

The American West c. 1835-1895



Starter:

What do you already know about the American West? Create a mind map in your book with the following heading:

‘What do I know about the American West’.

If you don't know anything yet see what you can infer from the sources opposite.



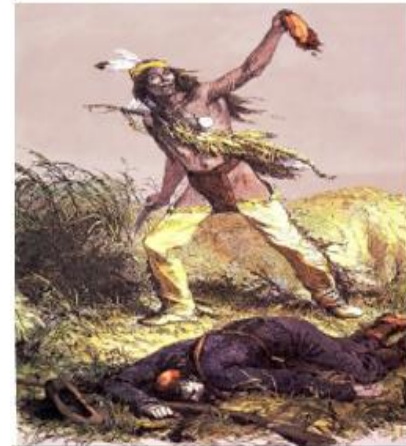
Source 1: A Kiowa Indian Village, Painted by Baldwin Mollhausen



Source 2: A Dash for the Timber, A Painting by Frederic Remington



Source 3: An image of the First Transcontinental Railroad



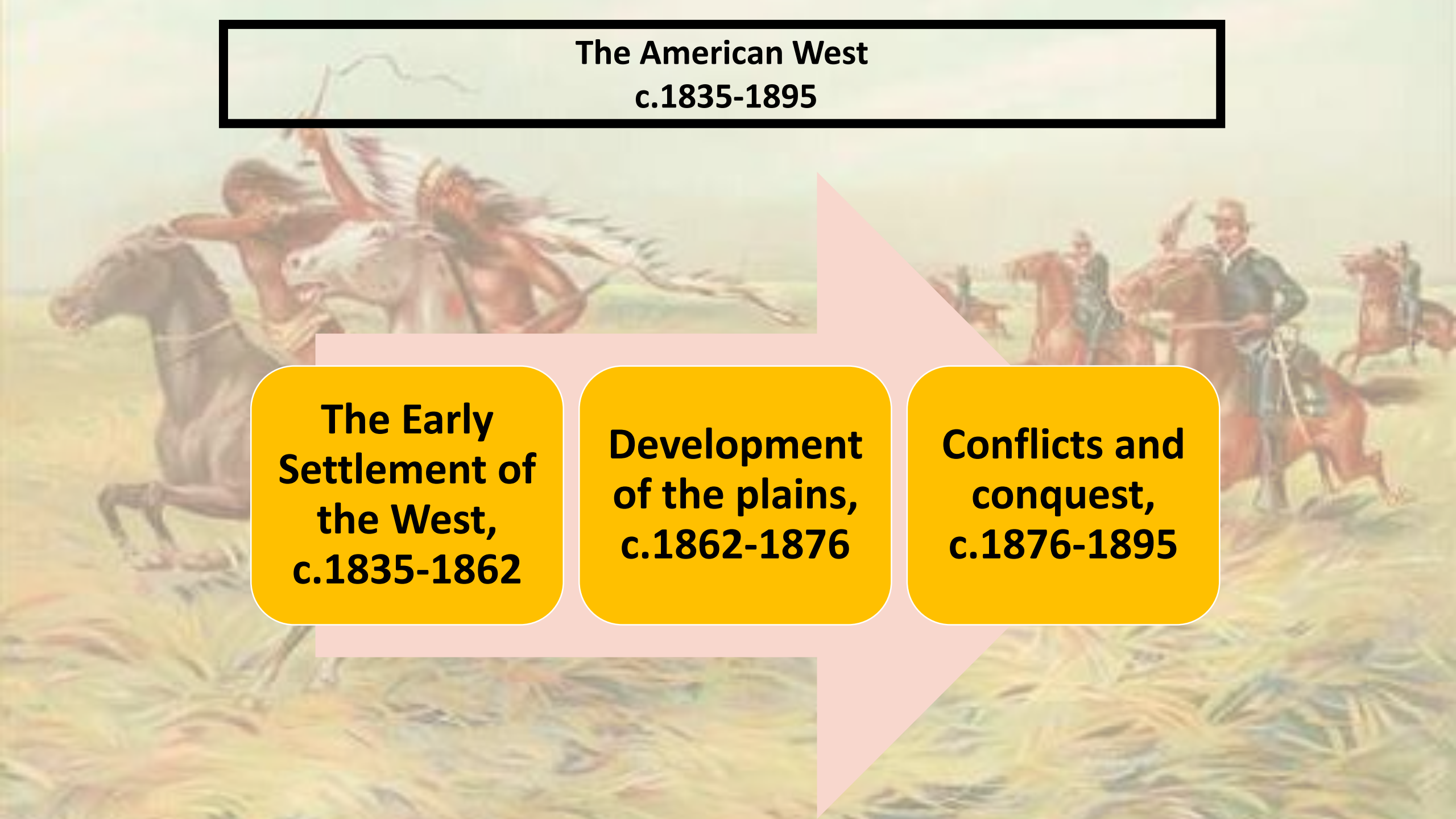
Source 4: An Indian scalping a dead cavalryman, an engraving from 1892



Source 5: A Painting of General Custer in a battle against the American Indians



Source 6: A picture of Helena, Montana (A mining town).

