

WRITING

This section measures your ability to write in English to communicate in an academic environment.

There are two writing questions in this section.

For question 1, you will read a passage and listen to a lecture about the same topic. You may take notes while you read and listen. Then you will write a response to a question based on what you have read and heard. You may look back at the passage when answering the question. You may use your notes to help you answer the question. You have 20 minutes to plan and write your response.

For question 2, you will write an essay based on your own knowledge and experience. You have 30 minutes to plan and complete your essay.

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1. **Directions:** Give yourself 3 minutes to read the passage.

Reading Time: 3 minutes

As early as the twelfth century A.D., the settlements of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico in the American Southwest were notable for their "great houses," massive stone buildings that contain hundreds of rooms and often stand three or four stories high. Archaeologists have been trying to determine how the buildings were used. While there is still no universally agreed upon explanation, there are three competing theories.

One theory holds that the Chaco structures were purely residential, with each housing hundreds of people. Supporters of this theory have interpreted Chaco great houses as earlier versions of the architecture seen in more recent Southwest societies. In particular, the Chaco houses appear strikingly similar to the large, well-known "apartment buildings" at Taos, New Mexico, in which many people have been living for centuries.

A second theory contends that the Chaco structures were used to store food supplies. One of the main crops of the Chaco people was grain maize, which could be stored for long periods of time without spoiling and could serve as a long-lasting supply of food. The supplies of maize had to be stored somewhere, and the size of the great houses would make them very suitable for the purpose.

A third theory proposes that houses were used as ceremonial centers. Close to one house, called Pueblo Alto, archaeologists identified an enormous mound formed by a pile of old material. Excavations of the mound revealed deposits containing a surprisingly large number of broken pots. This finding has been interpreted as evidence that people gathered at Pueblo Alto for special ceremonies. At the ceremonies, they ate festive meals and then discarded the pots in which the meals had been prepared or served. Such ceremonies have been documented for other Native American cultures.

Listen to Track 40. 



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