

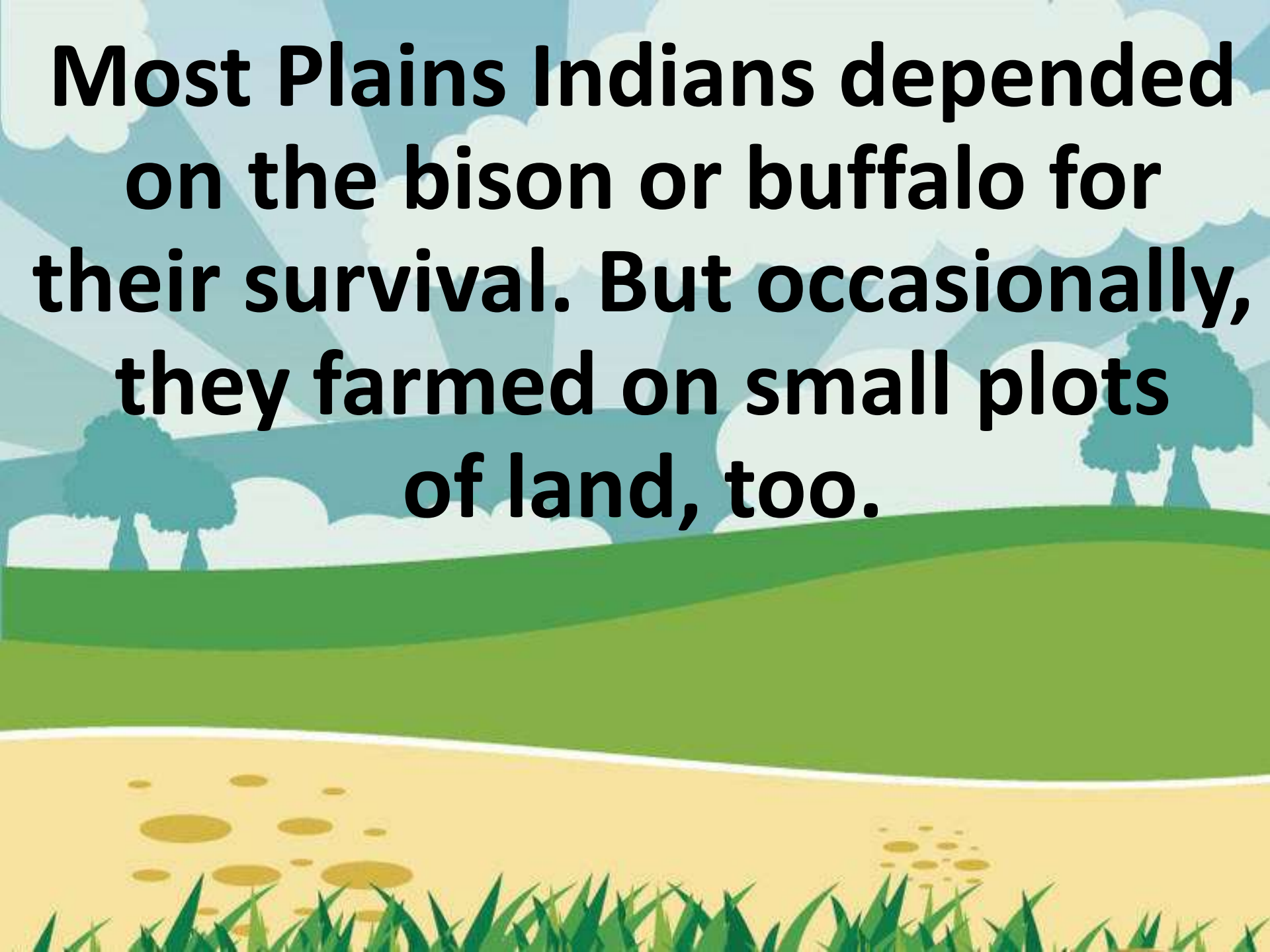
People of the PLAINS

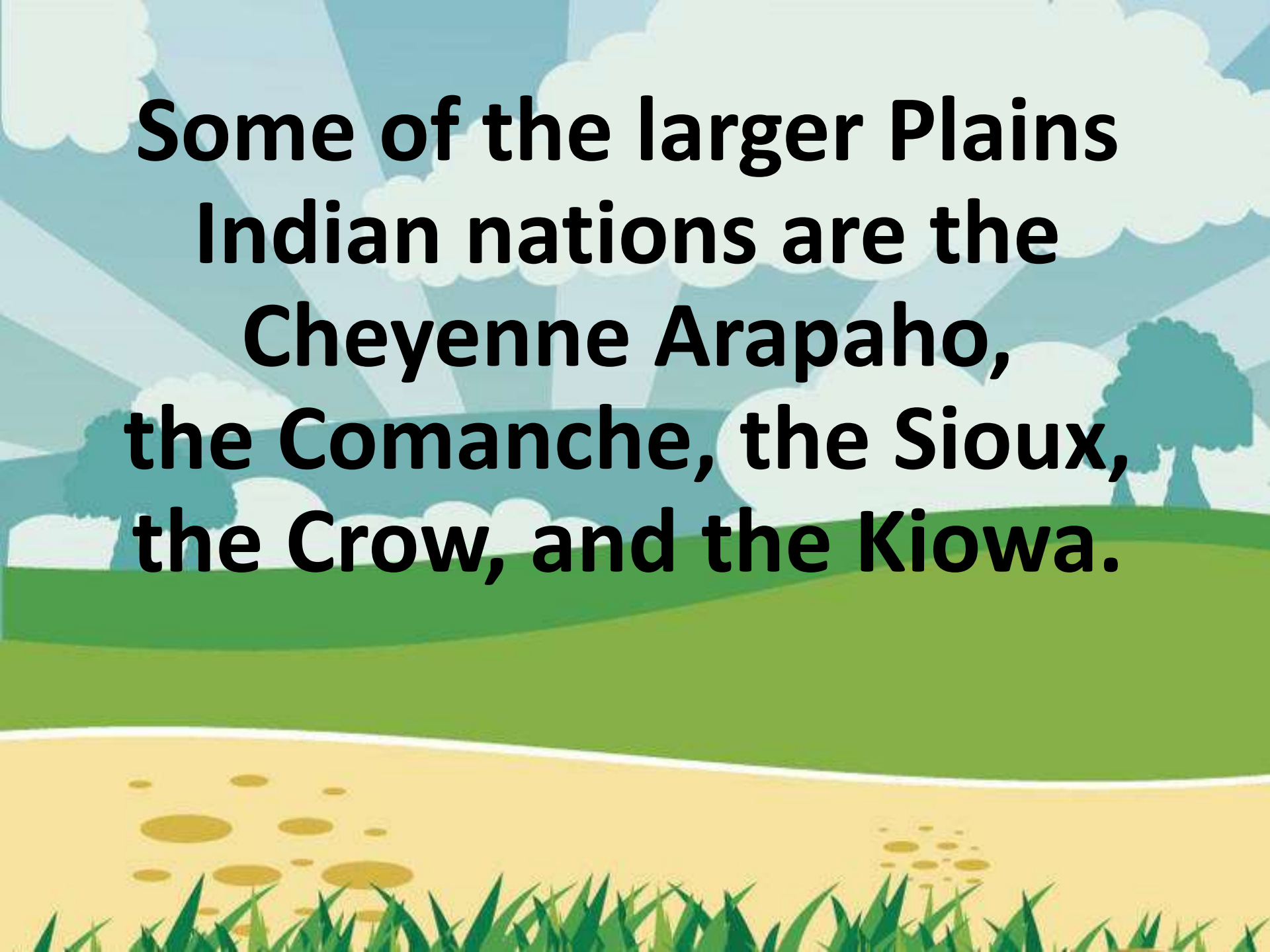


The earliest inhabitants of the Interior Plains belonged to many different groups of American Indians. Their nomadic culture was