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned illustration. On the left, a Native American man is depicted on a dark horse, wearing a large feathered headdress and holding a bow. On the right, a group of men in 19th-century attire are shown on horseback, appearing to be in a pursuit or conflict. The entire scene is set against a light, hazy background.

The American West c.1835-1895

**The Early
Settlement of
the West,
c.1835-1862**

**Development
of the plains,
c.1862-1876**

**Conflicts and
conquest,
c.1876-1895**

The Three Topics?

1. Early Settlement of the West

- a) The Plains Indians: their beliefs and way of life
- b) Migration and early settlement
- c) Conflict and tension

2. Development of the Plains

- a) The development of settlement in the West
- b) Ranching and the Cattle Industry
- c) Changes in Plains Indians' way of life

3. Conflicts and Conquest

- a) Changes in farming, cattle industry and settlement
- b) Conflict and tension
- c) Destruction of Plains Indians' way of life



To Familiarise yourself with the requirements of the course.

The Assessments?

You have to answer the following types of questions:

1. **Consequences** – Explain two consequences of a given development or event (e.g. The Wounded Knee Massacre)
2. **Write a narrative account** – Explain key developments in a period, linking them towards an outcome
3. **Importance** – Explain the importance of an event/development



To Familiarise yourself with the requirements of the course.

The American West 1835 – 1862 (Unit 1) Lesson 1

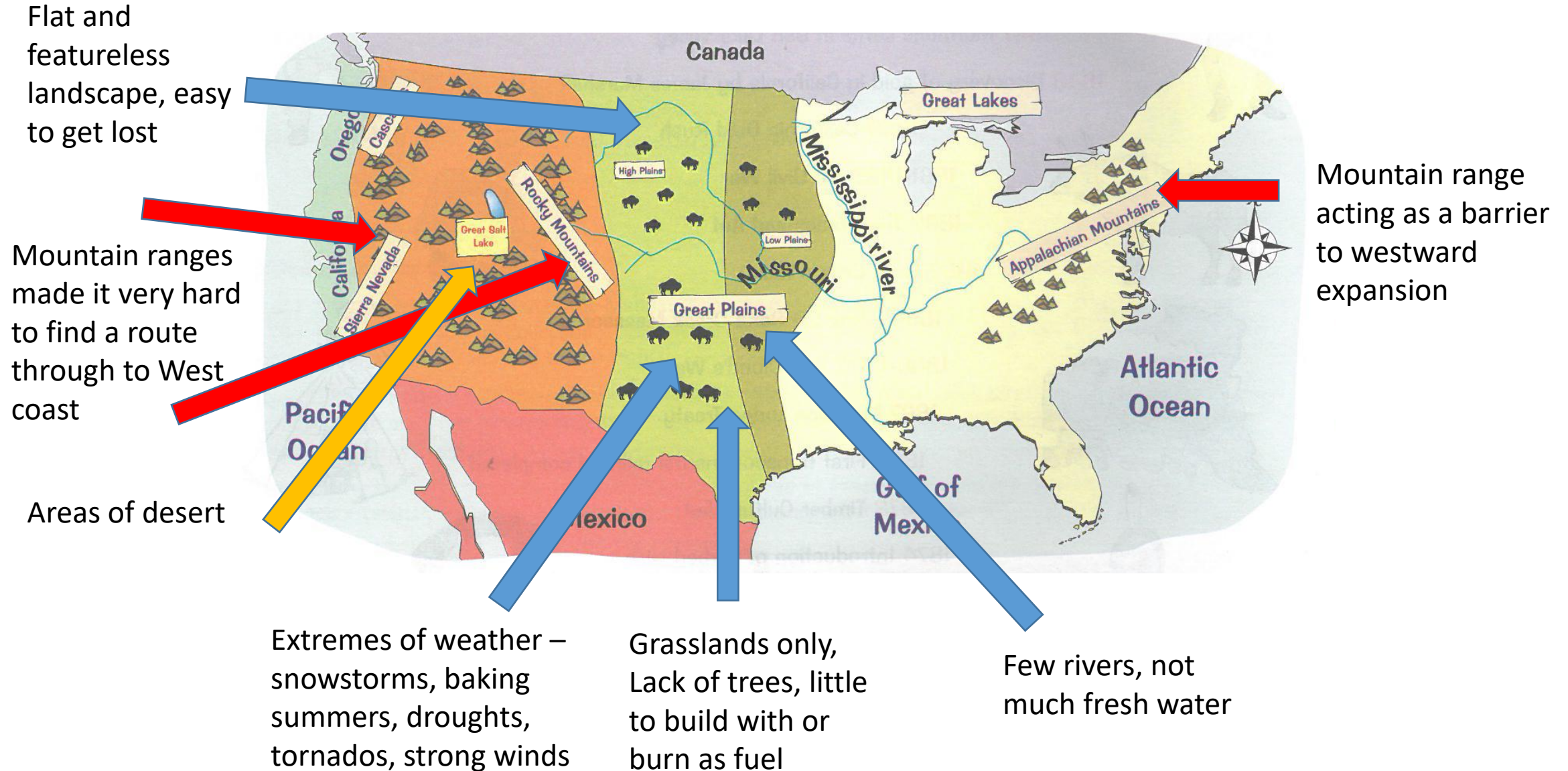
Geographical Regions and their Significance in the History of the American West



