

Summary: Culture of the United States

American Way of Life

People in the United States come from many different homelands. They have a variety of customs, traditions, and foods. They do share many of the same values, though. U.S. citizens care about individual freedoms, equal opportunities, fair treatment of people regardless of differences, private ownership of property, and education. Many of these values help define American culture.

About 70 percent of American citizens are members of religious groups. Many people originally came to America so that they could worship as they pleased.

Leisure activities in the United States reflect the influence of other cultures. For example, tennis came from France and soccer from England. The movie and television industries were developed in the United States, although they were affected by other cultures.

The international popularity of American music is an example of the globalization of culture. Globalization means spreading around the world. Today, cultural influences often cross national boundaries. Modern communication offers fast and easy ways to share the products and creations of different cultures.

U.S. Science and Technology

U.S. scientists are mapping DNA. They are discovering treatments and cures for diseases. They are finding new energy sources. Once discoveries are made, inventors create technology to apply what they've learned in practical ways. Advanced technology enables U.S. scientists to work with scientists from other countries.

Discoveries by U.S. scientists help people throughout the world. Polio was widespread in the 1940s and 1950s. Then U.S. doctors Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin developed two vaccines against the disease.

Negative effects of technology may include increased pollution. Another negative is the loss of certain cultural features as countries share languages, foods, and customs. Poorer nations may lack the money and skilled labor to benefit from new applications of science.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

value *noun*, a principle or an ideal by which people live

globalization *noun*, the spreading of an idea around the world

technology *noun*, tools and equipment that apply new knowledge



After You Read

REVIEW Why do you think values such as freedom of religion were written into the U.S.

Constitution? Highlight the sentence that supports your answer.

REVIEW Why has technology not had as great an effect on poorer nations? Draw a box around the sentence that explains why.