

Chapter 2

The Concept of Culture

Multiple Choice

1. The central concept in anthropology is the concept of:
 - a. distribution.
 - b. power.
 - c. culture.
 - d. artifacts.ANS: C
PG: 27
2. The anthropological concept of culture includes all of the following except:
 - a. the ideas people learn.
 - b. genetic aspects of being human.
 - c. the material things people share.
 - d. the ways people behave.
 - e. the values and attitudes that people have.ANS: B
PG: 28
MSC: WWW
3. Which statement about the concept of culture is not true?
 - a. Culture is symbolic.
 - b. Culture is learned.
 - c. Culture is always changing.
 - d. Culture is genetically-based.
 - e. Culture is adaptive.ANS: D
PG: 28
4. People from the same culture can predict one another's behavior because:
 - a. culture determines behavior.
 - b. culture conditions behavior.
 - c. all people in any given society accept exactly the same rules for behavior.
 - d. all people in any given society have exactly the same ideas.
 - e. culture groups are programmed to imitate each other.ANS: B
PG: 29

5. How does the earliest anthropological definition of culture by Edward Tylor differ from the definitions frequently used today?
- a. Tylor's definition is more like a "laundry list" of attributes that together form a culture.
 - b. Definitions today tend to be more specialized and detailed about characteristics of culture.
 - c. Definitions of culture are no longer being formulated. Anthropology has a single significant definition of culture that all researchers use.
 - d. Culture was more evident in the time of Tylor and his definition includes details that are no longer relevant to the study of culture.
 - e. Tylor's definition is the only definition still in use today.
- ANS: A
PG: 28
6. All of the following are components of any definition of culture except:
- a. ideas and values.
 - b. biological predispositions.
 - c. material objects.
 - d. behavior patterns.
 - e. attitudes in society.
- ANS: B
PG: 28-9
MSC: WWW
7. Symbols are one of the most critical components of culture. Which of the following statements is not true of symbols?
- a. Symbols unify people into a group.
 - b. Symbols provide meaning.
 - c. Symbols are completely separate from language.
 - d. Symbols help people identify objects and ideas.
 - e. Symbols are powerful.
- ANS: C
PG: 30
MSC: WWW
8. Which statement about the term civilization is true?
- a. Civilization is synonymous with culture.
 - b. All cultures are civilizations, but all civilizations are not cultures.
 - c. Civilizations are characterized by monumental architecture, writing, and centralized government.
 - d. Civilizations first appeared around 10,000 years ago.
 - e. There are no contemporary civilizations. This was a phenomenon of the historical past.
- ANS: C
PG: 30

9. Trying to operate in an unfamiliar culture:

- a. often leads to the experience of culture shock.
- b. is never difficult for an educated person.
- c. is relatively easy if you have read a book about that culture.
- d. may lead to physical distress but not psychological distress.
- e. creates mild psychological stress.

ANS: A

PG: 31

10. Subcultures have all of the following characteristics except:

- a. they are subsets of the wider culture.
- b. they always enjoy all the benefits of the mainstream culture.
- c. they retain a level of cultural uniqueness that sets them apart.
- d. they are neither inferior nor superior to mainstream culture.
- e. they do not control society's major institutional structures.

ANS: B

PG: 31

MSC: WWW

11. Which of the following best illustrates a pluralistic society?

- a. It is composed of a number of subcultural groups and has a low potential for misunderstandings or hostilities.
- b. It has a great potential for misunderstandings or hostilities and is found in the U.S. and the United Kingdom.
- c. It is found in the United States and the United Kingdom but because of diffusion it is rapidly disappearing.
- d. It is a peaceable society that promotes a great deal of cultural and social solidarity.
- e. It is a type of society that first developed with immigration, but it is no longer in existence.

ANS: B

PG: 32

MSC: WWW

12. The process by which people acquire their own culture is:

- a. called enculturation.
- b. genetically based.
- c. more rapid in industrialized societies than in less technologically developed ones.
- d. slowest in industrialized societies and most rapid in less technologically developed ones.
- e. called pluralism and results in pluralistic societies.