Task: Using your copy of the map and the accompanying worksheet, annotate with the key information about the different geographical regions of America

The American West 1835 – 1862 (Unit 1) Lesson 1

Geographical Regions and their Significance in the History of the American West



Geographical Regions

Right, the history of the **American West**. I suppose a pretty map would be a good place to start.

America has very different **Geographical regions**

When we speak of the American West, what we really mean is the area of North America west of the **Mississippi River**. This river runs from the northernmost region of present-day USA, right down to the **Gulf of Mexico**. In order to understand the events covered here, you need to examine how the **environment** has influenced the American people — so we'd better start with a look at the **geography** of North America. North America can be divided into several geographical **regions**, all of which are quite **different** from each other:



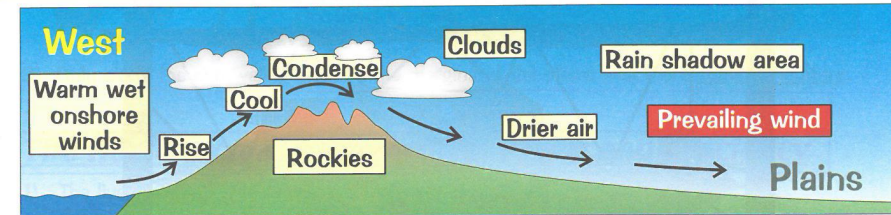
The West and its Climate

Enough of the maps. Let's talk about the weather.

The **Great Plains** lie in the **Centre** of North America

- 1) Central North America is dominated by the **Great Plains**.
- 2) The Plains are mostly a huge, flat, expanse of **grassland**. There are two bits:
 - the "**Low Plains**" to the east, with long grass (remember **L** for **Low** and **L**ong).
 - the "**High Plains**" to the west, with short grass.
- 3) The Great Plains become **drier** and more desert-like the further **south** you go.

The **Weather** on the Plains is **Extreme** and **scary**



- 1) The **weather** across the Great Plains varies severely — it can make farming difficult even today.
- 2) The **mountains** on either side of the Plains produce **rain shadows** (regions with little rain). You often get **droughts** in the summer and **severe snow** in the winter.
- 3) Being so far from the sea means there's a huge **difference in temperature** between summer and winter.
- 4) **Tornadoes** are quite common — like the one that damaged Oklahoma City in 1999.
- 5) These extremes are described as a **continental climate**. By comparison Britain is never very far from the sea and has fairly even temperatures and mild weather — an example of a **temperate climate**.