unique because of the geography and resources of the area.



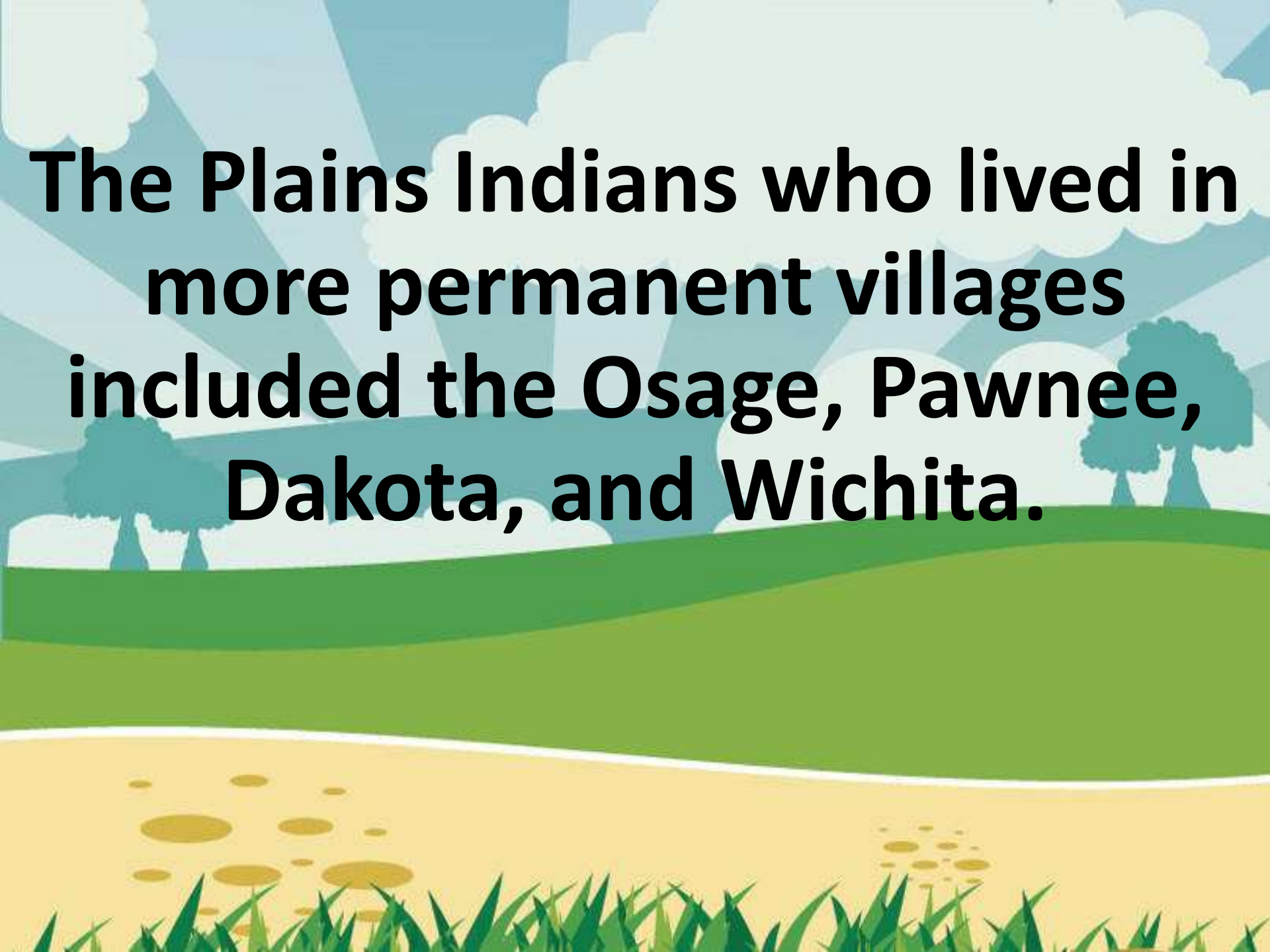
Most Plains Indians depended on the bison or buffalo for their survival. But occasionally, they farmed on small plots of land, too.





