, however, was the main food they grew and ate. Here is some corn cobs found on the floor of the Gila Cliff Dwellings in New Mexico.



Picture by Mike Nice – Gila Cliff Dwelling

The Mogollon culture had two types of housing. Their first dwellings were called pit houses. Pit houses are structures dug into the ground surface with stick and thatch roofs supported by posts and beams and plastered on the outside with dirt and clay. A fire was used for cooking either inside the pit house or outside in a communal area. Usually single families lived in these homes which were grouped together with other homes. This grouping created a village for protection. Some early Mogollon sites had a pit house that was three times larger than the others in the village. Archeologists think these might have been Kivas or places of worship.

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Cliff Dwelling

Picture by Mike Nice – Gila Cliff Dwelling

In later years, the Mogollon also lived in cliff dwellings. They might have gotten this idea from their neighbors to the north, the Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi). The Mogollon lived in cliff dwellings around 1270 – 1300 AD. The cliff dwelling contained rooms for living, food storage and ceremonies. Often many families lived together in these homes. Walls are built into natural caves to form rooms.

We know some things about the Mogollon from the art they left behind. We know they used pottery and have many examples of their work. One group was especially known for their pottery. They were called the Mimbres. Their pottery was usually white with black designs. The pottery was decorated with pictures of animals, people, shapes and abstract designs. When the Mogollon died, a hole was drilled in the middle of a special pottery bowl. The bowl was then placed on the face of the person who died. This was the “kill hole” and perhaps the place where the spirit could go out. No one is really sure what the bowl was used for. The Mogollon also painted pictures on rocks and on walls of their homes. These are called pictographs. They made paint from gypsum, hematite and charcoal. This gave them white, red and black colors. Feathers, shells and woven mats have also been found in places the Mogollon lived. The yucca plant was used for its fiber to make shoes and mats. Tools were made from stones and bone.



Picture by Mike Nice - pictographs



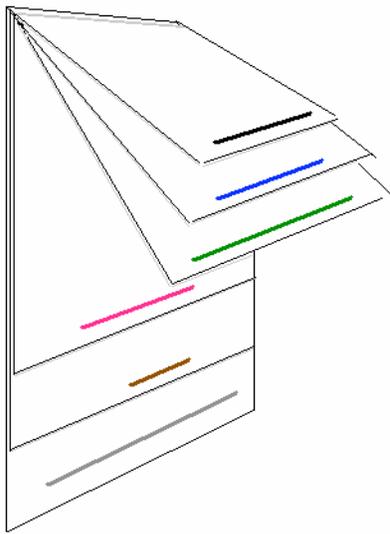
Mimbres Pottery

Trade networks are a way in which the Mogollon shared ideas and traded for goods. They often traded with the Hohokam for shells and they got the ideas for cliff houses from the Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi). They also got the idea of a t-shaped doorway from the Ancestral Puebloans. This way they could enter their cliff dwellings without taking off the load over their shoulders. Archeologists think that the Mogollon might have acted as traders between people to the north and south of them. They might have traded turquoise for copper and macaw feathers. These items could have been used for decoration or for religious ceremonies.

What happened to these people and their way of life? No one is quite sure since they did not leave a written record. Some archeologist suspect drought was a cause for moving out of the mountains. Some historians say that their descendants are the Zuni, Hopi and Tarahumara tribes. These tribes are located throughout the Southwest. The Zuni have a reservation in New Mexico, the Hopi’s land is in northern Arizona and the Tarahumara live in northern Mexico. One thing is certain; they never returned to their homes in central and eastern Arizona and southwest New Mexico.

