Fitzgerald

Ideas from Student Groups –

Characteristics of Most Native Americans and

Interesting Characteristics Associated with Each Region

**Characteristics of Most Native Americans**

* Live a subsistence lifestyle, either farming, hunting and gathering, or a mix of both
* Farm corn
* Planting method – mixed crops, especially of corn, beans, and squash
* Divided work by gender - men hunted and women farmed
* Were organized socially into clans, extended family groups descended from a single ancestor
* Believed in animism, the religious belief that all things in the universe and a spirit given to them by the Creator
* Often had guardian spirits that were obtained by young people in their early teens through a period of fasting and praying when they were alone, away from their villages
* Had Shamans, who were medicine men who were thought to cure illness by driving out evil spirits that caused the illness

**Interesting Characteristics Associated with Each Region**

Northeast –

* The Iroquois formed a confederacy uniting 5 and later 6 nations that lasted hundreds of years and played a major role in the French and Indian War and the revolutionary War.

Southeast –

* Natives in this region had large settlements with well-planned, permanent towns that had streets, residential and public areas, and were surrounded by protective barriers such as palisades, moats, and earthen walls.

Great Plains –

* Many Natives in this region hunted buffalo, as more than 60 million lived on the grassland, and the buffalo provided them with meat, fat for cooking, water-proof hides for house covers and coats, bones and horns for tools, stomachs for pouches and cooking, and ails for fly swatters.

Southwest –

* Natives who farmed in this region lived in apartment-like, multi-storied housing structures made of stone, mud and other materials. These structures were called pueblos that could hold 100s to 1000s of people. The stories were accessible only by ladders lowered by the inhabitants and thus provided protection.

Northwest Coast –

* Natives in this region carved monumental totem poles from large trees, mostly cedar trees. The carved poles were elaborately painted and the carvings represented their clans, family members, and notable events.