**Some of the larger Plains
Indian nations are the
Cheyenne Arapaho,
the Comanche, the Sioux,
the Crow, and the Kiowa.**

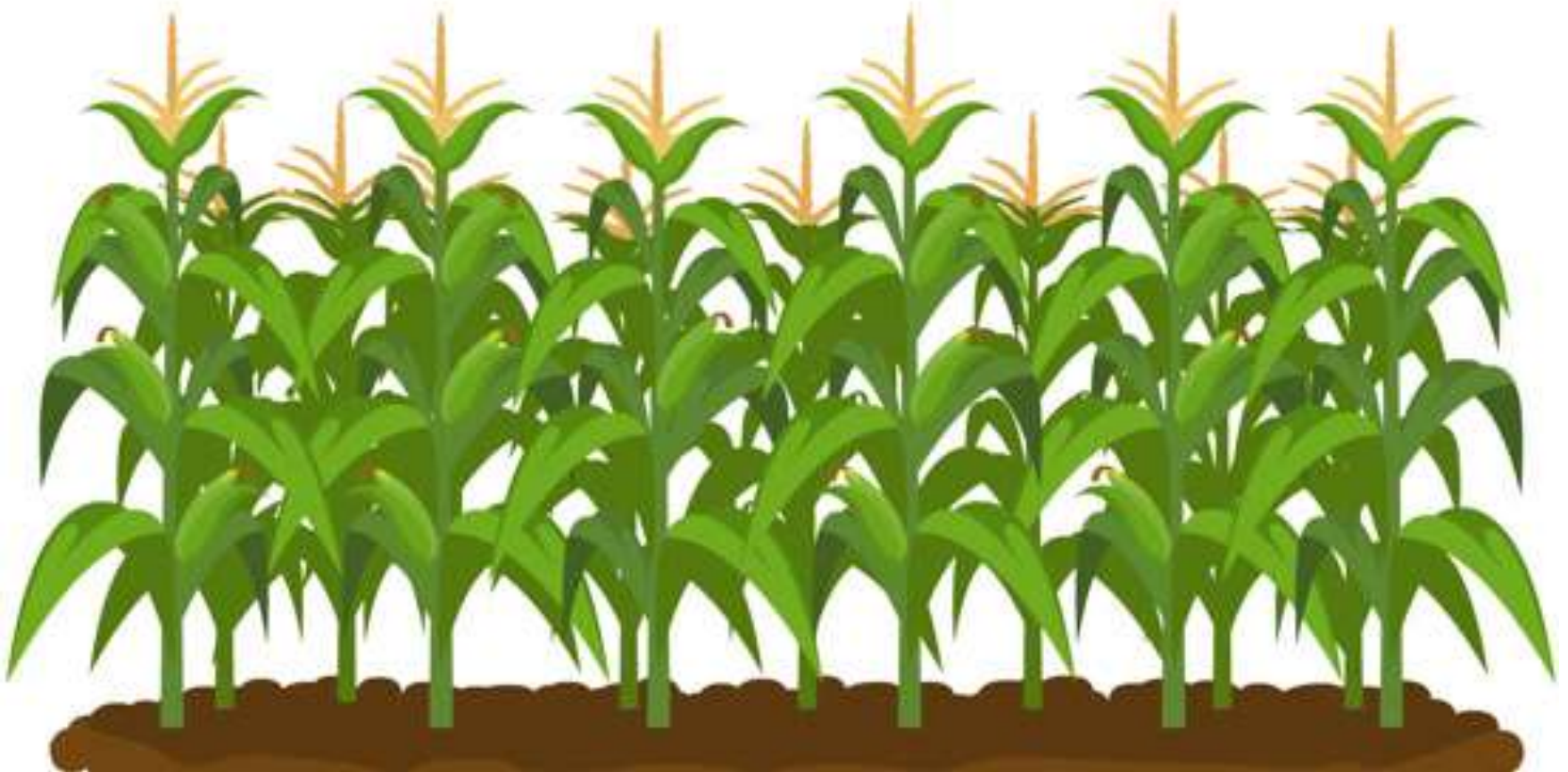




The Plains Indians who lived in more permanent villages included the Osage, Pawnee, Dakota, and Wichita.

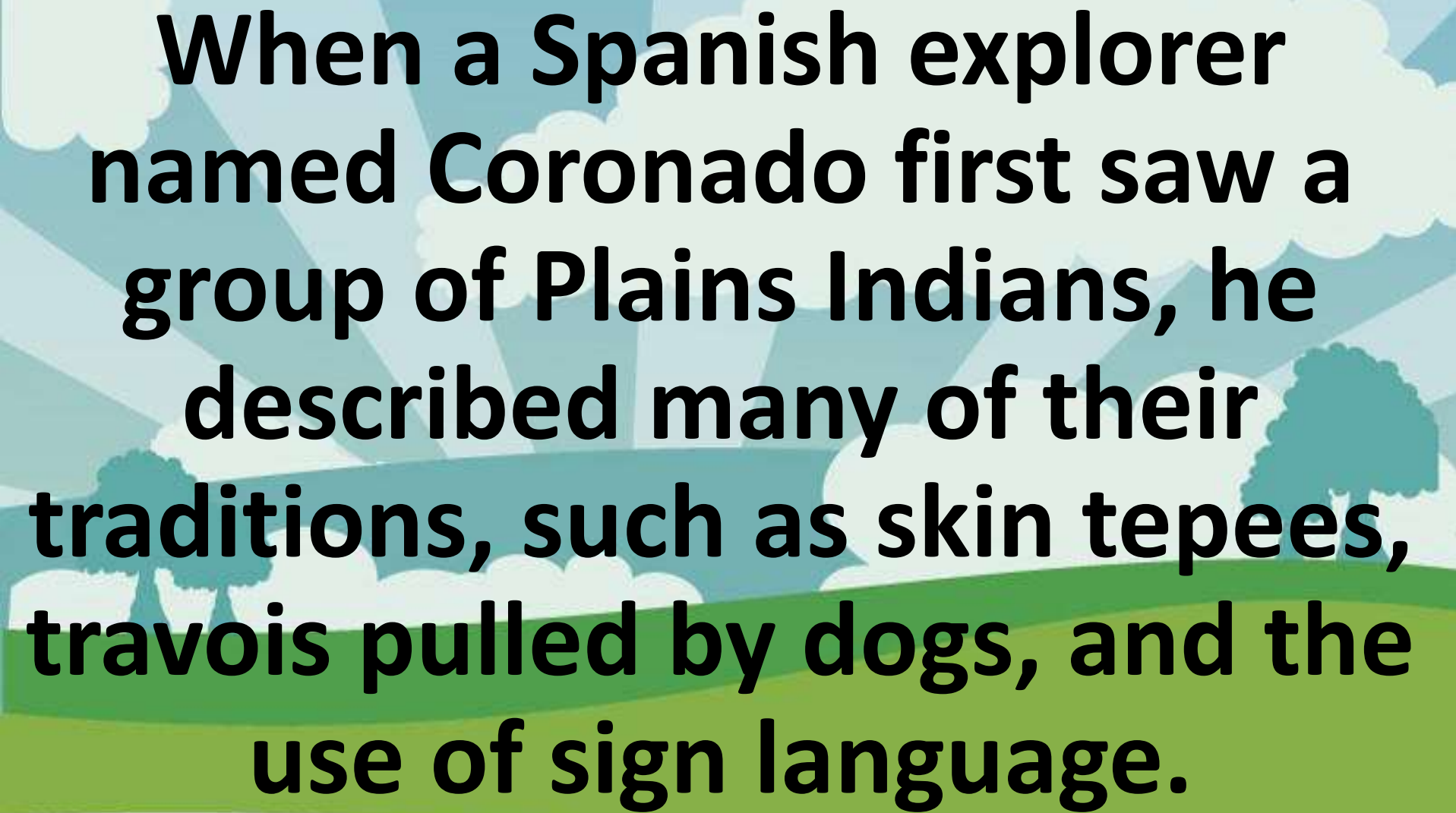


These tribes raise corn, squash, and beans. Wild crops, like sunflowers and tobacco were gathered, too.



