

Cultural Change

**BEFORE
YOU
READ**

Reach Into Your Background

If you like to listen to rap, rock, folk, or jazz music, you

like music from many different cultures. The rhythms you like might have come from Ireland, Jamaica, or Peru. You probably like some artists from different countries, too. Name some music you like that you think is a cultural blend.

Questions to Explore

1. What causes cultures to change?

2. Why has the rate of cultural change been increasing?

Key Terms

cultural diffusion
acculturation

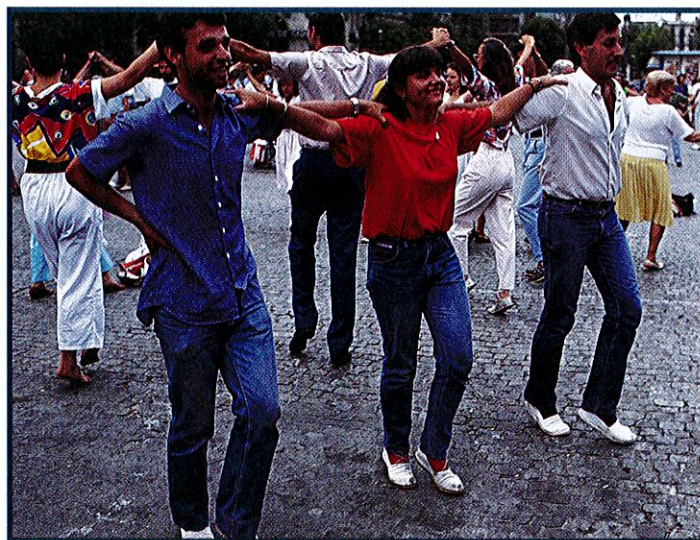
Most people think that blue jeans are typical American clothes. But many cultures contributed to them. Blue jeans were created in the United States in the 1800s, by Levi Strauss, a German salesman who went to California. He made the jeans with cloth from France, called *serge de Nîmes*. The name was shortened to denim. Strauss dyed the denim with indigo, a plant from India and China. The indigo colored the denim dark blue.

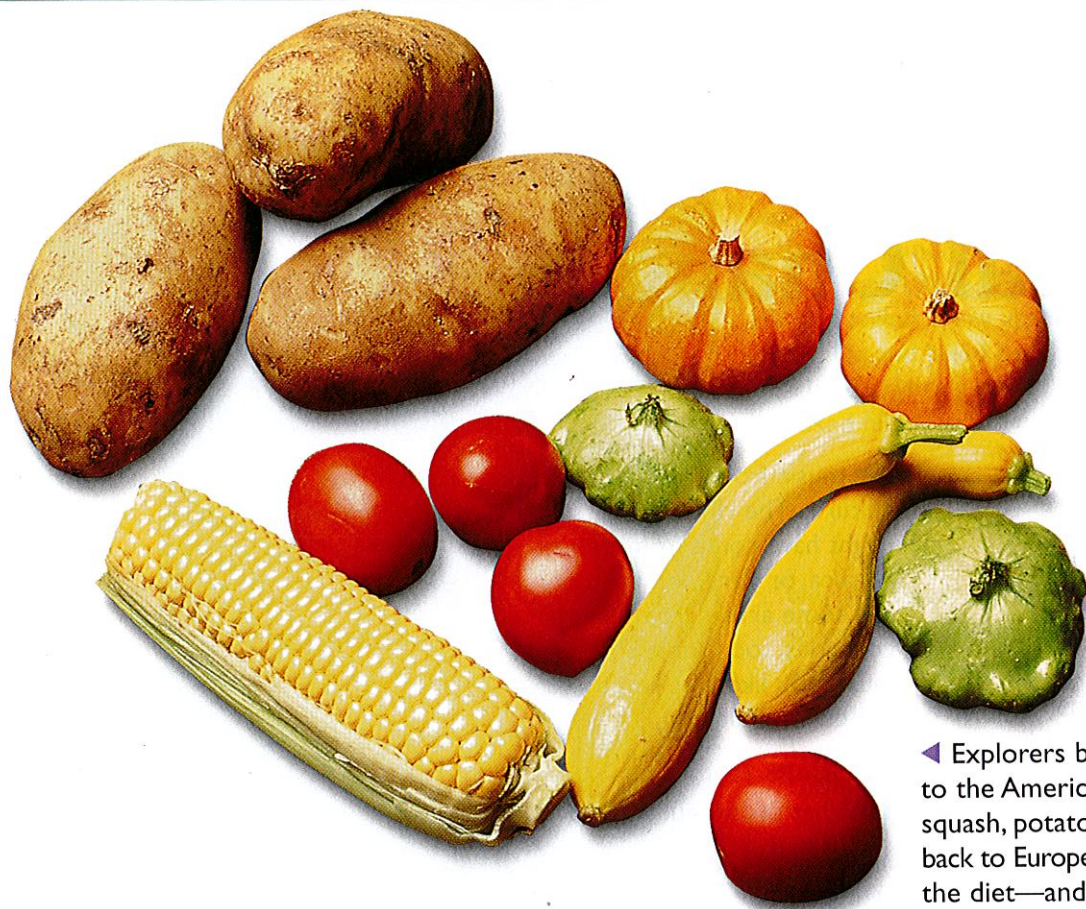
In the 1980s, the Japanese and the French developed stonewashing. It made brand-new denim jeans look worn. Then, an Italian company created acid-washed jeans. Today, jeans are still popular in America. They are also very popular in Britain, the former Soviet Union, India, and parts of Africa. And the name *jeans*? It's French, for Italian sailors who wore sturdy cotton pants. What is more American than jeans?

