

True or False?

The following questions have to do with American Indian history, culture, and language. Circle the correct answer for each true-false item.

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|------|------|-------|---|
| (1) | True | False | Early in U.S. history, a small number of American settlers defeated thousands of Indians in battle. |
| (2) | True | False | It is normally best to speak of Native Americans in the past tense because they lived a long time ago. |
| (3) | True | False | When speaking with White people, American Indians often use one-word sentences such as "Ugh" and "How." |
| (4) | True | False | Native Americans have a philosophy of respect for every form of life and for living in harmony with nature. |
| (5) | True | False | American Indians choose their own leaders instead of voting in elections for the U.S. president. |
| (6) | True | False | A good way for children to honor and celebrate Native American culture is by dressing up as Indians during Halloween. |
| (7) | True | False | Alphabet books and flashcards should recognize Native Americans by using phrases such as "A is for apple, B is for ball, I is for Indian." |
| (8) | True | False | All Native American groups share a common language and culture. |
| (9) | True | False | The proper term for an American Indian woman is "squaw." |
| (10) | True | False | It's okay to use the term "Indian-giver" because it is a widely used expression. |

ANSWER KEY AND DISCUSSION POINTS

1. **False.** The number of American Indians killed in battle was relatively small; what proved most fatal to the Indians were European diseases from which they had no immunity.
2. **False.** Nearly one million Native people live in the U.S. today, yet many books and videos still have titles such as *How the Indians Lived*.
3. **False.** The following are all stereotypes: using one-word sentences ("Ugh," "How"), using Hollywood-style grammar ("Me heep big hungry"), and portraying Indians as violent (e.g., war whoops and tomahawk chops). Native Americans are no more violent than others who fought to defend their homes and community.
4. **True.**
5. **False.** In addition to choosing their own leaders, American Indians are eligible to vote in all U.S. federal elections.
6. **False.** Even when well-intentioned, costumes that involve imitation feathers, face paint, headdresses, and buckskin are disrespectful of traditional Native dress (which many Indians consider honorable or even sacred).
7. **False.** Books and cards that equate Indians with inanimate objects reinforce the idea that Indians are not people.
8. **False.** There are a variety of Indian nations, such as Hopi, Lakota, and Navajo. Each nation has its own name, language, and culture.
9. **False.** The word "squaw" was once an Algonquin word meaning "woman," but its modern meaning is now slang for a "fat, lazy Indian woman" or for female genitalia. It is best to avoid this term and simply speak of "Indian women."
10. **False.** Phrases such as "You're being an Indian giver," "You're acting like a bunch of wild Indians," and "Please sit Indian-style" convey negative stereotypes.