

- Some scholars suggest that to make migration to the West easier, the U.S. government adopted a policy to eradicate the buffalo, the extermination of which would inevitably destroy Indian culture, since the bison was depended on for food, clothing and shelter. While Secretary of the Interior Delano testified before Congress in 1874 that, "The buffalo are disappearing rapidly, but not faster than I desire. I regard the destruction of such game as Indians subsist upon as facilitating the policy of the Government," members of the U.S. military protested the wanton destruction. Ask students to research the policies of the U.S. government towards the buffalo at this time and to draw their own conclusions regarding their intent. A wealth of background information on the subject may be found at this web site: [www.american.edu/projects/mandala/TED/ice/buffalo.htm](http://www.american.edu/projects/mandala/TED/ice/buffalo.htm)
- The first generations of Anasazi were often described as "basketmakers" because of their artistic baskets, often woven so tightly that even water could be kept in them. From the basketwork, a form of ceramic art developed that is unique in the United States. Ask students to research examples of Anasazi art and to create presentations analyzing and interpreting them and explaining what they say about Anasazi culture. Students may view numerous examples and read more information on Anasazi baskets, jewelry and rock art at the following web sites: [sorrel.humboldt.edu/~rwj1/ana.html](http://sorrel.humboldt.edu/~rwj1/ana.html) [www.co.blm.gov/a/c/artifact.htm](http://www.co.blm.gov/a/c/artifact.htm)
- There is no written record of the social, political or religious life of the Anasazi. All that we know of the inhabitants of the pueblos comes from excavation work. Why the Anasazi culture disappeared is still puzzling to many archaeologists. Ask students to research theories surrounding the collapse of the Anasazi culture at Mesa Verde and to write position papers presenting their own conclusions. Students may read more about the Anasazi collapse and find an extensive bibliography on the subject at the following web site: [www.cpluhna.nau.edu/People/anasaki\\_collapse.htm](http://www.cpluhna.nau.edu/People/anasaki_collapse.htm)
- Soon after Lewis and Clark documented the vast territory America had acquired from the French, the United States government fought Native Americans who aggressively defended their lands, and eventually developed the devastating policy of forced removal in 1830. Ask groups of students to research and develop detailed time lines of tragedies such as the Trail of Tears and the Long Walk to Basque Redondo.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.cliffdwellingsmuseum.com/anasazi.htm](http://www.cliffdwellingsmuseum.com/anasazi.htm)  
The Anasazi Preserve Museum offers an extensive history of this prehistoric North American culture.
- [www.head-smashed-in.com/](http://www.head-smashed-in.com/)  
This link gives students and teachers access to the official site of the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump Interpretive Center in southern Alberta.
- [memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/codhtml/hawpSubjects166.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award97/codhtml/hawpSubjects166.html)  
The Library of Congress provides an excellent digital collection of late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photographs of the people of Taos Pueblo.
- [www.ncptt.nps.gov/](http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/)  
The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training advances the use of science and technology in preserving America's history.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Bial, Raymond. *The Blackfeet*. Benchmark Books, New York, NY; 2003.
- Harrod, Howard L.L. *Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ; 2000.
- Stuart, David E. *Anasazi America*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM; 2000.

### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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# Wonders of the ANCIENT WORLD™

## ANASAZI, TAOS & BLACKFEET

### Grades 7 & up

**W**onders of the Ancient World transports viewers to ancient civilizations of the Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe and provides a firsthand look at the magnificent achievements and contributions of a wide range of cultures. Through the study of ancient peoples, students will understand the diversity of the human experience—the contrasts between settled and nomadic lifestyles, the characteristics of different religions and belief systems and the development of large cities and powerful empires—which provides a solid basis for the understanding of civilization today.



## Program Overview

The Anasazi, Taos and Black feet represent different eras in North American history, but are all unique and incomparable cultures that symbolize life before the European conquest of the continent. The prehistoric Anasazi are known as the “venerable ancestors” and developed thriving settlements on the high plateau of Mesa Verde. Among their cultural descendants were the founders of Taos Pueblo, a sacred place in northern New Mexico where current inhabitants still strive to protect their multi-storied adobe homes and traditional Native American lifestyle. Another group attempting to preserve their cultural roots is the Black feet, an indigenous people whose hunting grounds at Head-Smashed-In in western Canada serve as a reminder of the times when Native Americans shared the land with millions of bison.

## Episode 1: Anasazi

According to some archaeologists, the Anasazi developed as a distinct culture in the North American Southwest around 1500 BCE. Originally nomadic, the Anasazi became efficient farmers and began building circular storage bins and permanent communities featuring large cliff dwellings as high as five stories around 1050 CE. These door-less, window-less dwellings provided defense against invading Navajo and Apache tribes. Experts believe that a combination of severe drought and internal strife caused the Anasazi to abandon the cliff dwellings at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but despite the decline of the Anasazi civilization, many aspects of its culture survive today.