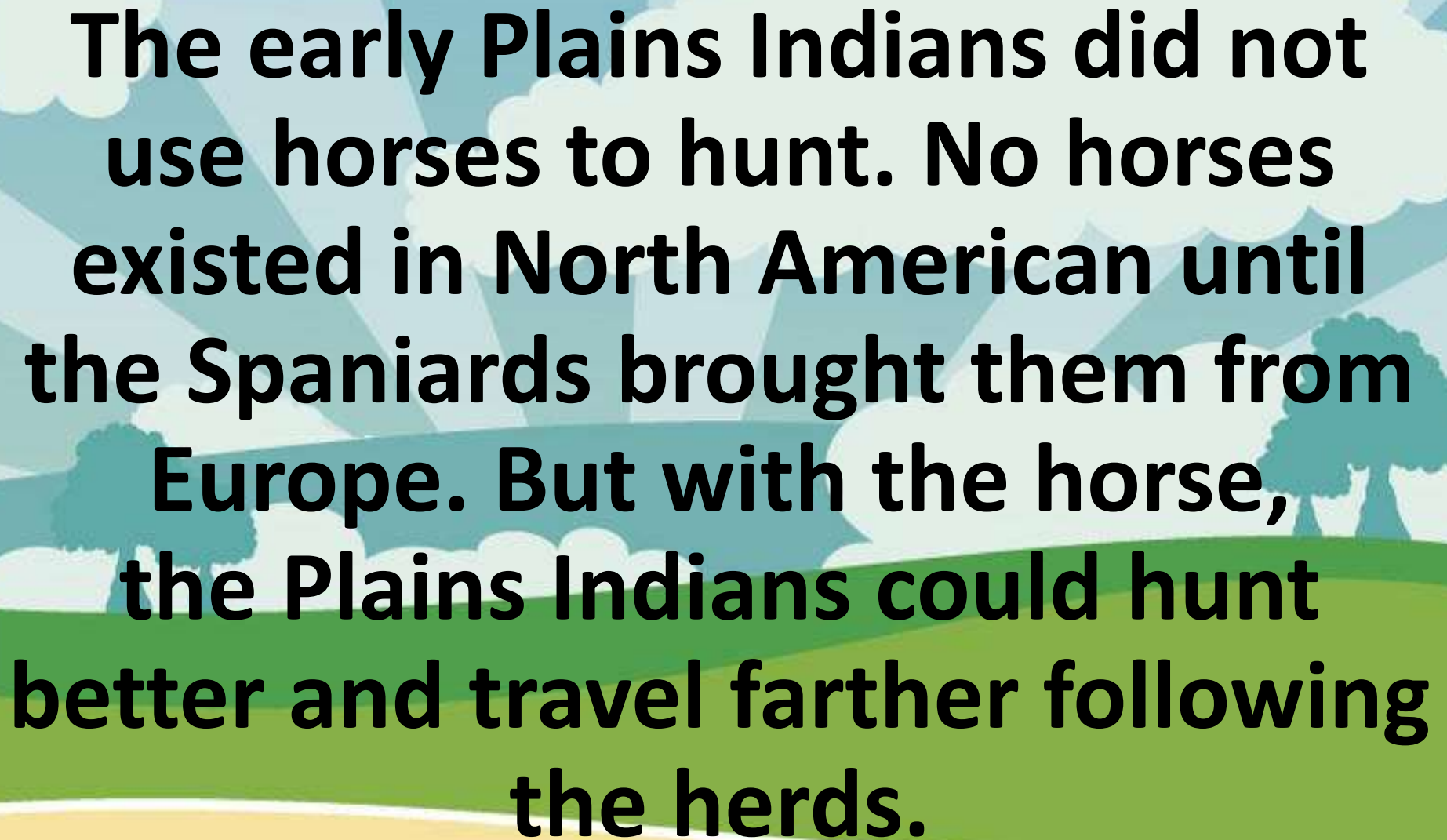
**The Plains people
used the bison for
housing, food,
clothing, and even
tools. Life was
centered on
following the bison
herds across
the plains.**



