Cultural Divergence and Convergence
Definitions

• Cultural divergence – is when a culture separates or goes in a different direction.

• Cultural convergence – where different cultures become similar or even come together.
Cultural Divergence

• Can happen when members of a culture move away from the core values of their culture
  – Usually because they have been exposed to new ideas.

• Physical barriers
  – Mountains might separate people living in different parts of a cultural region. This may cause each group to develop differently.
Examples of Cultural Divergence

• Roman Empire
  – Giant empire that used to cover most of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.
  – Germanic tribes attacked the western part of the empire and they introduced new cultural elements.
  – Western Roman empire adopted the Germanic influence while the Eastern Roman empire fell under the influence of the Greek culture.
  – It caused the Roman Empire to fall apart.
• **India**
  
  — Aryan India was **unified** by a **common Hindu culture** but the **arrival of Islamic influences** led India to become **divided** into Hindu and Muslim areas.

• **Aztecs and Yaquis of Mexico** —
  
  — it is believed that they **used to share the same language and culture** but they later **separated** and spoke **different languages** and held **different religious beliefs**.
Cultural Convergence
Columbian Exchange

• Brought new ideas and customs to the Native Americans.
  – Catholicism
  – Land holding
  – Spanish Language
  – Royal Government

• Gave new ideas and traditions to the Europeans
  – Tobacco
  – Eating corn, tomatoes, chocolate, and squash.

• Created a new Latin American culture.
Globalization

• Is the creation of a common global culture.
• This is occurring due to air travel, newspapers, television, telecommunications, and the Internet.
Recent Examples

• **Democracy**
  – In 1980 not many countries enjoyed the democratic government...many were communist.
  – In the late 1980s and 1990s democracy was on the rise.
  – Many communist dictators fell and a democratic government replaced them.
• English language
  – There is a increasing trend to use English as an international second language.
  – Almost half a billion people speak English as their primary language.
  – The Internet has also assisted in helping the English language spread.
  – International business has also assisted in the spread.
• **New technology**
  – At one time in history, different parts of the world did not even know about each other.
  – Today people in most cultures are familiar with telephones, televisions, computers, cell phones, and the Internet.
  – These are helping us to build a common culture.
Global Sports

- Sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup in soccer.
- Sports provide a universal language that can bridge gaps, resolve conflicts, and bring about a greater understanding of each other.