

CHEROKEE Reading Comprehension

The Cherokee were a dominant tribe that lived in parts of modern-day Tennessee, Georgia, the Carolinas, Alabama, and Kentucky. Men and women had specific gender roles: Men were in charge of war, hunting, and diplomatic relations, while females were in charge of the home, property, and family. Sometimes, Cherokee women participated in war too. The Cherokee were divided into seven large clans: Long Hair, Paint, Bird, Wolf, Wild Potato, Deer, and Blue. Babies would be born into their mother's clan. Villages comprised individuals from different clans. A man and a woman from the same clan could not marry.

The Cherokee had many sacred ceremonies including those for their crops, births, deaths, war, moon phases, and other events. The most important Cherokee ceremony was the Green Corn Ceremony, which took place when the last corn crop ripened. The ceremony usually lasted four days and honored Selu, the Cherokee Corn Mother. At the beginning of the ceremony, all of the members of a village would wash themselves in a source of moving water. Then, sacred dances representing the harvest would be performed for several hours within the sacred circle, a large pit that also included a fire lit with a sacred branch that was struck by lightning. The ceremony would end with various other dances and rituals, including one in which the entire village danced around the sacred fire.

The Cherokee practiced a variety of crafts including basketwork, pottery, carved pipe making, and rattle making. Rattles were made out of turtle shells and were used to ward off evil spirits. The Cherokee, however, are perhaps most renowned for their booger masks—colorful masks that represented evil spirits and their enemies. Eventually, these masks came to resemble the faces of the White trespassers. Booger masks were made from wood or hornets nests and were originally made as part of the Booger Dance, a winter celebration that ensured evil spirits could not disrupt the coming growing season. One of the most evil spirits in Cherokee lore was the Raven Mocker, an old, withered-looking witch-like character who robbed the living of their lives by eating their hearts. The Cherokees believed in good spirits as well such as the Little People, a small race of spirits that lived in nearby caves. The Cherokee considered these tiny spirits kind, hardworking, and helpful. The Little People came in all colors and shades and had the power to cast spells. They were given a great deal of respect among the Cherokee and were thought to teach about living in harmony with nature. There were three types of Little People: the Rock People, Dogwood People, and Laurel People.

The Cherokee also practiced the sport that evolved into modern-day lacrosse. It was played between members of the same clan, or between rival villages.

1.) **Select all of the states in which the Cherokee lived.**

- a.) Georgia
- b.) Mississippi
- c.) Tennessee
- d.) Alabama

2.) **Which of the following was not a Cherokee family clan?**

- a.) Paint
- b.) Coyote
- c.) Wolf
- d.) Wild Potato

3.) **Babies were born into their _____ clan.**

- a.) brother's
- b.) mother's
- c.) father's
- d.) their own

4.) **Which of the following is NOT true?**

- a.) Women were in charge of property.
- b.) Men were in charge of diplomatic relations.
- c.) Women never participated in war.
- d.) Men were in charge of hunting.

5.) **Which of the following Cherokee crafts actually represented evil spirits?**

- a.) rattles
- b.) booger masks
- c.) carved pipes
- d.) Little People

6.) **The _____ was a witch-like character that robbed the living of their lives by eating their hearts.**

- a.) White Settler
- b.) Little People
- c.) Cherokee Corn Mother
- d.) Raven Mocker

7.) **Select all of the following that were actual types of Little People.**

- a.) Dogwood People
- b.) Mountain People
- c.) Rock People
- d.) Elm People

8.) **Which of the following is NOT true?**

- a.) The Little People were thought to teach about living in harmony with nature.
- b.) The Booger Dance took place in the spring.
- c.) Booger masks were made of hornets nests or wood.
- d.) The Cherokee practiced a type of sport that evolved into modern-day lacrosse.

9.) **Which of the following is true?**

- a.) A man and woman from different clans could not marry.
- b.) A Cherokee man could marry any Cherokee women from any clan.
- c.) A man and woman from the same clan could not marry.
- d.) A man and woman from the same clan were expected to marry.

10.) **Which of the following words best describes the Cherokee?**

- a.) elusive
- b.) mysterious
- c.) evil
- d.) spiritual