

# Multiculturalism

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the following topic of sociology:

1. Multiculturalism

## 1. MULTICULTURALISM

**Multiculturalism** is an orientation that recognizes the cultural diversity of the United States and encourages equality for all cultural traditions. It is also the subject of an ongoing debate being waged right now because the United States has a history of the opposite approach.

### IN CONTEXT

The U.S. has a long history of striving for the opposite of multiculturalism, which is what is called **monoculturalism**, or a single homogeneous culture. Historically, America has striven for a monocultural society that is **Eurocentric**, which refers to the dominance of English and European cultural traditions in American life.

In fact, one of America's earliest experiences with cultural diversity was contact with the native North American populations. The Native Americans were systematically rounded up, and their children were sent to government-run schools where they were taught to learn English, with the goal of eventually assimilating into American life.

The goal was to eradicate Native American cultural influence from society, and produce one monocultural society. The ongoing debate, then, revolves around how to reconcile America's monocultural heritage with the increasing contemporary reality of increasing multiculturalism.



### THINK ABOUT IT

Think about the rhetoric of American politics. Have you heard any debate about a multiculturalist versus monoculturalist future for America? What does this mean?

You may hear that multiculturalists are in favor of securing rights for immigrants and recognizing the contributions immigrants make to the American society and economy. On the other hand, you may hear about monoculturalists wanting to put up a border, an electric fence, on the U.S./ Mexico border, or advocating to

find immigrants and deport them. When you're reading or watching the news, look for signs of these underlying monocultural or multicultural perspectives.

There are some multiculturalists in America who espouse the perspective of **Afrocentrism**, which is a perspective that encourages people to recognize and promote African American cultural traditions. This is a way to legitimize these traditions in American life and push back against the monocultural ethos in an effort to advance a more multicultural future.



#### BIG IDEA

Multiculturalism is a perspective that pushes for the equal treatment of all cultural influences in American life, in addition to recognizing the contributions of other cultures to the dominant American culture.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### **Multiculturalism**

A perspective that recognizes the cultural diversity of the United States and encourages equality for all cultural traditions.

##### **Monoculturalism**

A perspective that seeks to cultivate a single, homogenous culture.

##### **Eurocentrism**

A preference for the European, especially the English, cultural traditions in American life.

##### **Afrocentrism**

A perspective that encourages people to recognize and promote African cultural traditions.



#### SUMMARY

Today you learned about multiculturalism and its opposite, **monoculturalism**. You also learned about Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### **Afrocentrism**

A perspective that encourages people to recognize and promote African cultural traditions.

##### **Eurocentrism**

A preference for the European, especially the English, cultural traditions in American life.

##### **Monoculturalism**

A perspective that seeks to cultivate a single, homogenous culture.

##### **Multiculturalism**

A perspective that recognizes the cultural diversity of the United States and encourages equality for all cultural traditions.