

# The Chumash People

## Key Question

- ▼ How do anthropologists know about ancient cultures?
- ▼ What are artifacts and where are they found?
- ▼ What are the unique contributions of Chumash culture?
- ▼ How did the Chumash survive and thrive in this area for 10,000 years?
- ▼ How did European settlement change the ancient Chumash way of life?

## Key Concepts

- ▼ The Chumash were the native people living in Santa Barbara when the first Europeans arrived.
- ▼ The Chumash had been in this area for over 10,000 years.
- ▼ The Chumash acquired their food, tools, clothing, and building materials from nature.
- ▼ They had to make, find, or trade for everything they needed.
- ▼ Unique Chumash contributions: the tomol, fine baskets, and cave paintings.
- ▼ The Chumash had a complex, evolved society that centered on the group's well-being.
- ▼ Chumash are still here living a modern life without forgetting the past.

## Description of Activity

This program takes place in the Chumash Hall, the classroom laboratory, and the *Sukinani'oy* Garden of Chumash plants.

In the Chumash Hall, students are introduced to anthropology and to the role of artifacts in discovering how people lived in ancient cultures. They are encouraged to learn about the Chumash by closely observing and interpreting the exhibits.

Next, the group enters the classroom where students explore the hands-on materials used by Chumash for hunting, fishing, food preparation, basket making, currency and trade items, games, musical instruments, and rock painting.

After their discovery time in the classroom, students visit the *Sukinani'oy* Garden of Chumash Plants. In the garden, they hunt for specific plants using visual clues, much the way a Chumash boy or girl would have learned the plants that provided food, medicine, building materials, tools, and other necessities of life.



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## Words to Know

**abalone:** a marine snail having a large flat foot and ear-shaped shell with a row of holes along the outer edge. Its flesh is tough but edible; its shell was used by Chumash for fish-hooks, dishes, and decoration

**anthropologist:** scientist who studies the origin, the behavior, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humans

**ap:** the Chumash word for the round dwelling constructed of willow poles tied into place and covered with a thatch of cattails or tule rush

**artifact:** an object from an earlier time made by human beings, such as a tool, or the remains of one

**cordage:** cord, rope, string made by twisting the fibers from plants; different plants produce different types of cordage

**culture:** the ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another

**hide:** an animal pelt or skin that can be preserved by tanning; used for clothing and blankets

**leach:** to remove by filtering; for example, tannin is leached from acorn mush by filtering

**managed agriculture:** tending native plants in such a way as to increase food, maintain the plants existence, or shape the plant for specific needs

**midden:** a dump for trash used by people long ago; source of artifacts native animals, plants, people – existed here before the Europeans arrived in 1542

**tannin:** bitter chemical found in acorns that must be removed by leaching to make acorns edible

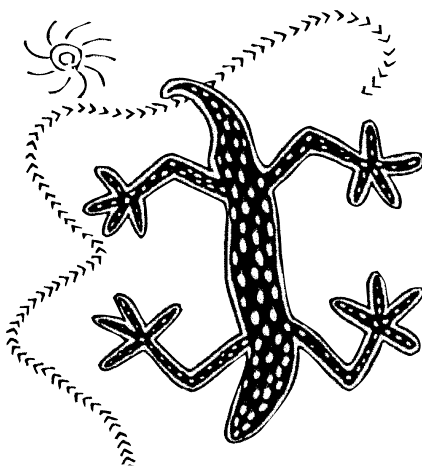
**tomol:** a Chumash word for the plank canoe used for ocean transportation in the Santa Barbara Channel.

**tool:** an implement created for doing work

**trade:** exchange between people who have what the other needs

**tule:** a plant growing near streams and lagoons harvested by the Chumash to thatch their homes; also woven to make screens and mats

**village:** a group of dwellings



# The Chumash People

## State Social Standards – Third Grade

3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.

1. Describe national identities, religious beliefs, customs, and various folklore traditions.
2. Discuss the ways in which physical geography, including climate, influenced how the local Indian nations adapted to their natural environment (e.g., how they obtained food, clothing, tools).
3. Describe the economy and systems of government, particularly those with tribal constitutions, and their relationship to federal and state governments.
4. Discuss the interaction of new settlers with the already established Indians of the region.

## Important Note to Teachers

- ▼ Please let your docent know if you are beginning a unit on Chumash or culminating your studies.
- ▼ Please let your docent know if you have been to the Golden Harvest Tour at the Botanic Garden.