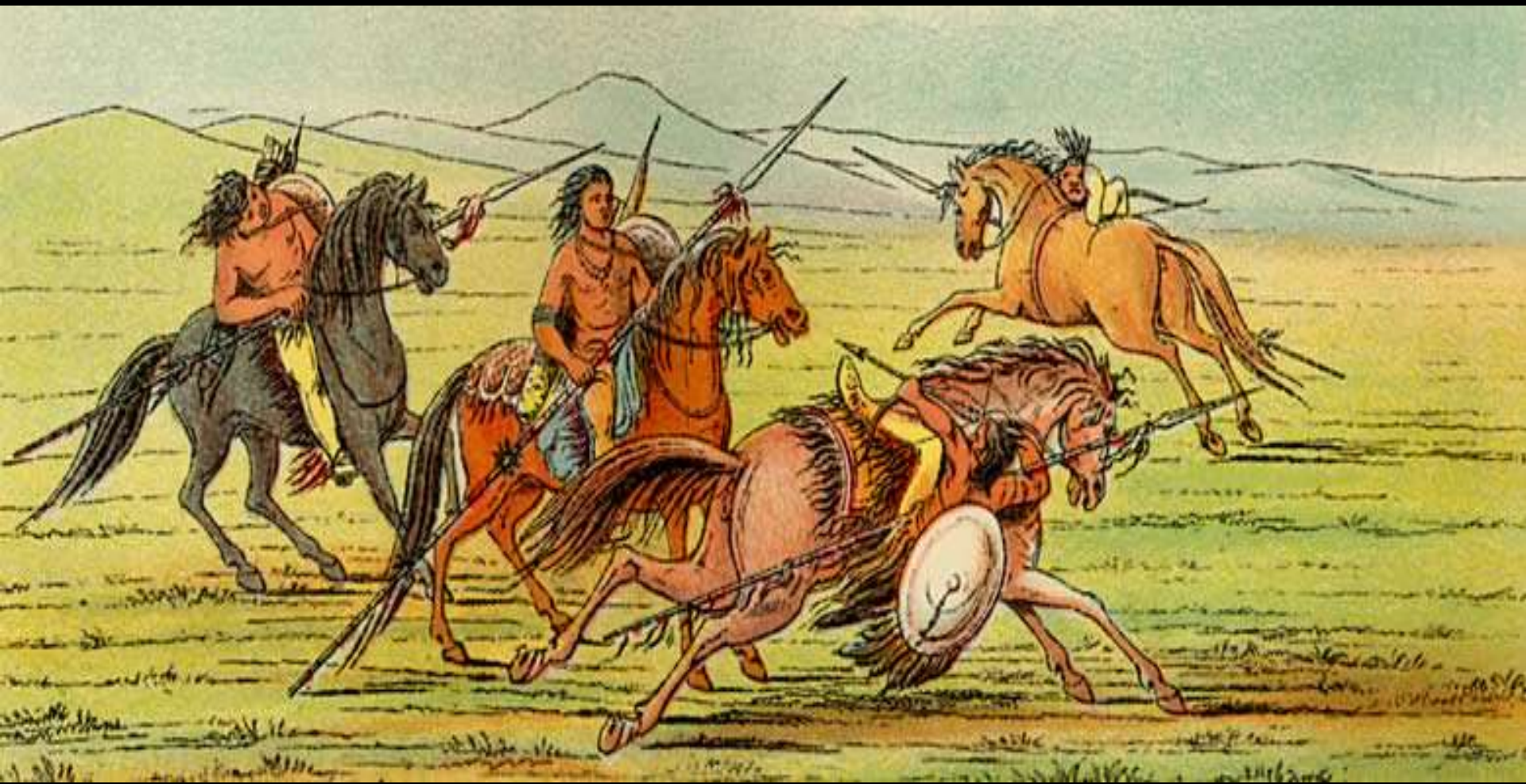


**When a Spanish explorer
named Coronado first saw a
group of Plains Indians, he
described many of their
traditions, such as skin tepees,
travois pulled by dogs, and the
use of sign language.**

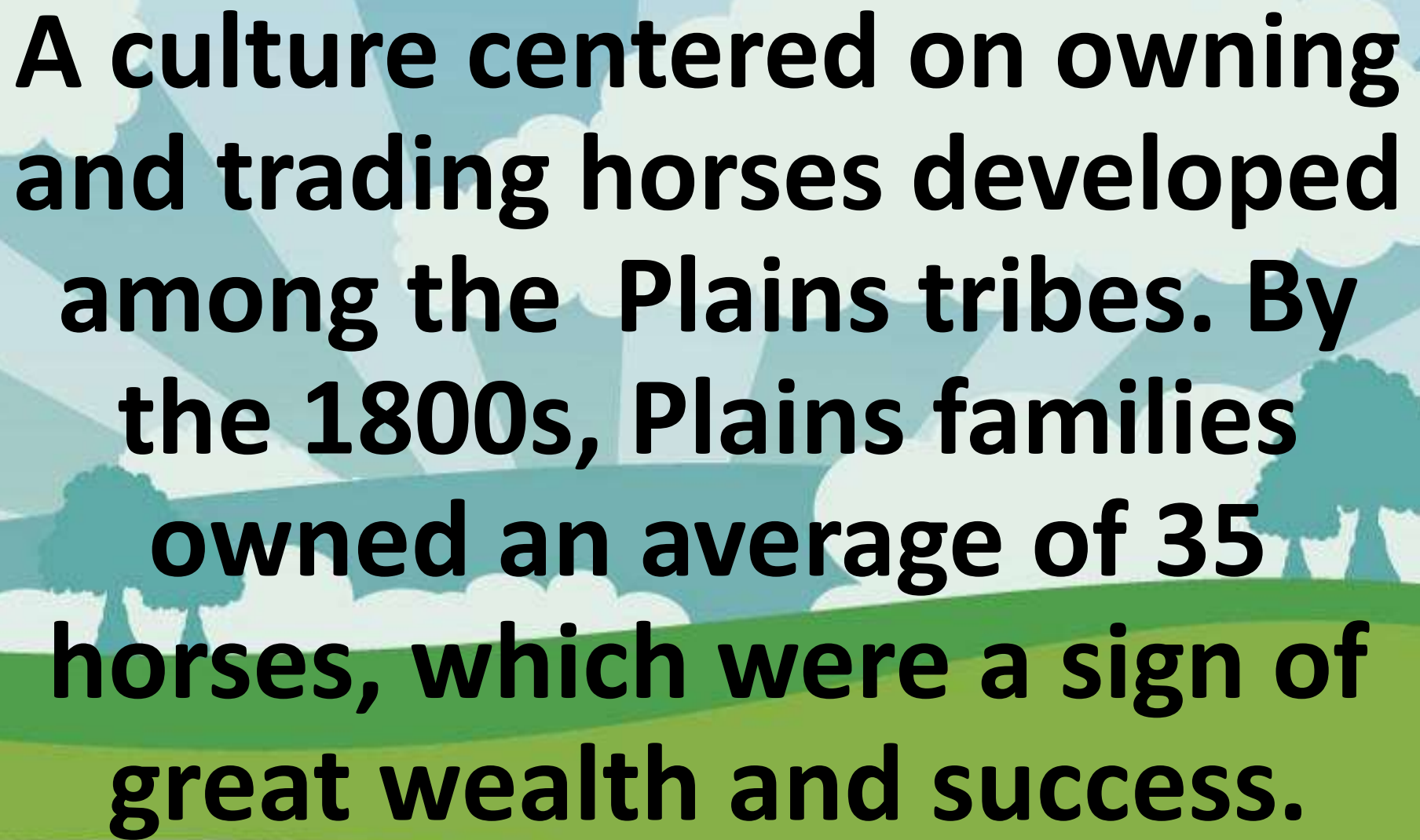




The early Plains Indians did not use horses to hunt. No horses existed in North America until the Spaniards brought them from Europe. But with the horse, the Plains Indians could hunt better and travel farther following the herds.