ANS: A

PG: 32

13. Which of the following is the best example of the enculturation process?
- a. an adolescent on an exchange program to another country
 - b. an adult business traveler spending short periods of time in many different countries
 - c. a young child attending a bilingual school in the U.S.
 - d. a young adult interacting within a multicultural community group
 - e. an infant learning how to walk and speak
- ANS: E
PG: 32
MSC: WWW
14. Which statement about the learned nature of culture is true?
- a. Humans are born with many predetermined behaviors.
 - b. People learn what they need to know in order to adapt to their environment.
 - c. Some cultures are more intelligent than others.
 - d. Children can learn only one culture at a time.
 - e. People around the world acquire culture through very different processes.
- ANS: B
PG: 33
MSC: WWW
15. Cross cultural coaching is appropriate in which setting?
- a. factory
 - b. public high school
 - c. the United States Army
 - d. work in federal agencies
 - e. Cross-cultural coaching is appropriate in all settings.
- ANS: E
PG: 34
16. When we describe a culture as being polychronic, we mean that people:
- a. feel comfortable engaging in a number of activities simultaneously.
 - b. tend to be extremely punctual.
 - c. prefer to engage in only one activity at a time.
 - d. believe in the saying "time is money."
 - e. are extremely ethnocentric.
- ANS: A
PG: 35
MSC: WWW

17. Dr. Edward T. Hall's model of monochronic vs. polychronic cultures is based on the cultural variable of:
- a. color.
 - b. spirituality.
 - c. time.
 - d. money.
 - e. power.
- ANS: C
PG: 35
18. Which statement about the concept of culture is false?
- a. Culture influences biological processes.
 - b. Culture is learned.
 - c. Cultures change over time.
 - d. All cultures include some common features.
 - e. Most cultural universals are instinctual.
- ANS: E
PG: 36
19. A Hindu who vomits after inadvertently eating beef illustrates which cultural principle?
- a. Culture is learned.
 - b. Cultures are always changing.
 - c. Culture influences biological processes.
 - d. The parts of a culture are interrelated.
 - e. Culture is adaptive.
- ANS: C
PG: 36
20. Some people in the world have tattoos, use scarification or wear bones in their noses because:
- a. they don't understand the harm they do to their bodies.
 - b. they have a distorted concept of beauty.
 - c. they do it as part of their religious practice.
 - d. their culture tells them that it looks good.
 - e. it is used as a status symbol to attract sexual partners.
- ANS: D
PG: 37
21. Ferraro's wife was considered unattractive by the Kikuyu because:
- a. the color of her skin was too light.
 - b. she was too thin.
 - c. she had pierced ears.
 - d. she wore lipstick.
 - e. she was too short.
- ANS: B
PG: 37

22. “Wearing a green hat” in Taiwan means that:

- a. a man’s wife or girlfriend has been unfaithful.
- b. a young man is eligible to be married
- c. a young woman is eligible to be married
- d. a man’s wife has died.
- e. the person (male or female) is celebrating a birthday.

ANS: A

PG: 37

23. Despite many differences in details, all cultures share a number of common cultural features including:

- a. marriage systems.
- b. a system of distribution.
- c. a system of communication.
- d. a system of education.
- e. each of the systems listed here.

ANS: E

PG: 38

24. Which of the following is not a universal cultural need?

- a. a social control system
- b. a system of marriage and family
- c. a system of supernatural belief
- d. a formal educational system
- e. a system of communication

ANS: D

PG: 38

MSC: WWW

25. Saying that every society has an economic system means that:

- a. every society has a system of standardized currency.
- b. every society has markets.
- c. each receives goods and services based on his or her capacity to pay.
- d. every society has worked out a patterned way of ensuring that people get what they need for survival.
- e. every society is now part of the globalized economy.

ANS: D

PG: 38-39

MSC: WWW

26. Which of the following statements is false?

- a. Culture provides humans with a quicker and more efficient means of adaptation than Darwinian natural selection alone.
- b. Darwinian natural selection is the primary means by which non-human animals and plants adapt to the world.
- c. Darwinian natural selection is the way that animals adapt to their world, but humans adapt only by means of culture.
- d. Not all aspects of culture are adaptive for humans.
- e. Culture is the primary means by which humans adapt to their world.

ANS: C

PG: 40

27. The “organic analogy” refers to the idea that:

- a. the parts of a culture are interconnected much as are the organs of a living animal.
- b. only the fittest members of a species will survive.
- c. humans evolved directly from non-human primates.
- d. culture helps people adapt to their environments.
- e. culture is a living and breathing entity that affects human survival.

ANS: A

PG: 41

MSC: WWW

28. The integration of a culture means that:

- a. all of the cultural parts are tightly connected to all other cultural parts.
- b. cultural parts are somewhat interconnected with one another.
- c. members of two different subcultures attend school together and thereby learn to adapt to culture.
- d. a culture is exactly like the body of a living organism.
- e. it is impossible to distinguish any area of culture from another area.

