



Student Exploration Booklet Teacher Guide

Page 2 -- A Brief History of Casa Grande Ruins

May review with students

Page 3 -- Record Your Visit

Have students fill out this page right away to personalize their booklets

Page 4 -- House Rules

This section is important. Please review with your students either before you arrive or in the outdoor classroom when your group arrives at the Monument.

Page 5 -- The Desert Dwellers:

Question: What kind of weather is it right now?

Answer: This varies, i.e. hot, cold, windy, still, rainy, clear, etc.

Question: On average, how much rain does the Sonoran Desert receive per year?

Answer: 8 inches.

Question: What did the early hunter/gatherers eat?

Answer: rabbits, deer, squirrels, lizards, snakes, fish, birds, cactus fruit, berries, and other wild plants

Question: Listen... What do you hear?

Answer: Birds, music, highway noise, train, people talking, tractor, airplane

Page 6 -- Agriculture and Irrigation:

Question: Who were the first farmers in the American Southwest?

Answer: Hohokam

Question: How did the farmers water their crops?

Answer: Water from the Gila River brought to the fields by irrigation canals

Question: What food crops did they cultivate?

Answer: Beans, squash, and corn

Question: What did they grow cotton for?

Answer: Clothes, foot protection, warmth, and trade

Question: How long did they farm the area?

Answer: About 1,000 years.

Question: Look...What kind of plants do you see?

Answer: Mesquite, paloverde, ironwood, creosote bush, various types of cactus (cholla, prickly pear, saguaro) and agave (century plant, etc.)

Page 7 -- Building the Compound

Question: What did the Hohokam use to build the structures in the compound?

Answer: People, caliche, wood, water (to wet the caliche)

Question: What activities might have occurred in the compound?

Answer: Trading, preparing food, eating, sleeping, jewelry making, pottery making, ceremonies and gatherings.

Question: Why would the Hohokam enclose the area with a 7-foot wall?

Answer: Good question. Maybe for protection from the elements or from other people. Maybe to keep others or animals in.

Page 8 -- Construction of the Casa Grande

Question: What kind of wood was used for the floors of the Casa Grande?

Answer: Pine, juniper, fir, saguaro ribs.

Question: How many pounds of caliche were used? (Hint: There are 2,000 pounds in 1 ton.)

Answer: 3,000 tons x 2,000 pounds in a ton = six million pounds.

Question: Why are there horizontal lines on the walls of the Casa Grande?

Answer: These are the lines where each layer of caliche was shaped by hand and allowed to dry and provide a base for the next layer (similar to English cobb or puddle styles).

Question: Look. . . . Inside the Casa Grande there are inscriptions or "graffiti". What is the oldest date you see?

Answer: 1800's

Page 9 -- A Prehistoric Observatory?

Question: How might the Casa Grande have been used?

Answer: For astronomy, as a sort of calendar.

Question: What is the summer solstice?

Answer: The longest day of the year.

Question: Why would the Hohokam build a calendar?

Answer: To know when the seasons are about to change.

Question: How would they use the information from the calendar?

Answer: To know when to plant and harvest their crops.

Question: Wait. . . . Can you feel the air on your skin? Does it feel cooler or warmer?

Answer: The air is cooler when you stand near an opening to the Casa Grande.

Page 10 -- Food from the Desert

Question: Besides the crops they grew, what plants did the Hohokam gather for food?

Answer: Cactus fruit, mesquite beans, berries, and other wild plants.

Question: What plants did they use for medicine?

Answer: Creosote. (Also agave although it is not stated on the wayside sign.)

Question: Why have most of the trees died in the area?

Answer: The water table has dropped. (Can also discuss the excessive use of water resources in modern times.)

Question: Look...count how many dead mesquite trees you see?

Answer: Many.

Page 11 -- Casa Grande Community

Question: What activities might have occurred in this area?

Answer: Cooking, pottery and jewelry making, meetings, trading, ceremonies, hunting, farming, playing.

Question: What games might the Hohokam have played?

Answer: Ball, stick, running, contests of different sorts.

Question: What other activities could have occurred in the ball court?

Answer: Ceremonies, maybe marriages, music, playing.

Question: Look... Which building would you like to live in? Why?

Answer: The Big House. Why????

Page 12 -- Abandonment

Question: Why do you think the Hohokam abandoned their cities and neighborhoods?

Answer: Maybe drought, flooding, or over-use of fields.

Question: Where do you think they went?

Answer: Maybe they are still here. Maybe they broke up into smaller groups and lived where there was water. The O'odham tribes that live in southern Arizona today tell us they are descended from the Hohokam.

Question: What events would make you leave home?

Answer: Bad weather conditions, lack of food, economic problems, warfare.

Page 13 -- Vandalism and the Road to Protection

Question: Who named the Casa Grande?

Answer: Father Kino in 1694.

Question: How old is the roof?

Answer: 76 years old. It was built in 1932

Question: When were the Casa Grande Ruins protected by the government?

Answer: In 1892- the ruins were set aside as the first archeological preserve. In 1918 the ruins became a National Monument.

Question: Why is the big roof over the top of the Casa Grande?

Answer: To protect it from the rain and other weather

Page 14 -- Those who are Gone?

Question: Why is it important to protect sites like this?

Answer: So our children and future generations can enjoy and learn from them.

Question: What can you do to help preserve special places?

Answer: Respect them, teach about them, and learn from them. Protect them! Don't climb on the walls or damage anything.

Question: Do you know of a special place you think needs to be protected?

Answer: Children can name many possibilities.

Question: Why do you think it is important?

Answer: Any answer can be correct.

Page 15 -- Share Your Experience

Question: How would you teach someone your own age what is important about Casa Grande Ruins National Monument?

Answer: It is a very special place that helps us learn about very special people who lived in a very different time, yet in some ways were not very different from you and me.

Question: How would you teach a grown up what is important about Casa Grande Ruins National Monument?

Answer: The same way as you would teach children.