



Reading #3 Impact of the Horse

Unit 1 Lesson 3

Mounted Group of Utes, 1894



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The Ute People began to get horses from Spaniards who settled south of Ute lands. Many records tell about the changes that the horse made in Ute life. The Ute People could travel further on horseback, so they saw each other more often. They also met their eastern neighbors, the Plains peoples, and learned many of their ways. Since they had more contact with their enemies, they fought more often. They could meet in larger groups because they could carry enough food on the horses to stay together for long periods of time. On the plains, they could load the horses with buffalo meat and hides. With the hides, they made clothing, containers, and tipis.





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Already skilled hunters, the Ute used the horse to become expert big game hunters. They began to roam further away from their home camps to hunt buffalo that moved over the vast prairies east of their mountain homes, and explore the distant lands.

The Ute began to depend upon the buffalo as a source for much of their items. It took only one buffalo to feed several families, and fewer hides were required to make homes and clothing.

The Ute who already had a reputation as defenders of their territories, now became even fiercer warriors. Women and children were also fierce and were known to defend their camps from attacking enemies. Ute men were able to endure* the harsh climate, and live off the land compared to the Europeans who often had to depend upon Native Americans and their knowledge about plants, animals and the environment. They became skilled raiders* preying upon neighboring tribes such as the Apache, Pueblos and Navajo. Items obtained from their raids were used to trade for household items, weapons, and horses. Owning horses increased one's status* in the tribe.

Encounters with the Spanish began to occur more frequently, and trade increased to include Spanish items such as metal tools and weapons, cloth, beads and even guns.

*endure: to live through

*raiders: a person who attacks an enemy in the enemy's territory

*status: the social standing of someone

Source: This excerpt was adapted from the Southern Ute website <https://www.southernute-nsn.gov/history/>.

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