

The Phenomenon of the American Culture

When the first Europeans began to settle the North American continent, they encountered a completely new culture: the native American tribes of North America. Native Americans, who had a highly developed culture in many respects, must have been as curious about the strange European manners and customs as were the Europeans about Native Americans. As always happens when two cultures come into contact, there was a cultural exchange. Native Americans adopted some of the Europeans' ways, and the Europeans adopted some of their ways. As a result, Native Americans have made many valuable contributions to American culture, particularly in the areas of language, art, food, and government.

1. Read the text and fill in the gaps

First of all, native Americans left a permanent imprint on the English language. The early settlers borrowed words from several different Native American languages to name the new places and new objects that they had found in their new land. All 1._____ the country, 2._____ can find cities, towns, rivers, and states with Native American names. **For example, the states of Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, and Alabama are 3._____ after Native American tribes, as are the cities of Chicago, Miami, and Spokane.** In 4._____ to place names, English has adopted many everyday words 5._____ various Native American languages. The words chipmunk, moose, raccoon, skunk, moccasin, and potato 6._____ just a few examples.

7._____ the vocabulary of English is the areas that shows the most Native American influence, it is not the 8._____ area of American culture that was changed by contact with Native Americans. **Art is 9._____ area showing the mark of Native American contact. Wool rugs** woven 10._____ women of the Navajo tribe in Arizona and New Mexico are 11._____ valued works of art in the United States. Also, Native American **jewelry made 12._____ silver and turquoise** is very popular and very expensive. Especially in the western and southwestern regions of the United States, **native crafts such pottery, handcrafted leather products, and beadwork can be found in many homes.** **Indeed, native art and handicrafts have become a treasured part of American culture.**

In addition to language and art, **agriculture is another area in which Native American had a great and lasting influence.** Being skilled farmers, **the Native Americans of North America taught the newcomers many things about farming techniques and crops.** Every American school child has heard the story of how Native American taught the first settlers to place a dead fish in a planting hole to provide fertilizer for the growing plant. Furthermore, they taught the settlers irrigation methods and crop rotation. **In addition, many of the foods we eat today were introduced to the Europeans by Native Americans.** **For example, potatoes, corn, chocolate, and peanuts were unknown in Europe. Now they are staples in the American diet.**

Finally, it may surprise some people to learn that **Americans are also indebted to one tribe for our form of government.** The Iroquois, who were an extremely large tribe with many branches and sub-branches (called “nations”), had developed a highly sophisticated system of government to keep the branches of the tribe from fighting one another. Five of the nations had joined together in a confederation called “The League of the Iroquois.” Under the League, each nation was autonomous in running its own internal affairs, but the nations acted as a unit when dealing with outsiders. The League kept the Iroquois from fighting among themselves and was also valuable in diplomatic relations with other tribes. **When the thirteen American colonies were considering what kind of government to establish after they won their independence from Britain, someone suggested that they use a system similar to the League of the Iroquois.** Under this system, each colony or future state would be autonomous in managing its own affairs but would join forces with the other states to deal with matters that concerned them all. This is exactly what happened. **As a result, the present form of government of the United States can be traced directly back to a Native American model.**

In conclusion, we can easily see the Native American influence on the language, art forms, eating habits, and the government. Modern Americans are truly indebted to Native Americans for their contributions to their culture. Hopefully, the cultural exchange will one day prove to be equally positive for them.

2. Answer the questions:

1. What was the start of the culture interaction between the Native Americans and the Europeans?
2. In what areas are the contributions of Native Americans to American culture most essential?
3. How is the influence of the Native Americans felt in the English Language?
4. What is one of the treasured parts of American culture formed due to the Native Americans culture?
5. What did the Native Americans teach Europeans in the field of agriculture?
6. How is the present form of government of the United States connected with the Native American ?

3. Find the following vocabulary in the text and explain (translate) it.

To settle	Fertilizer
Imprint	staples
chipmunk,	to be indebted
moose,	sophisticated
raccoon,	to be traced
turquoise	To provide input
pottery	to make contribution
beadwork	
Treasured	Lasting