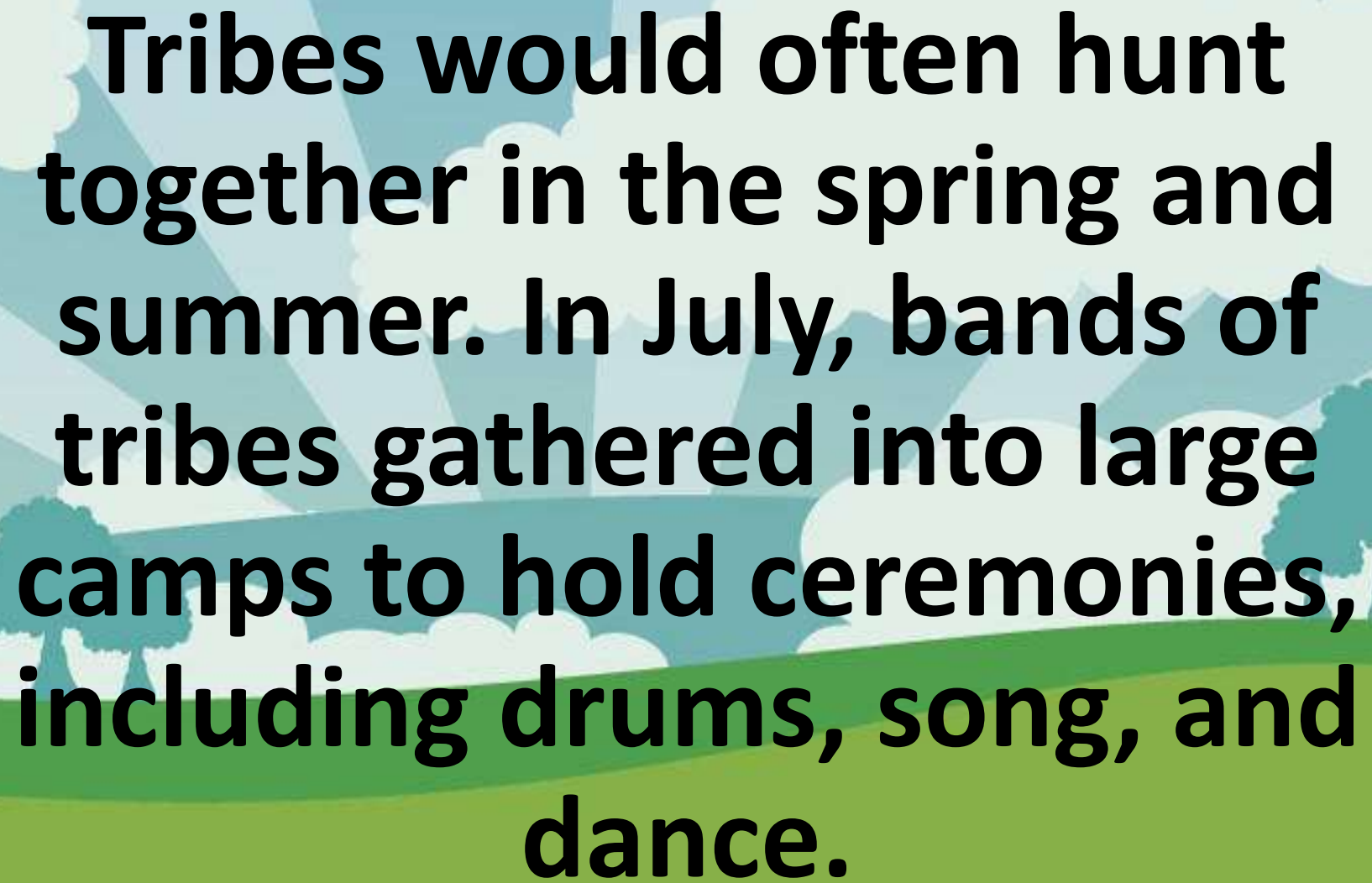







A culture centered on owning and trading horses developed among the Plains tribes. By the 1800s, Plains families owned an average of 35 horses, which were a sign of great wealth and success.



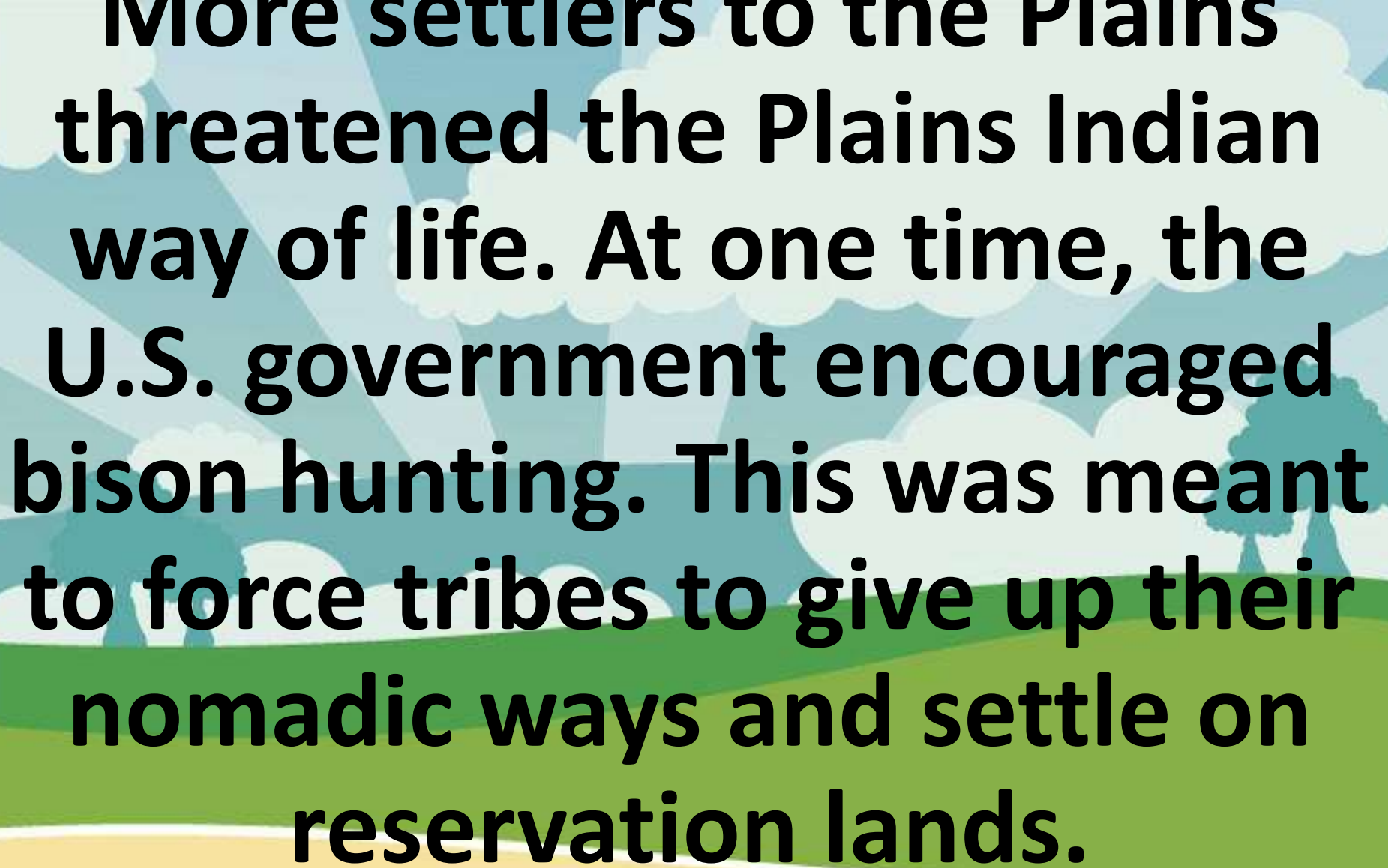


Tribes would often hunt together in the spring and summer. In July, bands of tribes gathered into large camps to hold ceremonies, including drums, song, and dance.





