

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

TEXT A:

The hunter-gatherer lifestyle worked at least tolerably well for the nearly 100,000 year history of behaviorally modern humans. Everybody in the world was a hunter-gatherer until the local origins of agriculture around 11,000 years ago, and nobody in the world lived under a state government until 5,400 years ago.

Diamond, Jared (2012: 209) *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies?* Penguin, New York.

TEXT B:

Indigenous knowledge is not static, an unchanging artifact of a former lifeway. It has been adapting to the contemporary world since contact with "others" began, and it will continue to change.

Bielawski, E. (1990) *Cross-cultural Epistemology: Cultural Readaptation through the Pursuit of Knowledge*. Paper presented at the Seventh Inuit Studies Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska, August 1990.

TEXT C:

"Fourth World" refers to ethnic and linguistic groups not represented by a nation-state.

TEXT D:

Indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique worldviews and associated knowledge systems for millennia, even while undergoing major social upheavals as a result of transformative forces beyond their control. Many of the core values, beliefs and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are beginning to be recognized as having an adaptive integrity that is as valid for today's generations as it was for generations past. The depth of indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can

benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (2005) Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Native Ways of Knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 36(1), pp. 8-23.

TEXT E:

Indigenous knowledge systems explore local knowledge unique to a particular culture or society. The term usually refers to the knowledge constructed by a particular group of people such as the Namaqua people of Southern Africa, the Secoya people of Ecuador and Peru, the Ryukyuan people of Japan and the Wopkaimin people of Papua New Guinea... The Maori knowledge system today, for example, is a mixture of traditional knowledge and knowledge inherited over time from exposure to European culture.

TOK SUBJECT GUIDE, 2015

GENERATIVE QUESTIONS

- 1. Why do 21st century academics use terms like “traditional” and “hunter-gatherer” rather than “primitive” societies? What is an LEDC? Is the term “4th World” politically incorrect?**
- 2. How does the official TOK Subject Guide avoid proposing a precise definition for indigenous? Why do you think they chose this strategy?**
- 3. To what extent are the Maori, as they are in New Zealand today, a war-like, 4th World, indigenous, highly traditional culture?**
- 4. Formulate your own knowledge question about a named Native American culture.**