Always Something New

Just as jeans have changed over time, so, too, has American culture. Cultures change all the time. Because culture is a total way of life, a change in one part changes other parts. Changes in the natural environment, technology, and new ideas affect culture.

▼ Blue jeans are a popular form of casual wear across the world. These blue-jeans clad dancers are from Barcelona, Spain.

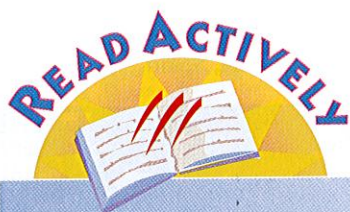




◀ Explorers brought crops native to the Americas, such as corn, squash, potatoes, and tomatoes back to Europe. This greatly changed the diet—and life—of Europeans.

A Change in the Environment If the weather changes long enough, the climate will change. That affects the kinds of food people can grow. It affects the kinds of clothes they wear. Changes in climate affect ways of making a living. But other changes can affect a culture, too.

A New Idea New ideas also change a culture. People used to take nature for granted. They thought anyone could use resources without damaging the overall supply. Since the 1950s, people in the United States and all over the world have become concerned about the environment. They recycle and work to protect endangered species and preserve forests. People also realized that we can use up or pollute many natural resources. The desire to save nature is a cultural change.



Predict What are some changes that technology has made in our culture in modern times?

Technology Equals Change Cultural change has been going on for a long time. New technological discoveries and inventions may have had the most effect on cultures. The discovery of fire helped early people to survive colder climates. When people invented wood and stone tools and weapons, ways of living also changed. Hunters could kill animals such as the mammoth and the giant bear. These animals had been too large to hunt without weapons.

Think of how technology has changed the culture of the United States. Radio and television brought entertainment and news into homes. Such things as TV dinners and instant information are now part of our culture. Computers change how and where people work. Computers even help people live longer. Doctors use computers to treat

patients. Radio, television, and computers add new words to our language. *Broadcast*, *channel surfing*, and *hacker* are three. What other new words can you think of?

Sharing Ideas People are on the move all over the world. People come to the United States from other countries. Americans travel to other countries. In the process, they all bring new things such as clothing and tools with them. They also bring ideas about such things as ways to prepare food, teach children, or worship and govern. Sometimes a culture adopts these new ideas. The movement of customs and ideas is **cultural diffusion**.

