

What does “Indigenous” Mean?

Indigenous refers to people or objects native to a certain region or environment. They may grow there, live there, be produced there, or occur naturally there. The term indigenous is primarily used to refer to plants or peoples.

Unlike plants, humans emerged first in a single location in Africa. About 70,000 to 80,000 years ago, some groups of humans left Africa and migrated around the world. They then established settlements in these new locations. People began to settle more permanently. Most people were born, raised, and died in the same location. We commonly refer to an indigenous person as an individual from a group that has lived in a particular location for thousands of years. For example, a person of Native American ancestry is considered an indigenous American. On the other hand, an American descendant of Europeans is not.

Source: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/indigenous>