Instructions for Layered Look book:

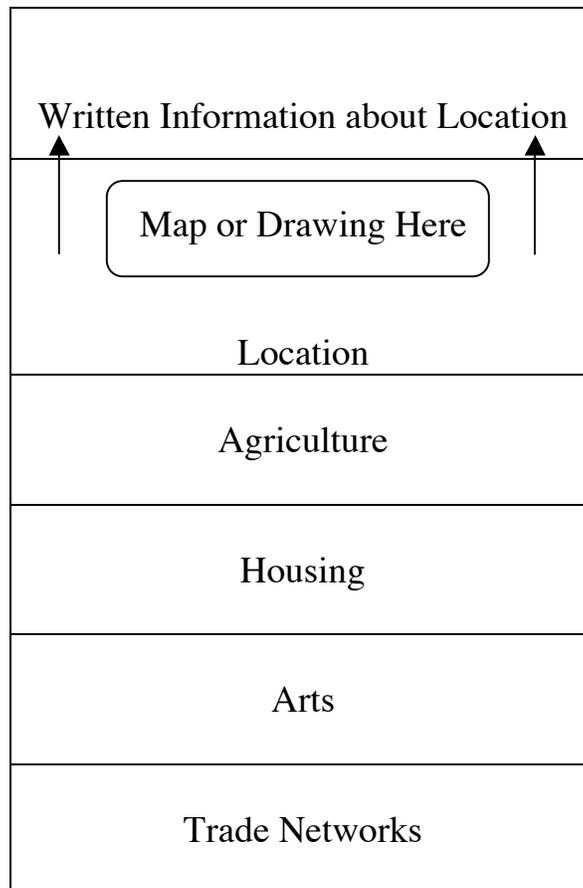
- Stack three sheets of paper together, placing each consecutive sheet about 3/4 inch higher than the sheet in front of it.
- Bring the bottom of both sheet upwards and align the edges so that all the layers or tabs are the same distance apart.
- When all of the tabs are equal distance apart, fold the papers and crease well.
- Open the papers and glue them together along the center fold or staple on the top fold.
- Label as showed in the diagram below.



Mogollon Culture
Location
Agriculture
Housing
Arts
Trade Networks

Layered Book Instructions continued:

- a. Location: Describe the land on which the Mogollon lived. Be sure to include vegetation and wildlife. Give 3 ways that this land helped the Mogollon survive. Draw a map showing where the Mogollon, Hohokam, Pueblo, and Anasazi lived using Prehistoric Cultures of the Southwest map as a resource.
- b. Agriculture: Identify 3 foods they grew and 3 foods they hunted or gathered. How did this supply of food change based on weather and other circumstances? Draw a picture of a food they ate.
- c. Housing: Describe either pit or pueblo construction. How did the environment influence how these homes were built? Draw a picture of one of their forms of housing.
- d. Arts: Describe how the pottery was made. What materials from the environment were used to create pottery and other arts and crafts? Draw a picture of an example of Mogollon pottery.
- e. Trade Networks: Explain with whom the Mogollon traded. What was traded? Which of these trade goods were natural resources from the area? Draw a picture of some of the goods they exchanged.



Scoring Guide for Layered Book

10 Points Location:

Describe the land on which the Mogollon lived. Be sure to include vegetation and wildlife. Give 3 ways that this land helped the Mogollon survive.

Draw a map showing where the Mogollon, Hohokam, Pueblo, and Anasazi lived using Prehistoric Cultures of the Southwest map as a resource.

10 Points Agriculture:

Identify 3 foods they grew and 3 foods they hunted or gathered.

How did this supply of food change based on weather and other circumstances?

Draw a food they ate.

10 Points Housing:

Describe either pit or pueblo construction.

How did the environment influence how these homes were built?

Draw a picture of one of their forms of housing.

10 Points Arts:

Describe how the pottery was made.

What materials from the environment were used to create pottery and other arts and crafts?

Draw a picture of an example of Mogollon pottery.

10 Points Trade Networks:

Explain with whom the Mogollon traded.

What was traded?

Which of these trade goods were natural resources from the area?

Draw a picture of some of the goods they exchanged.

10 Points Good Sentences

All sentences are complete.

Spelling is correct.

Capitalization and punctuation are correct.

10 Points Effort

Neatly done.

Drawings are colorful.

Shows a considerable amount of effort.

Total 70 Points