

**This 3-Minute American History Quiz illustrates how policies made nearly 200 years ago still affect the everyday lives of Native Americans.**

Question 1: Why did the United States government establish Indian reservations?

Answer: The government's objective was to rid the country of its "Indian problem" and open the land for white settlers. Beginning in 1830 with the Indian Removal Act, the official policy of the United States was to forcibly remove Native Americans from their ancestral lands and relocate them to far-away regions "reserved" only for Indians. Today these are known as the reservations. For the Cherokee and other tribes, this is often remembered as the "Trail of Tears." But it didn't end there. During the Navajo Long Walk beginning in 1863, thousands of Navajo were also removed from their homelands. Many died or grew ill along the way, often due to malnutrition. They settled within an area of only 40 square miles and gave up their sacred homeland mountains.

Question 2: How did the government decide where to locate the reservations?

Answer: Typically, the government put reservations in the areas it regarded as being unfit for white settlers—arid places unsuitable for agriculture and isolated from towns, transportation, and the growing economy. However, as the settlers expanded westward, the government took back most of the reservation lands, too, and forced Native Americans to relocate again, this time to even less-desirable lands. And today, the land once reserved for Native Americans has shrunk to just 2.3 percent of the land originally promised by the U.S. government.

Question 3: If I were to visit an Indian reservation today, what should I expect to see?

Answer: You would see a proud people—strong in tradition and values—but living in or near third-world conditions. Poverty is extreme. You would see many people living in run-down houses and trailers, many of which are without electricity, telephone, running water or a sewage system.

Question 4: How can these conditions exist in a rich and powerful country like the U.S.?

Answer: Harsh government policies concentrated Native Americans in barren regions inadequate for farming and distant from settlers, supplies, and jobs. Most reservations are so remote that the added costs of transporting supplies and products on and off the reservations make local production impractical. What's more, the U.S. government holds reservation lands in trust, so outside businesses are reluctant to invest and create jobs on reservation lands. Sadly, today between 35% and 85% of the Native Americans who live on the reservations are unemployed. To find work, many must move away and leave their families behind. This is why about half the children living on reservations are being raised by their grandparents. Even the most basic services (healthcare, retail stores, pharmacies, and schools) are often an hour or more away.



## ***Nipmuc Prayer***

***Great Spirit, Great Spirit, Almighty Great Spirit,***

***Hear me: I stand before thee, Great Spirit***

***I thank you for this beautiful day***

***I thank you for my health and well being***

***I pray daily for all of my people***

***I pray for the future to come of seven generations***

***I pray for all living things***

***I pray with the sun every morning***

***We give thanks for a bountiful harvest***

***We give thanks for the beautiful forests***

***We give thanks for all the trees and beautiful flowers surrounding us***

***We give thanks for the beautiful lakes and waterfalls***

***We give thanks for all good things***

***I have spoken***

