

Native Languages

This text is about native languages among the Indians in North America.

In the text there are 16 words missing. Read the text and decide which words should be filled in.

You MUST write a word in each gap, but only ONE word per gap. Be careful with your spelling and grammar.



EXAMPLE: *This is a text _____ about _____ native languages.*

For thousands of years, Hupa people said “Hey yung!” when they met a friend. That means “hello” in the Native American language of Hupa. Today, not many people use Hupa to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Only 20 people can speak the language well enough to hold a conversation. All of _____
1
are older members of the tribe. Most children and young adults in the tribe grew up speaking English and know only a few _____ of the Hupa language.
2

Hupa is not the only language that is in danger of dying out. According to experts, more than 1,000 different native languages were once spoken in North America. Most of them had no writing systems, and many of them have _____
3
forgotten. Today, only 206 are left. In many cases, only a handful of people still speak the language. Unless the situation changes soon, one third of the remaining languages could become extinct in the next few decades.



Navajo teacher Andrew Becenti says we must save native languages
_____ they are important parts of Native American cultures. “If you
4 don’t have the language, and you try to teach the culture, it’s like food
_____ salt. Something’s missing. It’s just flat”, he says.
5

All across the US, many Native American kids and adults are already working
hard _____ preserve their languages. In some places, elders work
6 one-on-one to teach younger people.

Some native languages actually have a very good _____ of
7 survival. About 80,000 people speak Navajo, and many of them are kids. On the
Navajo reservation in Tuba City, Arizona, kids can take Navajo language classes in
school. Since the language is being passed down from generation to generation it
will likely survive for a long time. “I’m going to _____ my children
8 our Navajo language when I get older,” says sixth grader Sophina Manheimer.
Sophina enjoys learning Navajo because it helps her to talk with her grandparents,
who do not speak English well.

The future is less certain for languages like Hupa, although some young
people are trying to learn it. One of them says “Our language is a very important
_____ of our heritage. We can’t just let it die out.”
9



Historical Background

In the 1800s, the US government thought Native Americans should become more like European-Americans. In 1865, a committee of Congress recommended that children be sent to boarding schools far _____ their homes. There, children would be removed from tribal language and customs. They would learn to speak English and to dress and live exactly _____ white people. The government began building the schools in the 1870s. Thousands of Native American children between the ages of six and sixteen attended them. Some children were taken forcibly from their families. Some were not _____ to visit their homes, not even in the summer. Many children had a _____ time fitting in when they returned to their tribes after years of schooling. Sometimes, they no longer remembered or wanted to follow a traditional Native American _____ of life. But many were not accepted in white society, either.

After 1890, some boarding schools continued to operate, but the US government began to concentrate more on developing day schools for Native American children. Children _____ attended day school lived with their families, but were still expected to speak only English in school. Nowadays there is a US law that supports the right of Native American kids to be educated in traditional languages as _____ as in English.

Spelling:

pts
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Points
16