



# STUDY GUIDE

## AMERICAN INDIANS ARE STILL GETTING A RAW DEAL

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**KEY TERMS:** American Indians  
Land Trust

Indian reservations  
Federal regulations

Federal Agency

**NOTE-TAKING COLUMN:** Complete this section *during* the video. Include definitions and key terms.

**CUE COLUMN:** Complete this section *after* the video.

Which racial group in America has the highest poverty rate?

How is the U.S. government involved in the communities of American Indians?

What are the two federal agencies that oversee the activities of American Indians?

What consequences for American Indians follow from the involvement of the U.S. government?

How much are the natural resources on Indian reservations estimated to be worth?

## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

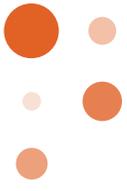
- Towards the beginning of the video, Mrs. Riley states, “Like most people, the only time I hear about today’s American Indians is when people are outraged about sports mascots or team names, like the Washington Redskins.” Why do you think that so many people, especially Americans, seem so disinterested in the general affairs and conditions of American Indians? Do you think that more Americans should be interested in how the U.S. government continues to treat American Indians? Why or why not?
- Mrs. Riley goes on to ask, “Did you know that Indians have the highest rate of poverty of any racial group in America? Did you know that alcoholism is more common among Indian youths than among youths in any other ethnic group?”
- Did you know that the rate of child abuse among Indians is twice as high as the national average?” What do you think is causing such abhorrent conditions for the First Nationers of the United States? Explain. What other significant problems do you think American Indians might be continuing to experience as a result of their current conditions?
- Later in the video, Mrs. Riley shares with us that, “The two main agencies that oversee the activities of Indians who live on reservations are the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA, and the Bureau of Indian Education, or BIE. Education, economic development, tribal courts, road maintenance, agriculture and social services. The federal government basically funds and controls all of it.” Why do you think that the federal government in the U.S. is still so directly and heavily involved in the lives of American Indians? Do you think it should be? Why or why not?
- Mrs. Riley also explains that, “..the vast majority of Indian lands with natural resources remain undeveloped because of federal regulations. For instance, for Indians to get permission to mine for coal on Indian land requires 49 steps spanning four federal agencies. Each of these 49 steps can take months or years to be approved. There are so many government regulations that just to apply for a permit to dig a hole costs \$6,500.” Why do you think that the federal government regulates American Indians so heavily? Do you think that such heavy regulation is proof that the U.S. government continues to exploit and to treat American Indians poorly? If not, why not? If so, why?
- Towards the end of the video, Mrs. Riley opines that a beginning to helping the plight of American Indians is to, “...end the trust system. Let Indians do what they want with the land they own. Get the massive federal bureaucracy out of the way. Give American Indians the opportunity to embrace the same thing that has lifted millions of other people out of poverty and into the middle class—free enterprise.” Do you agree with Mrs. Riley’s suggestions? Why or why not? What else do you think could be done to begin to meaningfully improve overall conditions for America’s First Nationers? Explain.

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: The Lumbees

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Government Creates Poverty,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What percentage of American Indians are born to single mothers? Who are the Lumbees? Where does the Lumbees wealth come from? What do members of officially recognized tribes aspire to become (instead of entrepreneurs)? What does Ben Chavis say is the secret to his success?
- Why do you think that so many people with good intentions, like the Indian activists mentioned in the article, are so ignorant in regards to how to meaningfully and actually help U.S. First Nationers? What types of problems does dependency on federal handouts cause for American Indians? Considering the history of the U.S. government with American Indians, how do you think that such awful treatment of such a special group is allowed to continue? Do you think that other tribes will ever have the freedom and opportunities that the Lumbees enjoy? Why or why not?
- Do you think that this article supports the points made in the video? If not, why not? If so, which points are supported and how are they supported?

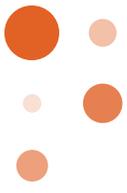


# QUIZ

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- 1. Which of the following is true of American Indians?**
  - a. They have the highest rate of poverty of any racial group in America.
  - b. Alcoholism is more common among their youth than among youths in any other ethnic group.
  - c. The rate of child abuse is twice as high as the national average.
  - d. All of the above.
  
- 2. The federal government basically funds and controls all of the activities of Indians who live on reservations.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 3. What practice illustrates the low regard the government has for American Indians?**
  - a. Permitting casinos to be built on reservations.
  - b. Holding Indian land "in trust."
  - c. Questioning their spiritual practices.
  - d. Doing nothing and leaving them to their own devices.
  
