

The Mapuche

The text is provided courtesy of Vanderbilt University: Center for Latin American Studies.



Indigenous people are some of the first people to live in a particular place. Indigenous people are also called Native people. The largest Indigenous group in Chile is the Mapuche. They have been living in Chile for over 2,500 years. Traditionally, the Mapuche were **farmers** and lived with their extended families. The women were famous for their weavings and used them for **trading**. Today, the Mapuche are still known for their weavings. Mothers teach their daughters to **weave**, passing the knowledge down through generations. They dye the wool themselves in large clay pots and then **weave** ponchos, blankets, bands, and belts.



The Mapuche are also known for their silverwork. Traditionally, the Mapuche made coins and jewelry from silver found in Chile. Several Mapuche chiefs wore headdresses that contained silver coins. During the height of silverwork, every Mapuche chief had at least one silversmith working for him alone. Different **designs** of silver finery come from different families and regions. At one point, a person would be able to tell who had made a piece of silver based on the **design**.

The Mapuche believe in multiple spirits and gods. Mapuche healers, called shamans, believe that they possess ancient healing power passed down through generations.

Vocabulary

design

noun

definition: A design is a pattern or an arrangement of things in a certain way.

Amy's pajamas are blue with a design of yellow and white stars on them.

Spanish: diseño, patrón

farmer

noun

definition: A farmer is a person who owns or runs a farm.

David's uncle is a farmer. He owns a big farm with many cows. He also grows corn, and he has a huge tractor.

Spanish: granjero, agricultor, ranchero, labrador, hacendado

trade

verb

definition: When you trade something, you give it in return for something else.

Spanish: intercambiar, cambiar, canjear

forms: traded, trades, trading

weave

verb

definition: When you weave, you make cloth or other things by passing threads or long pieces of material over and under each other. Blankets and rugs are things that are often woven.

Spanish: tejer

forms: weaved, weaves, weaving, wove, woven

1. Before you start reading...

Here are the vocabulary words that will be in this reading. Let's see how well you already know them.

Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
design				
trade				
weave				

2. Word Changer

Words have different forms when we use them in different ways. Write the correct vocabulary word, in its correct form, in each blank.

Amy's pajamas are blue with a _____ of yellow and white stars on them.

I _____ my apple for my friend's candy.

She is _____ a beautiful rug.

3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...

Do you know these words better? Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

	Don't know it	Have heard of it but not sure of its meaning	Know something about its meaning	Know it well
design				
trade				
weave				

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, who are the Mapuche?

- A. the oldest indigenous group in Chile
- B. the richest indigenous group in Chile
- C. the largest indigenous group in Chile
- D. the smallest indigenous group in Chile

2. What does the text mostly describe?

- A. what the Mapuche are known for
- B. where the Mapuche have lived
- C. how the Mapuche started
- D. what the Mapuche believe in

3. Read these sentences from the text.

Traditionally, the Mapuche were farmers and lived with their extended families. The women were famous for their weavings and used them for trading. Today, the Mapuche are still known for their weavings. Mothers teach their daughters to weave, passing the knowledge down through generations.

What can you conclude about Mapuche weavings today and in the past?

- A. Mapuche weavings today are made in a longer way compared to the weavings in the past.
- B. Mapuche weavings today are made in a shorter way compared to the weavings in the past.
- C. Mapuche weavings today are made in a different way compared to the weavings in the past.
- D. Mapuche weavings today are made in a similar way compared to the weavings in the past.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

The women were famous for their weavings and used them for trading. Today, the Mapuche are still known for their weavings. Mothers teach their daughters to weave, passing the knowledge down through generations. . . .

The Mapuche are also known for their silverwork. Traditionally, the Mapuche made coins and jewelry from silver found in Chile. Several Mapuche chiefs wore headdresses that contained silver coins. During the height of silverwork, every Mapuche chief had at least one silversmith working for him alone.

Based on the text, how famous are today's Mapuche weavings and silverwork?

- A. Today's Mapuche weavings are more famous than today's Mapuche silverwork.
- B. Today's Mapuche weavings and today's Mapuche silverwork are both famous.
- C. Today's Mapuche weavings are less famous than today's Mapuche silverwork.
- D. Today's Mapuche weavings and today's Mapuche silverwork are both not famous.

5. What is the main idea of the text?

- A. The Mapuche women have been famous for their weavings, with mothers passing the knowledge down through generations.
- B. The Mapuche people, the largest indigenous group in Chile, are known for their weavings and silverwork.
- C. The Mapuche people are known for their silverwork, with different designs coming from different families and regions.
- D. The Mapuche people have healers who believe they possess ancient healing power passed down through generations.