A Clash of Cultures

European colonists arrived in America full of dreams for their future. Some colonists wanted religious freedom. Others wanted to become rich by trading or working the land. But Native Americans already lived here. Colonists and Native Americans had different ideas about the land.

Think About Comparing and Contrasting

When you compare, you find out how two or more things are alike. When you contrast, you look to see how they are different. By comparing and contrasting, you better understand what you read. For example, if you compare a football and a baseball, you might say they are both used in sports. If you contrast them, you might say they are different sizes, made of different materials, and used in different sports. To compare and contrast, follow these steps:

- As you read, look for topics that have something in common.
- Ask yourself: How are they alike? How are they different?
- Make a Venn diagram, two circles that overlap, to help you compare and contrast ideas or things. One part of the diagram lists details that are the same. Another part of the diagram lists details that are different.

Think About the Topic

When you predict, you make a statement about what you believe will happen. Predictions are more than guesses; they are based on what you already know about a person or an event.

Reread the short introduction above for "A Clash of Cultures." Make a prediction based on comparing and contrasting the colonists' views about the land with the Native Americans' views.

Colonists' Views:


Native Americans' Views:


Prediction:


A Clash of Cultures

European Colonists Arrive in the New World

In 1620, an English ship called the Mayflower carrying 102 passengers landed in Plymouth harbor, which is located today in the state of Massachusetts. The passengers called themselves Pilgrims, and they had sailed from England in search of religious freedom.

The English colonists were not the first Europeans to arrive in North America. Since the late 1400s, the Spanish, Dutch, and French all came to the New World to explore and settle the land. They heard stories about a new land that was rich in animals and timber. European merchants found new opportunities for trade. Farmers found vast amounts of land for growing crops.

Colonists faced a problem when they arrived in America. By the time the colonists arrived, Native Americans had already lived on the land. Native Americans had been in the Americas for thousands of years before the first European explorers.

When Christopher Columbus landed in 1492, he called the inhabitants "Indians" because he believed that he had discovered the land of India. The early English colonists called them "savages," because Native Americans had a different culture, or lifestyle. They did not dress or look like Europeans or speak the same language.

Question
Nonfiction writers help you learn new information by making connections or comparing and contrasting ideas with things you already know.

Why did the colonists find the Native American culture so different from their own culture? When you compare and contrast ideas, look for answers in the paragraph and think about what you already know about the early colonists and Native Americans.
Ideas About the Land

Native Americans lived on the land and used its resources in many ways. Some Native Americans grew crops. Other tribes fished and collected shellfish for food. They hunted animals and gathered plants, seeds, and berries. Over thousands of years, Native Americans developed different traditions. Their customs, ideas, and beliefs are based on their use of the land.

Their ideas about the land and nature are closely related to their spiritual beliefs. They think of the land as a mother. The land provides people with life and food. Native Americans have a great respect for nature. Land, water, trees, and animals are for everyone to use. No one owns them. Native Americans believe they have a responsibility to protect the land.

To help understand these ideas about the land, think about the air. We cannot own or sell the air we breathe. Native American beliefs about the land are similar to these ideas about the air. Native Americans believed no one could own the land.

Europeans thought about land in a very different way from that of Native Americans. Europeans looked at land as something to be owned, tamed, and developed. They bought and sold land. Europeans judged others by how much land they owned. They dreamed of wealth by owning land and the resources on it.

Native American families enjoy the land surrounding their campsite along a river.

List 3 ways that Native Americans and colonists used the land in the same way.

1.  

2.  

3.  

List 3 ways that Native Americans and colonists thought about land differently.

1.  

2.  

3.  

Compare and Contrast

When you compare and contrast, you look at how things or ideas are alike and different.

Comparing and contrasting helps you understand information in the article. Read the four paragraphs under “Ideas About the Land,” and complete the lists below.
The First Hard Winter

The first winter of 1621 in Plymouth was very hard for the Pilgrims. They were afraid that the Native Americans would attack them. The weather was very cold. Their primitive houses did not protect them well. There was barely any food and not much fresh water. Many people became sick and almost half of the colony died.

Two Native Americans, Squanto (SHWAN-toh) and Samoset (sam-OH-set), rescued the starving colonists. Seven years before the Pilgrims landed, English fishermen had captured Squanto. The captain brought him to Europe and sold him as a slave. Later, Squanto gained his freedom. He sailed to Newfoundland, in Canada, on board an English ship. From there, he found his way home.

Samoset lived in what is now called Maine, the northernmost state in the Northeast. He learned a few English words from English fishermen in Maine. Samoset was on a hunting trip when he discovered the Pilgrims in Plymouth (Massachusetts).

How might the Pilgrims have felt as they compared their old lives to their new lives in America? Why?
Squanto and Samoset spoke English. With their help, the Pilgrims could speak with other natives. The natives and colonists became friends. In 1621, the Pilgrims signed a peace treaty with Massasoit (mass-uh-SOY-et), chief of the Wampanoag (wam-PAH-oh-agh). Massasoit gave the Pilgrims permission to live on the 12,000 acres of land that became the Plymouth Plantation. But he did not understand the European idea of owning land. He believed in the native idea of sharing.

Squanto stayed with the Pilgrims for a year. He and other natives taught the colonists how to fish, raise corn, beans and other crops, and trap wild game. The Pilgrims were grateful for their help. In the fall, the colonists invited the natives to share in their first harvest. Massasoit and ninety of his men brought five deer. They celebrated their friendship with a three-day festival to show thankfulness for their survival.

Native Americans and colonists celebrate a thanksgiving feast together. This is how the artist imagined the event.

List two details that support your inference.

1. 

2. 

5th grade
Contrast Primary Sources

A primary source is a record made by people who lived during an event. Old photographs, diaries and journals written at the time, and artwork are examples of primary sources. The selection below is from a primary source. It is part of a journal called “Mourt’s Relation.” It was written by people who arrived on the Mayflower. While exploring the area, these colonists found a Native American dwelling. Here is their description:

November 1620. The houses were made with long yeling saplings treed bended, burnt and both ends stuck into the ground. They were made round like an arbor [arch] and covered down to the ground with thick mats made of straw and reeds. The door was not over a yard high. The chimney was a wide-open hole in the top, which they had a mat to cover when they pleased. One might stand and go upright in them. In the midst of them were four little stakes knocked into the ground and small sticks laid over, on which they hung their pots and what they had to see [cook]. Round about the fire they lay on mats, which are their beds. The houses were double-matted, for as they were matted without (these straw and reed mats covered the inside and outside walls). In the houses we found wooden bowls, trays and dishes, canthen pots, hand baskets of crab shells wrought (joined) together.

Using the pictures and the journal entry, contrast the Native American houses with colonial houses. How are they different?

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Comparing and Contrasting