

# Explain it!

## How did the Sioux survive on the Plains?

**This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.**

The column on the left describes the kinds of things you would expect to see in a drawing of a Sioux encampment. Working with a friend, match the behaviours to the explanations – either by drawing connecting lines, or by cutting out and connecting the cards.

<b>A warrior with horses he has stolen from his enemies:</b>	<i>... since life on the Plains was so dangerous, and so many men died, polygamy was a way for the warriors to support the women and children.</i>
<b>A man buying another wife with a dowry of horses:</b>	<i>... life on the Plains was so difficult that the band could not support people who could not make a contribution. Also, the Sioux thought of themselves as part of nature.</i>
<b>An old person preparing to stay behind and die when the band moved:</b>	<i>... men did the hunting and when this was finished they rested unless they were needed for warfare which involved stealing horses.</i>
<b>Buffalo meat hanging to dry:</b>	<i>... the Sioux believed that spirits would help them when they were hunting and so they drew pictures of their visions on their tipis to get closer to the spirits.</i>
<b>Children on horses and holding wooden spears:</b>	<i>... the Sioux used the buffalo for everything so they did not need to farm the land for crops.</i>
<b>Men sitting and talking:</b>	<i>... the status of a warrior was measured in horses. Also, warfare was more about humiliating an enemy than killing him.</i>
<b>No farming at all:</b>	<i>... the Sioux had no written language so did not need to learn to read or write. Children learned from their parents how to hunt or prepare buffalo.</i>
<b>Some warriors refusing to take part in a war which the tribal council has agreed:</b>	<i>... life was so difficult that the men were needed for the buffalo hunt; they could not afford to throw away their lives needlessly.</i>
<b>Smoke coming out of the top of the tipi:</b>	<i>... the Sioux bands were held together by custom and 'influence'; tribal decisions were not binding.</i>
<b>Tipis decorated with pictures of hunting and warfare:</b>	<i>... the Sioux lived all together in a tipi; they were warmed in winter by a fire which was also needed for cooking.</i>
<b>Warriors returning from a battle they have fled from, because they were losing:</b>	<i>... the meat needed to be dried so that the Sioux could carry it when they needed to move on, and live off it during the winter. They had no electricity.</i>
<b>Women preparing the buffalo skins (hides) stretching them out:</b>	<i>... women prepared the buffalo that the men hunted – the Sioux relied on the buffalo for everything.</i>

**This happened because ...**