ANS: B

PG: 41

29. The task of the cultural anthropologist is to:

- a. describe the various parts of the culture he or she studies.
- b. study aspects of a culture in isolation from the rest of the cultural system.
- c. show how parts of a culture are independent from one another.
- d. determine if one culture is more moral than another.
- e. work to help develop the most adaptive type of culture to improve human potential.

ANS: A

PG: 41

30. In comparison to the United States and Germany, why have so few scientists received Nobel Prizes in Japan?

- a. Japan does not have a strong scientific tradition, as do the Western nations.
- b. Japanese scientists have focused more on productive efficiency rather than any kind of technological advances.

- c. Most Japanese scientists who are advanced choose to immigrate to Europe or the United States.
- d. Japanese scientists have been chosen to receive the Nobel Prize, but because of cultural tradition they have not traveled to accept the award.
- e. Japanese culture does not value bold experimentation of individual accomplishment as much as these other countries.

ANS: E

PG: 42

31. The organic analogy of a culture is an example of the characteristic that:

- a. cultures are constantly changing.
- b. cultures are adaptive and maladaptive.
- c. cultures are generally interconnected.
- d. culture influences biological processes.
- e. there are cultural universals.

ANS: C

PG: 42

MSC: WWW

32. Conversational distance in U.S. cultures tends to be approximately:

- a. 9 inches from one mouth to the other.
- b. 15 inches from one mouth to the other.
- c. 20 inches from one mouth to the other.
- d. 22 inches from one mouth to the other.
- e. 29 inches from one mouth to the other.

ANS: D

PG: 43

33. The anthropological attitude that a society's customs and ideas should be viewed in the context of that society's culture is called:

- a. ethnocentrism.
- b. cultural relativism.
- c. cultural constraint.
- d. cultural diffusion.
- e. cultural innovation.

ANS: B

PG: 43

MSC: WWW

34. Internal cultural changes occur most often in:

- a. cities.
- b. monumental architecture.
- c. Asian societies.
- d. indigenous societies.
- e. technologically complex societies.

ANS: E

PG: 43

35. What types of cultures remain completely static year after year?

- a. small-scale cultures
- b. non-Western cultures
- c. No culture remains completely static.
- d. Western cultures
- e. All cultures are static.

ANS: C

PG: 43

MSC: WWW

36. The spread of a cultural element from one society to another is called:

- a. innovation.
- b. tabula rasa.
- c. ethnocentrism.
- d. cultural diffusion.
- e. invention.

ANS: D

PG: 44

37. Cultural diffusion is very important in cultural change because:

- a. people are essentially uninventive and unimaginative.
- b. all important elements of culture came from European societies.
- c. all important elements of culture came from Asian and African societies.
- d. it is easier to borrow a thing or idea than it is to invent it.
- e. it allows cultures to adapt more quickly to their changing environment.

ANS: D

PG: 45

MSC: WWW

38. Which of the following is not an example of cultural diffusion?

- a. the popularity of Tokyo Disneyland in Japan
- b. the popularity of manga, karaoke, and sushi in the United States
- c. the use of the detachable outrigger on the island of Hiva Oa
- d. a *feng shui* McDonald's constructed in a California city with a large Asian population
- e. African women exercising and losing weight to fit the American ideal of beauty

ANS: C

PG: 44-46

39. Which statement about culture change is false?

- a. Cultures are always changing.
- b. Cultures change through the processes of diffusion and innovation.
- c. Cultures change more through invention than through diffusion.
- d. Anthropologists do not agree on the single most important cause of culture change.
- e. Culture change is important to cultural survival.

ANS: C

PG: 45

40. In situations of cultural diffusion:

- a. the two cultures do not exchange every cultural item.
- b. one culture borrows and the other one does not.
- c. it is the stronger culture which borrows, or steals, from the other.
- d. the recipient culture does not have a choice regarding the item exchanged.
- e. it is common for the two cultures to merge and become integrated.

ANS: A

PG: 45

MSC: WWW

41. Which of the following statements about cultural diffusion is false?

- a. Some parts of culture are more likely to diffuse than others.
- b. Diffusion is affected by other variables within a culture.
- c. The process of diffusion is selective.
- d. Diffusion is a reciprocal process.
- e. Widespread diffusion indicates that a culture is having difficulty adapting.

