

# [American indian](https://assignbuster.com/american-indian-essay-samples-2/)

American Indians The North American Indians were forced from their nomadic lifestyle into a more sedentary existence on a reservation with the advent of the white man on their land. Indian tribes were decimated by the foreign diseases such as smallpox brought by the European immigrants who also slaughtered the Native Americans so as to steal the lands they occupied. The Europeans went further in spreading misery amongst the Indians by eradicating what once were millions of buffalo that provided food, clothing, shelter and weapons for the tribal peoples. These indigenous people, the descendants that remained from the genocide that occurred during the 1800’s, have been supplanted to distant outposts of despair called reservations.
During the late 1700’s trappers established trading posts which initiated business relationships with the native population. This new relationship introduced tribal members to firearms which aided them while hunting or defending themselves. The association also brought smallpox which devastated the tribes’ population. The trading posts offered provisions outside of what was supplied in nature and enhanced the tribal economies which were previously tied directly to following the buffalo herds. Otherwise, buffalo provided almost everything the Indians needed including food, clothes, weapons and shelter until they were nearly hunted into extinction in the 1880’s, forcing the Indians to depend upon the white man for trade.
From the first landing of the Europeans in America to the present, Indians have desperately attempted to retain their land and culture. However, as there was then, there are now some Indians who learned the white mans’ customs well enough to use this knowledge as an advantage benefiting both personal and tribal interests. Throughout the history of the nation, Indians have learned to speak English well enough to articulate their beliefs, art, folklore and culture to those outside the Indian reservation. It is because of this effort to at least partially assimilate into white society that Indian culture, religion and traditions have become of interest and widely respected among mainstream Americans. Some have become good students of capitalism as evidenced by the success of the casinos (Hoxie, 1992). A number of Indians have gone to great lengths to be equally adept in both Indian and non-Indian cultures over the past quarter century. These individuals have been able to express the concerns of tribal society at the congressional and judicial level thus positively affecting reservation society. “ Over the past two decades [Indians] have been successful in litigating and in gaining passage of federal legislation ultimately to create a wide enough path for the distinct culture in Indian society to reemerge” (Vicenti, 1995).
In an attempt to socialize the Indian tribes, their children were introduced to ‘ white man’ education in the late 1800’s when the tribes were at their lowest emotional, spiritual and physical point as their lands and food source had recently been taken. In addition, they were not acclimated to farming or working for someone else. The white man’s culture was very different and those of the Indian tribes did not integrate well. This is a prevalent issue arguably still present for inhabitants of reservations today. (Ewers, 1988).
The lack of employment is driving many young Indians to seek work outside the reservation which causes a reduction of population, eventually resulting in tribal nations losing their sovereignty status thus disappearing into obscurity. “ Genocide would occur again at the hand of any tribal government that fails to see the need for change. Integrity, generosity and respect are the values of many Native American nations, and it would be a sad day when these are no longer practiced, let alone acknowledged” (Whiteman, 2006).
What once were a free and successful people, the Native Americans have been subjugated to third world status as a result of the cultural clash that occurred when the Europeans invaded and took over America. The Native Americans were left with two choices; assimilate into the ‘ white culture’ by leaving the reservations or to stay and attempt to maintain their thousands of year-old heritage, a heritage that is quickly and sadly fading into obscurity.
Works Cited
Ewers, John Canfield. Indian Life on the Upper Missouri. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.
Vicenti, Carey N., Chief Judge, Jicarilla Apache Tribe. “ The Reemergence of Tribal Society and Traditional Justice Systems.” Judicature. Vol. 79, No. 3, (November/December 1995). August 1, 2007 Whiteman, Mimi Little. The Future of American Indian Peoples. (February 4, 2006). August 1, 2007