Examples of Cultural Diffusion

Cultural diffusion is the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group to another. The mixing of world cultures through different ethnicities, religions and nationalities has increased with advanced communication, transportation and technology.

Common Cultural Diffusions

- A Chinatown is an area with people from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao and these exist all over the world.
- Some people in the United States play hockey, which is played in Canada.
- The spread of music throughout the world shows cultural diffusion. For example, jazz started as a blend of the music of Africa and the Caribbean.
- Southern cities in the United States, especially border towns, have signs in both English and Spanish.
- The popularity of sushi, a traditional Japanese dish, shows diffusion of Japanese cuisine.
- The French Quarter in New Orleans show diffusion of French culture.
- People in the United States celebrate Cinco de Mayo.
- Over two million persecuted Jews fled Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914 to live in Britain or the United States.
- The English language is a good example of diffusion, as it contains many words from other languages.
• Australia used to be predominantly an aboriginal cultural community and now has many aspects of British culture.

• An example of forced diffusion would be taking Africans from their home to become slaves.

• An example of cultural diffusion with negative effects would be the spread of diseases, like AIDS, Bubonic Plague and Smallpox.

Religious Cultural Diffusion

• Christianity started in Israel and has spread all over the world.

• An example of forced diffusion is the Afghans forcing the Nuristanis to convert to Islam.

• India is home to many religions: Buddhists, Christians, Muslims and Hindi.

• An example of forced diffusion is the Spanish, French, English and Portuguese forcing the native population of the Americas to become Christian.

• Islam has spread recently to the whole world.

• In China, during the Han Dynasty, Buddhism spread from India to China.

Cultural Diffusion in Technology
- Paper was first made in China and soon spread to the Middle East and Europe.
- Kyrgyz herders in Afghanistan are isolated from the rest of the world and they have cell phones for playing music and taking pictures, even though there is no cellular service there.
- Gunpowder originated in China and eventually came to Europe.
- The fax machine was developed in Germany and was then made into a worldwide product by the Japanese.
- China invented the first mechanical clock and soon that technology spread throughout other cultures.
- The anti-lock brake system was developed in the United States and became known due to German automotive suppliers.

**Economic Cultural Diffusion**

- Trade has been a means of cultural diffusion over the centuries. One example is the Silk Road, over which caravans would travel and exchange goods between Europe and Asia.
- An article of clothing can be made from cotton grown in one country and then assembled in another.
- Coca-Cola products are found all over the world.
- In Himalayan villages, you can find people wearing blue jeans.
- McDonald's restaurants have sprung up virtually everywhere.