

Critical Thinking Exercise

Using Intellectual Tools to Evaluate Additions to Tribal Membership Rolls

The following summaries detail three people applying for tribal membership. Read each of the scenarios and identify similarities that exist in terms of need, capacity, and desert. Work in small groups to determine who should be considered for the benefit of tribal membership. Be prepared to explain your position to the class.

Applicant 1–Brian Mukwa

Shortly before Brian was born his mother, a tribal member, moved off the reservation to be close to his father's army base. Because Brian's mother and father moved frequently, Brian did not have an opportunity to learn the traditions and customs of his people. Brian did however, learn to speak his native language from his mother, and is not only a fluent speaker, but has also taught his two young sons to value and speak the language of their ancestors. After successfully living and working in the city for most of his life, Brian feels drawn back to his community. He wants to reconnect to his extended family even though he does not live on the reservation. Brian plans to continue working as a business consultant in a local town.

Applicant 2–Ronda Opeechee

Ronda's mother and father were tribal members from different tribes. Ronda was enrolled as a member of her father's tribe when she was born. Shortly thereafter, her mother died and her father decided to move the family from his reservation to her mother's reservation to be near Ronda's maternal grandmother. Ronda has graduated from college and has earned a position working at the healthcare clinic on her mother's reservation. To be considered for housing benefits on the reservation, Ronda must be an enrolled member of her mother's tribe.

Applicant 3–Pat Mooz

Pat Mooz did not grow up on the reservation or in the state his reservation is in. Because Pat was adopted by non-Native parents, it was only recently and by accident that he learned of his Native American heritage. Pat worked in construction most of his life and was quite financially successful. However, he lost his job and has been unable to find work in his home state. After reading a news story about a new shopping mall being built on his tribe's reservation, Pat decided to apply for a construction job with the tribe. He was not hired because he is not an enrolled member. Pat does not intend to live on the reservation and plans to return to his home state once he can find a permanent job.