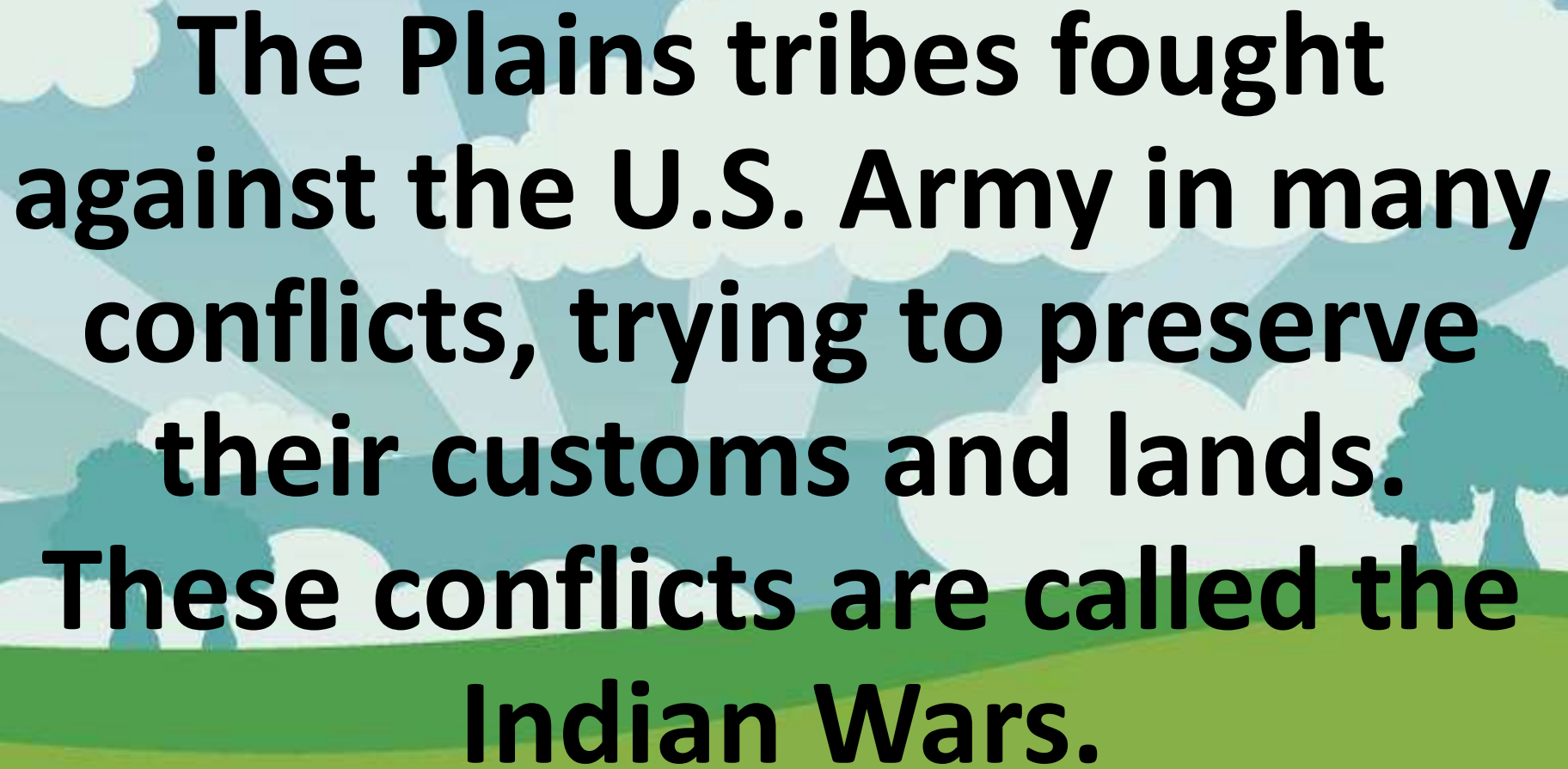
**In these encampments,
important decisions were
made for future hunting,
raiding, and trading.**



More settlers to the Plains threatened the Plains Indian way of life. At one time, the U.S. government encouraged bison hunting. This was meant to force tribes to give up their nomadic ways and settle on reservation lands.

The bison almost became extinct during this time.





The Plains tribes fought against the U.S. Army in many conflicts, trying to preserve their customs and lands. These conflicts are called the Indian Wars.

A famous victory won by the Lakota Sioux and the Cheyenne was at the Battle of Little Big Horn.



Because of their skills in riding and their knowledge of the environment, the Plains Indians were often the victors in battles with the U.S. Army.



**But one of the most important events
at the end of this time happened
in South Dakota.**


**This was called the Wounded Knee
Massacre because many Indians,
including women and children died
during an attack by the U.S. Army.**

