

Summary: The American People Today

Many People, One Nation

The people of the United States come from many different countries and cultures. About one in every ten citizens of the United States was born in another country. Today, about one-third of new immigrants to the United States come from Latin America. There are many ethnic groups from all over the world in the United States.

Immigrants contribute, or add, parts of their culture to the culture of the United States. Contributions include language, new foods, and new customs. For example, we use words from other languages, such as *mosquito* from Spanish and *kindergarten* from German. When immigrants settled here, they brought their traditions and new traditions were also created. Individual immigrants have brought knowledge and talent to America. The population of the United States is very diverse. Diversity is one of our country's greatest strengths.

Our Shared Values

The United States is a mix of many cultures, but all Americans share a democratic heritage. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights protect the values of democracy and equal rights. The rules of the Constitution keep any one person or group from taking power away from the people.

The rights of some ethnic groups have not always been protected. Some groups faced difficulties like discrimination. African Americans and other groups such as American Indians struggled for protection of their rights to equal jobs, schools, and housing.

Americans worked together to change the Constitution to make the United States democratic for everyone. The Bill of Rights protects our freedom of speech, religion, and assembly. Americans have the right to different opinions. They have the right to disagree, even with the government.

One United States motto is "E Pluribus Unum," which is Latin for "out of many, one." Today, fifty states form one nation. Its culture is as diverse as the people who live here.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

heritage *noun*, something that is handed down from past generations

motto *noun*, a short statement that explains an ideal or goal

After You Read

REVIEW What are two contributions that immigrants have made to the United States?

Underline two sentences that name contributions.

REVIEW What rights does the Bill of Rights guarantee? Highlight rights that are protected by the Bill of Rights.