Name: _____ Date: _____

A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Circle group

Some families moved to the flat prairie long ago. The prairie had tall grass. It had very few trees. There was no wood for a house.

The families found a new way. Grass has thick roots. The roots hold the dirt together. A farmer cut the ground into big blocks. The blocks were called sod.

The family stacked the sod like bricks. That made the walls. The roof was made of poles, grass, and sod.

A sod house was cool in summer. It was warm in winter. But dirt fell from the roof sometimes.

Questions

1. What did the prairie have very few of?

_____

_____

2. What held the dirt together?

_____

_____

3. What were the big blocks called?

_____

_____

4. What was a sod house like in winter?

_____

_____

5. Why did families build with sod and not wood?

_____

_____

Words to know

prairie: a wide, flat land covered with grass
roots: the parts of a plant that grow under the ground
sod: a block of dirt held together by grass roots

stacked: put one on top of another in a pile

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Triangle group

Some families moved to the wide, flat prairie long ago. The prairie had tall grass, but it had very few trees. There was no wood to build a house.

The families found a new way. The grass had thick roots that held the dirt together. A farmer cut the ground into big blocks. These blocks were called sod.

The family stacked the sod blocks like bricks to make walls. They put a roof of poles, grass, and more sod on top. The house was a sod house.

A sod house stayed cool in summer and warm in winter. But it was not perfect. Bits of dirt sometimes fell from the roof, and bugs sometimes got in.

Questions

1. What did the prairie have very few of?

_____

_____

2. What held the dirt together?

_____

_____

3. What were the big blocks of ground called?

_____

_____

4. What was a sod house like in winter?

_____

_____

5. Why did the families build with sod instead of wood?

_____

_____

Words to know

prairie: a wide, flat land covered with grass
roots: the parts of a plant that grow under the ground
sod: a block of dirt held together by grass roots
stacked: put one on top of another in a pile

Talk together (every group has these)

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Name: _____ Date: _____

A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Square group

Long ago, some families moved to the wide, flat prairie, where tall grass stretched in every direction but hardly any trees grew. Without wood, there was nothing to build a house with.

The families discovered a clever solution. Prairie grass has thick roots that hold the soil together very tightly, so a farmer could cut the ground into large, heavy blocks. These blocks were called sod.

The family stacked the sod blocks like bricks to build the walls, and they covered the top with a roof of poles, grass, and more sod. The finished home was known as a sod house.

A sod house stayed cool in the summer and warm in the winter. However, it was not perfect, because bits of dirt sometimes fell from the roof and bugs occasionally crawled inside.

Questions

1. What did the prairie have very few of?

_____

_____

2. What held the soil together so it could be cut into blocks?

_____

_____

3. What were the large blocks of ground called?

_____

_____

4. What was a sod house like in the winter?

_____

_____

5. Why did the families build with sod instead of wood?

_____

_____

Words to know

prairie: a wide, flat land covered with grass
roots: the parts of a plant that grow under the ground
sod: a block of dirt held together by grass roots
stacked: put one on top of another in a pile

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Easier · 94 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.9

1. Trees.
2. The thick roots of the grass.
3. Sod.
4. It was warm.
5. There were no trees, so there was no wood.

Triangle: A House Made of Grass and Dirt

This passage · 116 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.8

1. Trees.
2. The thick roots of the grass.
3. Sod.
4. It stayed warm.
5. There were no trees, so there was no wood.

Square: A House Made of Grass and Dirt

Harder · 133 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.8

1. Trees.
2. The thick roots of the prairie grass.
3. Sod.
4. It stayed warm.
5. Hardly any trees grew, so there was no wood.