- 4. The billions of dollars that the federal government spends on Indians every year has \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. drastically improved the overall health of Indians
  - b. given Indian children a better education than the general population
  - c. provided many great economic opportunities
  - d. not made their lives better
  
- 5. The vast majority of Indian lands with natural resources remain undeveloped because \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a. the Indians have no desire to improve the land
  - b. they lack the funds
  - c. of federal regulations
  - d. it's against their beliefs



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://reason.com/archives/2011/04/28/government-creates-poverty>

# Government Creates Poverty

## Freedom leads to prosperity.

John Stossel | April 28, 2011

The U.S. government has "helped" no group more than it has "helped" the American Indians. It stuns me when President Obama appears before Indian groups and says things like, "Few have been ignored by Washington for as long as Native Americans."

Ignored? Are you kidding me? They should be so lucky. The government has made most Indian tribes wards of the state. Government manages their land, provides their health care, and pays for housing and child care. Twenty different departments and agencies have special "native American" programs. The result? Indians have the highest poverty rate, nearly 25 percent, and the lowest life expectancy of any group in America. Sixty-six percent are born to single mothers.

Nevertheless, Indian activists want more government "help."

It is intuitive to assume that, when people struggle, government "help" is the answer. The opposite is true. American groups who are helped the most, do the worst.

Consider the Lumbees of Robeson County, N.C.—a tribe not recognized as sovereign by the government and therefore ineligible for most of the "help" given other tribes. The Lumbees do much better than those recognized tribes.

Lumbees own their homes and succeed in business. They include real estate developer Jim Thomas, who used to own the Sacramento Kings, and Jack Lowery, who helped start the Cracker Barrel Restaurants. Lumbees started the first Indian-owned bank, which now has 12 branches.

The Lumbees' wealth is not from casino money.

"We don't have any casinos. We have 12 banks," says Ben Chavis, another successful Lumbee businessman. He also points out that Robeson County looks different from most Indian reservations.

"There's mansions. They look like English manors. I can take you to one neighborhood where my people are from and show you nicer homes than the whole Sioux reservation."

Despite this success, professional "victims" activists want Congress to make the Lumbees dependent—like other tribes. U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-N.C.), has introduced the Lumbee Recognition Act, which would give the Lumbees the same "help" other tribes get—about \$80 million a year. Some members of the tribe support the bill.

Of course they do. People like to freeload.

Lawyer Elizabeth Homer, who used to be the U.S. Interior Department's director of Indian land trusts, says the Lumbees ought to get federal recognition.

"The Lumbees have been neglected and left out of the system, and have been petitioning for 100 years. ... They're entitled, by the way."

People like Homer will never get it. Lumbees do well because they've divorced themselves from government handouts. Washington's neglect was a godsend.

Some Lumbees don't want the handout.

"We shouldn't take it!" Chavis said. He says if federal money comes, members of his tribe "are going to become welfare cases. It's going to stifle creativity. On the reservations, they haven't trained to be capitalists. They've been trained to be communists."

Tribal governments and the Bureau of Indian Affairs manage most Indian land. Indians compete to serve on tribal councils because they can give out the government's money. Instead of seeking to become entrepreneurs, members of tribes aspire to become bureaucrats.

"You can help your girlfriend; you can help your girlfriend's mama. It's a great program!" Chavis said sarcastically.

Because a government trust controls most Indian property, individuals rarely build nice homes or businesses. "No individual on the reservation owns the land. So they can't develop it," Chavis added. "Look at my tribe. We have title and deeds to our land. That's the secret. I raise cattle. I can do what I want to because it's my private property."

I did a TV segment on the Lumbees that I included in a special called "Freeloaders." That won me the predictable vitriol. Apparently, I'm ignorant of history and a racist.

The criticism misses the point. Yes, many years ago white people stole the Indians' land and caused great misery. And yes, the government signed treaties with the tribes that make Indians "special." But that "specialness" has brought the Indians socialism. It's what keeps them dependent and poor.

On the other hand, because the U.S. government never signed a treaty with the Lumbees, they aren't so "special" in its eyes. That left them mostly free.

Freedom lets them prosper.

*John Stossel is host of Stossel on the Fox Business Network. He's the author of Give Me a Break and of Myth, Lies, and Downright Stupidity. To find out more about John Stossel, visit his site at [johnstossel.com](http://johnstossel.com).*