The **Rocky Mountains** form a **Barrier** across America

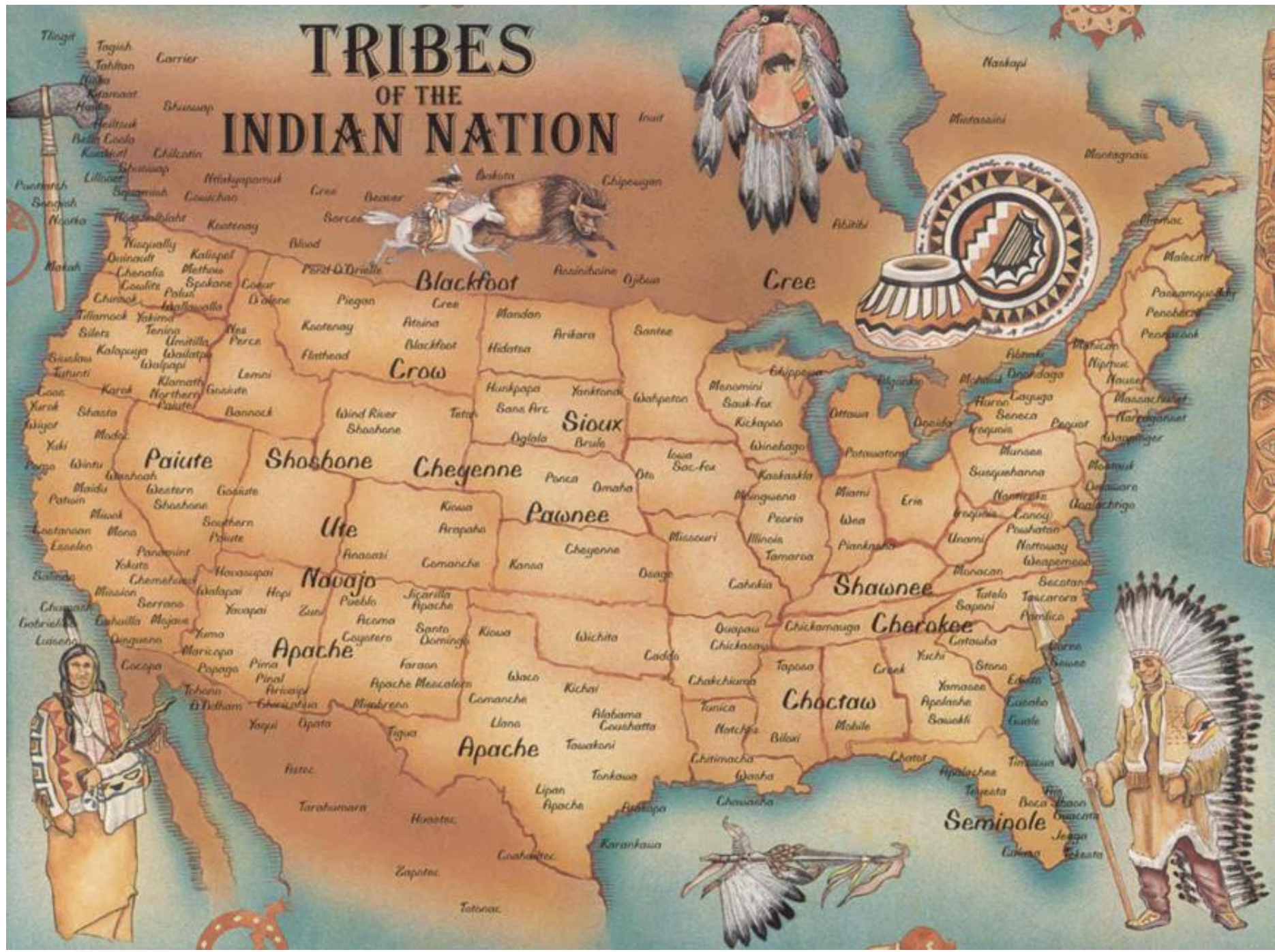
- 1) The **slopes** on either side of the Rockies are **heavily wooded** — especially in the South.
- 2) Towards the centre of the Rockies is the **Plateaux region**. This is relatively flat and contains areas of **desert**. Water can run onto the Plateaux region and get trapped, only escaping by **evaporation**. This has led to the **Great Salt Lake** — important later on.

The **Pacific Coastlands** are **milder** and **fertile**

- 1) West beyond the Sierra Nevada mountains lie the **Pacific coastlands**.
- 2) This land is mainly **fertile**. It has a temperate climate because it is close to the sea.
- 3) This region was a much sought-after place to live. It still is, despite the **earthquake risk**.

You'd better learn the geography — or you're history...

OK, so you thought you were studying **history**. The thing is though, so much of what happened in the West was related to the **geography**. That means things'll make much more **sense** and be easier to remember if you get a sense of the geography first.

[illegible]

**The American West
1835 – 1862
The Plains Indians.**



By the 1830s and 1840s many of the Native American tribes lived on the Great Plains and were known as Plains Indians. Many different tribes lived on the Great Plains such as the Sioux and the Pawnees.

Target 3-4

Describe some of the challenges of living on the Great Plains

Target 5-6

Explain why the Great Plains could be a harsh environment in which to live.