**The Army was ordered to move the
Indians back onto their reservation.**



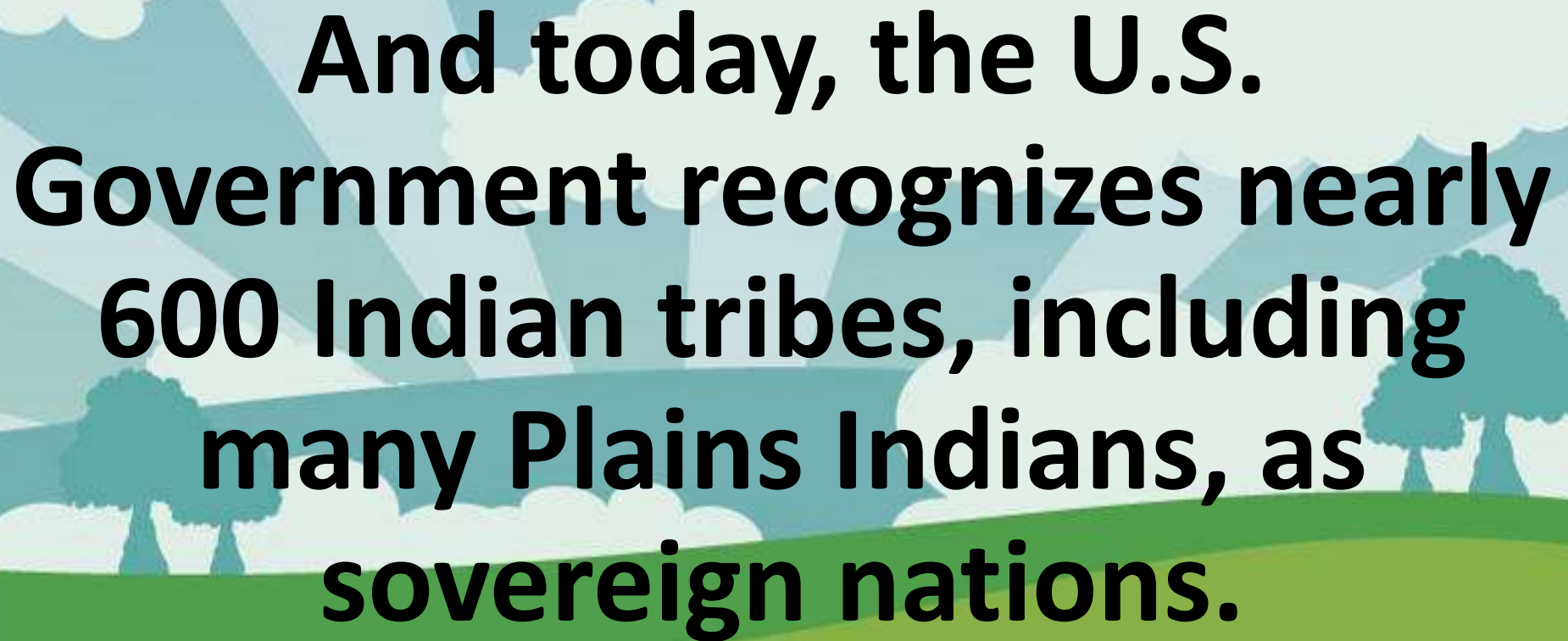
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**Today, many of the Plains
Indians and their tribal
governments try to preserve
the traditions and culture of
their ancestors.**





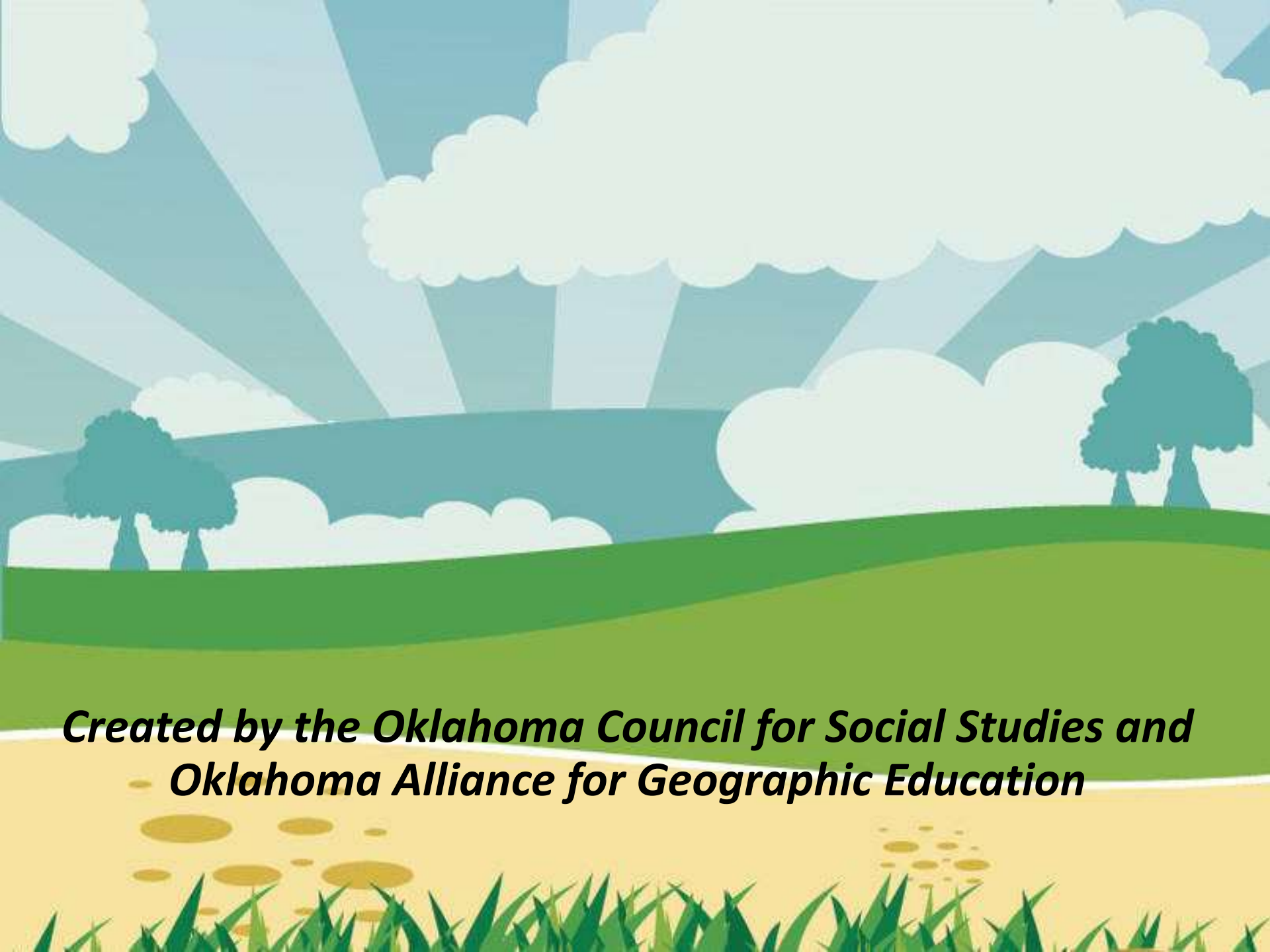
**And today, the U.S.
Government recognizes nearly
600 Indian tribes, including
many Plains Indians, as
sovereign nations.**



**This means that tribes can
make most of their own
decisions and control the
resources of their lands.**

People of the PLAINS





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