

# Benjamin franklin

Literature



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Benjamin Franklin's Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America

Civility, politeness, and decorum are concepts that are considered applicable to 'civilization'. And the term 'civilization' is only used in context wherein there is so-called 'order', 'system', 'cities', 'education', 'government', etc. However, Benjamin Franklin, in his address Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America, argued that people of the so-called civilized world greatly misunderstood other cultures, especially those that exist within the confines of the wilderness like Native Americans. It is a common belief that people living outside 'civilization' are savages, rude, and ignorant. But Benjamin Franklin begged to differ. He provided actual experiences and real examples to prove his point that these so-called 'uncivilized' people like Native Americans are indeed very decorous or well-mannered in our own definition of it. Benjamin Franklin aims to point out in his speech that Native Americans have their own ideas of civility, education, work, leisure, communication, and governance. And surprisingly, it seems that their ways are more respectable and civilized, even though quaint, than those claimed by the purportedly civilized world.

Benjamin Franklin offered several quite strong and persuasive examples. The first example he gave was the dialogue between the government of Virginia and the Six Nations. The Virginian representatives informed the Native American representatives that the government is willing to provide for the education of Indian youth—a White-people education. The Indian representatives did not answer the proposal right away for they have a code that commands them to take time thinking about proposals such as this. Their delayed response to an offer means that they are seriously and thoroughly considering the proposal, and this gesture is a sign of respect for <https://assignbuster.com/benjamin-franklin/>

them. However, they respectfully declined the offer because they believed that White education makes their youth unfit to their ways of life, and so they proposed educating the White people of their practices.

Another example is the Native American's tradition of holding public councils. They do not have the technology but their system of communication is very effective and precise. They also practice civility in public dialogues like allowing the speaker to deliver his/her entire speech before anyone gives his/her comments or opinions, appreciating the views of one another, and so on. In this manner, they avoid conflict or heated disputes. Their courtesy in conversation was also shown in how they dealt with missionaries who were trying to indoctrinate them in Christian ways of life. They listened intently and approvingly with the Christian teachings, and then they invited the missionaries to listen to their own beliefs. They accepted the truth of Christianity and fully respected the wisdom of the missionaries.

The last example is in conducting meetings. Native Americans do not meet to talk about ways to cheat their neighbors, fellow people, or strangers. They meet to discuss how they can best assist a person in need, especially a stranger from another place, and not to talk about ways to rob or show disrespect to that person. These are the ways of those people we call 'savages' and Benjamin Franklin tells us to think twice.