

Grade 9 Answer

12 Mark Essay Question

12
Marks

Question:

Which of the following was the more important reason why Plains Indians' ways of life were destroyed

- Extermination of Buffalo
- US Government Policy?

Explain your answer with reference to both bullet points.

(12 marks)

Answer:

Firstly, the extermination of the buffalo was a very important reason why Plains Indians' ways of life were destroyed, as by 1890 they were virtually extinct. Plains Indians used all parts of the buffalo to support their lifestyle. The buffalo was considered sacred so it was important not to waste any part of it. For example, they ate the meat, hooves were used to make glue, fur was used to make blankets and horns were used to make cups. By 1890 buffalo were virtually extinct, as they were killed by tourists and used to feed construction workers, and grassland was destroyed and eaten by other animals, which was their natural habitat. This destroyed a large part of indigenous life, as buffalo were such a vital part of survival.

Secondly, the US government policy was also a very important reason why Plains Indians' ways of life were destroyed. During the 1880s indigenous people were put onto reservations. This destroyed their nomadic, tribal life and chiefs lost their power over their people. A key policy that destroyed Plains Indians' ways of life was the 1887 Dawes Act. It aimed to break up the power of Indigenous tribes by encouraging individuals to move away from the tribal structure. Reservation land was redistributed, allocating each Indigenous family a homestead of 160 acres. This would free up more land for white migrants to settle on, as well as forcing Plains Indians to further integrate into white society.

Overall, the US government policy was the most important reason why Plains Indians' ways of life were destroyed. Although the extermination of the buffalo had a large impact on Plains Indians, they still held onto other traditions such as their nomadic lifestyle and culture. However, the US government policy forced Plains Indians onto homesteads, and forced them to integrate into white society, which ultimately destroyed their indigenous ways of life.

Feedback:

This answer would get 12/12 marks because the pupil has explained each of the given points (extermination of buffalo and US government policy) in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. The pupil has also included a judgement at the end, explaining which point was more important and why.