

School-to-Home Newsletter

Scott Foresman History-Social Science for California

Unit 2: Early People in California

History-Social Science 4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

Here are the main ideas we are learning:

- Many American Indian groups are native to California. They had unique heritages and relied on the natural resources of their area to live.
- Early European explorers used land and sea routes to find more territory. Both the ocean and California's geography made travel difficult.
- Explorers such as Captain James Cook, Vitus Bering, and Juan Cabrillo explored California by sea. Russians also settled here.
- The Spanish built missions in California near available resources. Missionaries worked to spread Catholicism throughout New Spain and Latin America.
- Soldiers lived in presidios. Pueblos supplied food for presidios. Ranchos were settlements where animals were raised.
- Hunter-gatherers found food by hunting animals and gathering plants, nuts, and seeds. In an agricultural economy, large quantities of food are grown and sold.
- After Mexico won its independence from Spain, it set up a system of land grants in California. Missions lost their power, and a rancho economy emerged.

Family Activities

Talk Together

The Europeans' arrival changed life for the American Indians already living in California. Discuss how certain events brought about big changes for your family. For example, how did life change when you moved to a new home or your child began attending another school? Were the changes positive, negative, or both?

Learn Together

Help your child learn about the arrival and impact of European settlers in California.

- Search your community for ways the Spanish impacted California. You might want to focus on foods, religion, architecture, and art.
- Read about one California Indian group. Compare and contrast how this group lived before Europeans arrived with how they live today.
- Find out where some of the Spanish missions were founded in California. What natural resources do you think attracted missionaries to these areas?

Read Together

Mexican Independence Day and Cinco de Mayo, by Dianne M. MacMillan. (Enslow Publishers, ISBN 0-894-90816-2, 1997) Nonfiction

Back in the Beforetime, retold by Jane Louise Curry. (Turtleback Books, ISBN 0-689-84048-9, 2001) Folklore

Zia, by Scott O'Dell. (Dell Publishing, ISBN 0-440-41001-0, 1995) Fiction

Unit Reading Skill

Students are learning how to compare and contrast. To *compare* is to tell how two or more things are alike. To *contrast* is to tell how they are different. Sometimes clue words are used to signal when things are being compared or contrasted.

THANK YOU
for supporting
your child's
education!