

Poverty Point

This instructional task contains a set of primary and authentic source documents about Poverty Point settlements in and around North Louisiana.

Alignment

This task addresses content related to the following grade-level expectations:

GLE 47: Use information in a map, table, or graph to describe the past (H-1A-E3)

GLE 52: Identify and describe early settlers in Louisiana (H-1C-E1)

Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Additional Resources for Teachers](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task, which excludes GLE alignment and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the question.
- For specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 3.

Primary and Authentic Sources

Ask students to read and study the following sources about Poverty Point and take notes in the space next to the documents or on page 4 of the printable student version. Students should then use the documents to answer the extended-response question on page 5 of the printable student version.

Source 1: Poverty Point Tables

Tools
spears
atlatles (spear throwers)
stone hoes
antler hooks
blades (knives)
earth ovens
stone pots
stone bowls
clay pottery

Food
fish
venison (deer)
ducks
turkeys
squirrels
nuts
wild grapes
acorns
turtle
wild beans

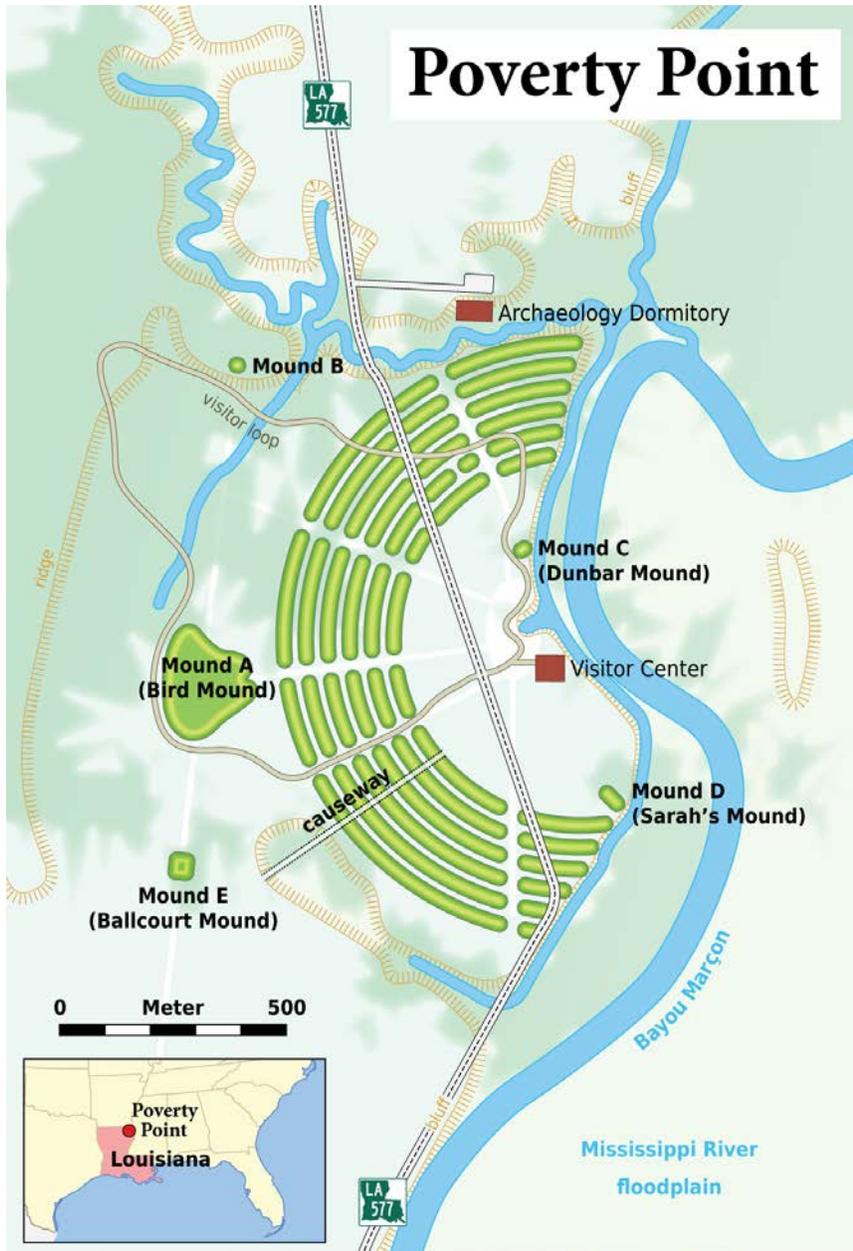
Other Characteristics
traded at length
built large mounds
built permanent buildings
made clay figures
wore jewelry