The blue jeans story is a good example of cultural diffusion. Jeans were invented in the United States but now are popular around the world. People in other countries made changes to jeans. People in the United States adopted the changes. The process of accepting, borrowing, and exchanging ideas is called **acculturation**.

You can see cultural diffusion and acculturation if you study the history of baseball. It began as an American sport, but today it is played all over the world. That is an example of cultural diffusion. The Japanese love baseball. However, they changed the game to fit their culture. This change is an example of acculturation. Americans value competition. They focus on winning. But in Japan, a game can end in a tie. The

LINKS TO MUSIC

Tuning In to Cyberspace

Many record companies are now on the Internet. They talk about things like a band's latest musical release and upcoming tours. Some let people hear a band's music before buying it. Some bands have even tried live concerts over the Internet. This could be a big cultural change—listening to live performances at home instead of at a concert!

Working in a Canning Factory, 1912

Immigrants to the United States, like these young workers in a New York canning factory, came from many different ethnic backgrounds. The mixing of their various cultures produced a new, American culture.





Ask Questions Imagine you meet someone on the Internet from another culture. What questions would you ask to learn more about his or her culture?

Japanese do not mind a tie game for several reasons. For instance, in Japan, how well you play is more important than winning. Also, people try hard not to embarrass someone.

Technology and the Speed of Change

What's the fastest way to get from your house to Japan? A jet plane? A phone call? A television broadcast? The Internet? A fax? All these answers can be right. It depends on whether you want to transport your body, your voice, a picture, an interactive game, or a sheet of paper.

For thousands of years, cultures changed slowly. People moved by foot or wagon or sailing ship, so ideas and technology also moved slowly. Recently, technology has increased the speed of change. People no longer have to wait for a newcomer to bring changes. Faxes and computers transport information almost instantly. Magazines and television shows bring ideas and information from all over the world to every home. This rapid exchange of ideas speeds up cultural change.

A Global Village A village is a small place where people all know each other. It doesn't take long to get from one place to another. Today, many people call the Earth a "global village." That is because modern transportation and communications tell everyone about far-away people, businesses, and governments almost instantly.

Technology has brought many benefits. Computers let scientists share information about how to clean up oil spills. Telephones let us instantly talk to relatives thousands of miles away. In the Australian Outback, students your age use closed-circuit television and two-way radios to go to school in their own homes.

International Travel

Chart Study More and more people visit foreign countries each year. In 1998, 56 million Americans traveled to other nations. That's nearly the population of California and Texas combined. **Movement** How have today's forms of transportation, such as jet planes, affected international travel? **Critical Thinking** How do you think the increase in international travel has affected the "global village"?

Year	U.S. Travelers to Foreign Countries	Foreign Visitors to the United States
1980	22 million	22 million
1985	35 million	25 million
1990	45 million	40 million
1995	51 million	43 million
1998	56 million	46 million

Keeping Traditions Alive

In recent years, people across the world have made greater efforts to preserve their traditions. In this picture, for example, young people from 20 Native American nations perform a dance at a gathering near Lake Casitas, California. **Critical Thinking** Why do you think it has become more important in recent years for people to preserve their traditions?



Information Overload? Change can help, but it can also hurt. If things change too fast, people can become confused, and culture is threatened. Valuable traditions can disappear. Once important sources of knowledge are lost, they can never be regained. In many parts of the world, people are working to save their own cultures before it is too late. They do not want to lose what is good in their culture. They understand it is important to remember where they came from if they are to understand where they are going.

SECTION 4 REVIEW

- 1. Define** (a) cultural diffusion, (b) acculturation.
- 2.** List three things that can cause a culture to change.
- 3.** Explain the meaning of the term "global village."

Critical Thinking

- 4. Distinguishing Fact From Opinion** A friend who has a computer tells you she has an e-mail pal in Singapore. "You learn more by having a pen pal on the Internet than by having one through regular mail," she says. You point out that you get drawings and photos in the mail from your pen pal in Turkey. Which of you has stated a fact? Which has stated an opinion? How do you know?

Activity

5. Writing to Learn

Interview an older person about what changes she or he has seen in the culture over the years. Write two paragraphs summarizing what they say.