### Vocabulary

**Anasazi** — A Navajo term meaning “ancient enemies” that refers to the ancestral Pueblo people of southwestern North America. Hopi descendants refer to the Anasazi as *Hisatsinom*.

**Mesa Verde** — The site of the ancient cliff dwellings of the Anasazi, or ancestral Pueblo, people located in southwestern Colorado.

**kiva** — A large assembly area of a Pueblo village, usually used for religious ceremonies.

**pueblo** — Traditional homes of southwestern Native Americans made of adobe (a clay mixture), featuring flat tops and many rooms.

## Episode 2: Taos

The Taos Indian in eastern New Mexico is one of the many Native American cultures who are the historic descendants of the Anasazi. Taos Pueblo is an adobe settlement that developed around the beginning of the tenth century and is considered to be one of the oldest continually-inhabited villages in the United States. Despite being mostly insular, peaceful people, the Taos and other Pueblo Indians played a large role in resisting Spanish colonialism.

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Life in the pueblo was centered on the kivas, underground ceremonial chambers, which also served as social meeting places for male tribe members. While much has changed in Taos Pueblo over its 1,000-year existence, the village still has permanent residents who have retained their unique way of life.

### Vocabulary

**rio** — A Spanish word meaning “river.”

**Blue Lake** — Blue Lake was both a place of renewal and a final resting place for the people of the Taos Pueblo. The trees surrounding the lake were revered as spiritual beings. Blue Lake was and continues to be the source of water for the pueblo.

**Franciscan** — A member of a religious order founded by St. Francis of Assisi in the twelfth century, which forcibly converted many Native Americans to Christianity.

**Pueblo Revolt** — An uprising of Pueblo Indians against the Spanish in New Mexico that took place from 1680-1692. It is known as the most successful Indian revolt in the history of North America.

**shaman** — A person who acts as a medium between the visible world and the spirit world in certain tribal societies and is thought to have magical healing and prophetic powers.

## Episode 3: Blackfeet

The Blackfeet, sometimes called the Blackfoot, was one of the largest and strongest Algonquin tribes in the Northwest Plains region. It was among the first Native American cultures to move from the timberlands to the Plains, where its people’s lives revolved around the hunting of bison. Before archers on horseback and firearms were used on the hunt, the Blackfeet drove herds of buffalo over cliffs to their deaths. While Head-Smashed-In in western Canada is a noted ancient hunting ground, throughout North America, there are several hundred cliffs over which bison were driven. When the buffalo were almost exterminated in the early 1880s by American hunters, many Blackfeet died of starvation. After being resettled on reservations in 1877, the Blackfeet became farmers and cattlemen, but thanks to a bison breeding program, some have returned to their cultural roots and now live off bison once more.

### Vocabulary

**Head Smashed-In** — A precipice in southern Alberta where herds of buffalo were driven to their deaths by Native Americans.

**Plains** — Known as the Great Plains, a huge expanse of grassland in North America that extends from Texas in the South through Canada in the North.

## Follow-up Discussion Questions

- How did the Ute Indians refer to Mesa Verde? Speculate about the cultural importance of this site to surrounding tribes.
- What was the Sun Temple? Analyze the evolution of Anasazi architecture from the time the Sun Temple was constructed until after the building of the first pueblos.
- Mesa Verde is described as the “Roof of the World” in the western United States. Offer evidence to support this observation and provide your own moniker for this naturally beautiful area.
- Describe the involvement of Spain in the history of the Pueblo people. What was the outcome and significance of the Pueblo Revolt?
- When did the American government begin to resettle Native Americans on reservations? Evaluate this policy and explain why the people of Taos Pueblo were allowed to stay in their village.
- Analyze the positive and negative influences Europeans have exerted on the Pueblo people. Discuss the importance of preserving the values and culture of the people of Taos.
- How important was the buffalo to Blackfeet culture? Brainstorm a list of practical ways bison were used.
- Why did Americans kill millions of buffalo in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century? Speculate about the effect this extermination had on the Indians of the Great Plains.

## Follow-up Activities

- The creation of the Carson National Forest in 1906 took thousands of acres of land from Taos Pueblo, including Blue Lake, a sacred Pueblo religious site. In a long struggle, the Indians of Taos Pueblo won far-reaching autonomy over their land; in 1970, the U.S. government returned Blue Lake and the adjacent mountain areas to the inhabitants of Taos. Ask groups of students to research the legal proceedings that led to this historic event and to conduct investigations into other initiatives to advance Indian rights, such as the seizure of Alcatraz Island in 1969 and the standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973. How did these situations develop and how were they resolved? Did this civil disobedience result in any government initiatives to meet Native American concerns? As a follow-up, students may create a profile that describes the history, goals and concerns of the American Indian Movement, or AIM. More information about AIM may be found at this web site: [www.aimovement.org/](http://www.aimovement.org/)

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