Source 2: Excerpts from Poverty Point Informational Article,

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/archaeology/povertypoint/assets/poverty-point-pdf-1.03.pdf>

- Introduction, page 1
- Trade and Travel, pages 5-6
- Food, page 7
- A New Way of Life, page 9

Source 3: Poverty Point Map



Source 4: Poverty Point Video, <http://www.archaeologychannel.org/video-main-menu/video-guide-main/video-guide-summary/190-poverty-point-earthworks-evolutionary-milestones-of-the-americas>

Extended-Response Task

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on page 5 in this answer document.

The people of the Poverty Point culture were hunters and gathers. They also constructed large, permanent mounds or earthworks. What do these details tell us about the Poverty Point culture?

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Your response should have multiple paragraphs, begin with an introduction, and end with a conclusion.
- Use evidence from each of the documents to support your claims.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Be sure to write clearly.

Use page 4 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on page 5 in this answer document.

Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its analysis and content. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

Score	Social Studies Task Rubric – Poverty Point
2	<p>The student’s response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides an in-depth description of the American Indians who inhabited Poverty Point based on knowledge of the earthworks and other artifacts located in the area; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ addresses or demonstrates understanding of the documents, and ○ integrates adequate and relevant information beyond what is provided in the documents; • contains valid historical understandings and interpretations with no errors significant enough to detract from the response.
1	<p>The student’s response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a reasonable description of the American Indians who inhabited Poverty Point based on knowledge of the earthworks and other artifacts located in the area; • may support the description with insufficient evidence; • may be incomplete and may contain errors.
0	<p>The student’s response is incorrect, irrelevant, or too brief to evaluate.</p>

Scoring Notes

A strong response

- references the documents appropriately:
 - Poverty Point peoples lived near the Mississippi River and built large mounds of different shapes. (source 2 and source 4)
 - Poverty Point peoples were hunter-gatherers and did not rely on farming to produce the food they needed. (source 1 and source 2)
 - Poverty Point peoples had advanced systems of trade. (source 2 and source 4)
 - Poverty Point structures were complex and required high-level skills to develop. (source 2 and source 3)
- Applies the provided evidence as well as additional information about Poverty Point and the peoples who inhabited the area.
 - Most hunter-gatherer societies did not build large structures or earthworks such as those evidenced at Poverty Point.
 - The building of the massive earthworks at Poverty Point tells us that there was a large population of laborers with a leader or group of leaders to organize the efforts.
 - The focus on building and the massive scale of the projects allows us to understand that the basic survival needs were being met. Food was abundant and it was easy to hunt, fish, and gather what was required.
 - The cultures of Poverty Point had periods of time when they were not in conflict with other groups of people. The ability to focus on the building projects meant that people were relatively safe during the periods of construction; they weren’t focusing on war or other dangers.
 - The Poverty Point peoples had the skills and tools necessary to move thousands of pounds of earth and the planning and vision to create geometric shapes using dirt.

- The exact purpose of the mounds at Poverty Point has not been established.
 - Some archaeologists believe it was a ceremonial or religious site.
 - Others believe it was a trading center because some stones and other natural materials found at the Poverty Point site originated hundreds of miles away.
 - Archaeologists have also proposed that the Poverty Point site may have been a permanent settlement of American Indians.
- Evidence suggests that the mounds at Poverty Point were built over several decades. Individual mounds, however, may have been built very quickly, over a period of about 90 days.

Additional Resources for Teachers

- http://anthropology.artsci.wustl.edu/files/anthropology/imce/PP_Md_A_report_final.pdf
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/01/ancient-mound-poverty-point-louisiana-archaeologists_n_2599344.html
- <http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/archaeology/povertypoint/assets/poverty-point-pdf-1.0.pdf>
- http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/archaeology/activity_guides/ppexpeditions/overview2nancy.htm

**Printable
Student Version**

***Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

Directions: Read and study the following source documents about Poverty Point. As you read, take notes in the space next to the documents or on page 4 in this answer document. Then use the documents to answer the extended-response question on page 5.