Target 7+

Assess ways in which the lifestyles of the Plains Indians may have adapted to cope with their environment.

Adapting to a Harsh Environment – surviving on the Plains

The Horse



The Buffalo



The Tipi



Using the resources appropriate to your target level, make 3 detailed mind maps, fact files or similar on the three vital aspects of survival on the Great Plains. Please be aware of the exam question you will be answering shortly (see next slide).

We have a proverb: *'A beautiful tipi is like a good mother. She hugs her children to her and protects them from heat and cold, snow and rain.'*
A proverb of the Sioux tribe

[Footage of Tipis](#)



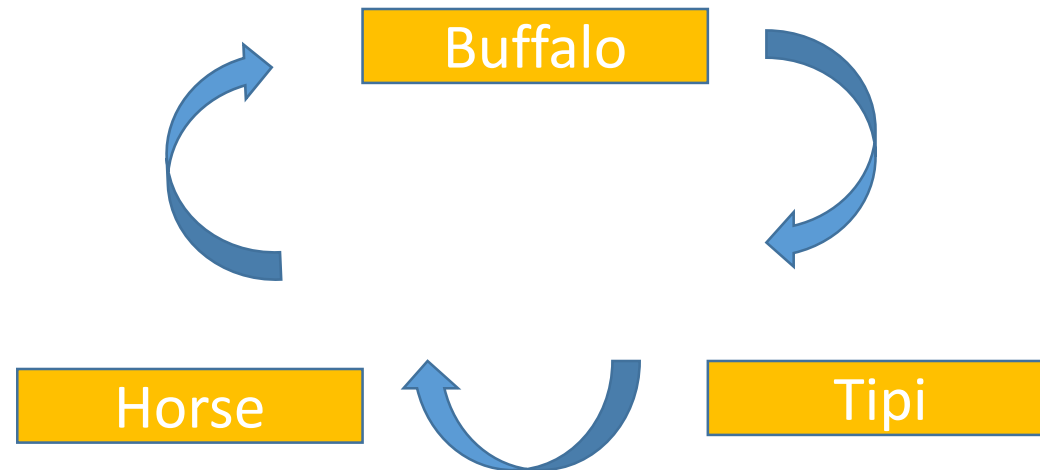
Exam Question: (16 marks)

Explain **two** of the following:

- The **importance** of **horses** to the way of life and survival of the Plains Indians.
- The **importance** of the **buffalo** to the way of life and survival of the Plains Indians.
- The **importance** of the **Tipi** as a means of living and surviving on the Plains.

Extension Question:

- Which was the most essential to the American Indian way of life?
- Explain how you decided.



Explain the importance of the horse to the Plains Indians' way of life

One way in which the horse was important was...

A second way in which the horse was important was...

Level	Mark	Descriptor
1	1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple generalised answer is given, showing limited development and organisation of material.• Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic is shown.
2	3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing an attempt to analyse importance. It shows some reasoning, but some passages may lack coherence and organisation.• Accurate and relevant information is added, showing some knowledge and understanding of the period.
3	6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing analysis of importance. It shows a line of reasoning that is coherent and logically structured.• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied.

Explain the importance of horses to the way of life and survival of the Plains Indians



WAGOLL

- Horses were first brought to South America by the Spanish in the 1600s. Horses were first used by the Pueblo Indians of Mexico who captured them from the Spanish and learned to breed and train them. As time went on, horses became very important to many Native American tribes, especially the Indians living on the Plains as they enabled them to live and survive in the tough environment of the Great Plains. Without horses these Plains Indians would find it difficult to survive through hunting, as farming was so difficult due to climate and extreme weather events such as tornados.
- Most significantly, the horses were so important because it enabled the Plains Indians to hunt buffalo. It took real skill to ride horses in a hunt and fire arrows at stampeding buffalo. Without the ability to train and breed horses and the skills to ride them, buffalo hunts would have been impossible and the buffalo was essential to the Plains Indians for food, clothing, shelter amongst many other things. Consequently their horses were indispensable, they could also use their horses to follow the buffalo herds across the Plains and maintain their nomadic lifestyle. They could pack up and transport their tipis on the travois (sledges) attached to their horses.
- Horses were also important because they gave the Plains Indians wealth and status. Individuals measured their wealth by the number of horses they owned. Horses were also important in warfare as warriors could raid over longer distances. An Indian's skill with a horse became an important measure of bravery.
- Horses were therefore very important to the way of life and survival of the Plains Indians, helping them hunt, fight and gain prestige, wealth and status.