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turkeys
squirrels
nuts
wild grapes
acorns
turtle
wild beans

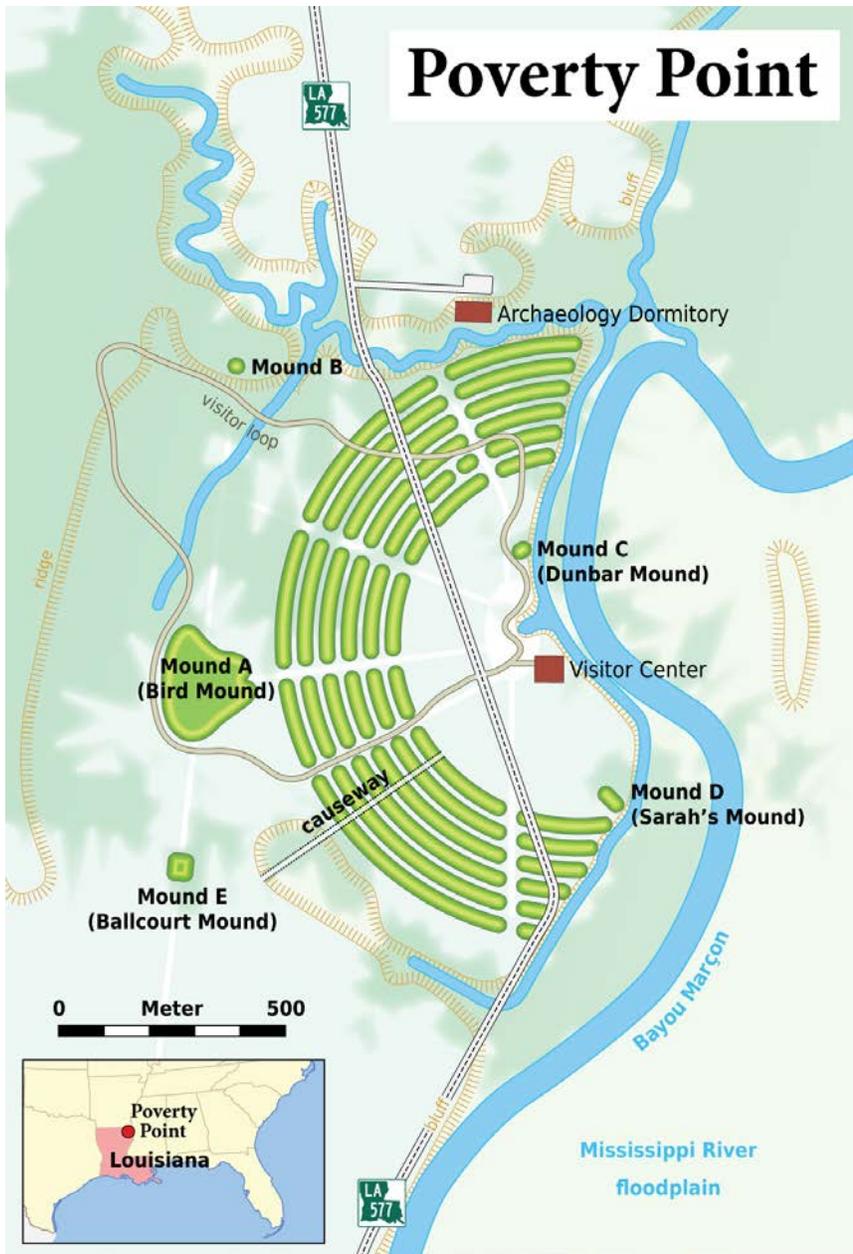
Other Characteristics
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Extended-Response Task

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on page 5 in this answer document.

The people of the Poverty Point culture were hunters and gatherers but constructed large, permanent mounds. What does the building of these earthworks tell us about the Poverty Point culture?

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Your response should have multiple paragraphs, begin with an introduction, and end with a conclusion.
- Use evidence from each of the documents to support your claims.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Be sure to write clearly.

Use page 4 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on page 5 in this answer document.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page 4 will not be scored. Only your response on page 5 will be scored.

Use for notes and planning your response.
(This page will not be scored.)