ANS: E

PG: 46

MSC: WWW

42. In Hacienda Heights, California, a MacDonald's restaurant has incorporated the ancient Asian practice of *feng shui* in the design of one of its restaurants. Which principle of culture change does this illustrate?

- a. cultural diffusion
- b. innovation
- c. invention
- d. acculturation
- e. ethnocentrism

ANS: A

PG: 46

43. Forced borrowing under conditions of external pressure is a form of:

- a. cultural diffusion.
- b. cultural innovation.
- c. acculturation.
- d. invention.
- e. colonialism.

ANS: C

PG: 47

MSC: WWW

44. Changes in the United States as a result of the introduction of the automobile, such as changes in vacation style, increased employment mobility, greater variety of food products available, and environmental crises, are an illustration of:

- a. acculturation.
- b. linked changes.
- c. integrated change.
- d. cultural diffusion.
- e. maladaptation.

ANS: B

PG: 47

45. When the authors use the term “small-scale society,” they are referring to societies with relatively:

- a. small populations, simple technologies, and little labor specialization.
- b. simple technologies, very specialized labor, and small populations.
- c. numerous small subcultural groups who are economically interconnected.
- d. isolated populations of native peoples.
- e. undeveloped economic systems.

ANS: A

PG: 48

46. Why do anthropologists distinguish between ideal behavior and real behavior?

- a. some behaviors are much more adaptive and morally superior to others
- b. most cultures have aspirations for people to behave better than they usually do
- c. people in a society are never completely forthcoming or truthful with each other
- d. people in a society rarely conform completely to social norms
- e. All of these answers are correct.

ANS: D

PG: 48

MSC: WWW

47. Which statement about *hikikomori* is true?

- a. It is a culture-specific psychological disorder found in China.
- b. It affects teenage girls and young women.
- c. It results from the enormous pressure Japanese culture places on young males to succeed in school and later in the corporate world.
- d. It is an eating disorder found among Japanese teenage girls.
- e. It is a form of spirit possession found in the Philippines.

ANS: C

PG: 49

48. Which of the following statements about culture is true?

- a. Culture determines behavior, and the individual must conform to expectations in order to succeed within a group.
- b. Culture influences behavior and acts as a powerful force in affecting individual choices and free will.
- c. Culture is a form of behavior itself and may be either ideal or real.
- d. Culture and behavior are two kinds of social deviance which cause the individual significant amounts of anxiety.
- e. There is no relation between culture and behavior.

ANS: B

PG: 49

MSC: WWW

49. In a best-selling 1958 book called *The Ugly American*, authors William Lederer and Eugene Burdick documented:

- a. the social deviance that they witnessed among North American youth prior to the 1960s.
- b. the aggressive and war-like tendencies of North American culture.
- c. the various ways that beauty is defined differently between different cultural groups.
- d. the primary physiological differences between North Americans and Europeans.
- e. the cultural insensitivities of North Americans traveling abroad.

ANS: E

PG: 49

50. What do we call the specialty in anthropology that focuses on travel and interaction between visitor and natives?

- a. anthropology of migration
- b. anthropology of tourism
- c. global anthropology
- d. travel anthropology
- e. social anthropology

ANS: B

PG: 50

True/False

1. Anthropology focuses on the concept of culture more than any other academic discipline.
ANS: T
PG: 27
2. Culture influences biological processes.
ANS: T
PG: 28
MSC: WWW
3. The most fundamental aspect of culture is its use of material objects.
ANS: F
PG: 29
4. A subculture refers to an inferior cultural group.
ANS: F
PG: 31
MSC: WWW
5. There are an estimated 5,000 cultural groups in existence today.
ANS: T
PG: 30
6. The process by which a child learns his or her own culture requires many years of formal schooling.
ANS: F
PG: 32
7. The American Anthropological Association has taken the official position that humans are born with a built-in culture.
ANS: F
PG: 33
8. The United States is an example of a monochronic culture.
ANS: F
PG: 35
MSC: WWW
9. Human behavior is largely instinctual.
ANS: F
PG: 34
10. Humans are the products of both cultural and biological processes.
ANS: T
PG: 36
MSC: WWW

11. In the last decade there has been a reduction in the extent to which Americans alter their appearance through plastic surgery.
ANS: F
PG: 37
12. Few cultural universals have to do with meeting the basic physiological needs of humans.
ANS: F
PG: 38
13. Cultural adaptations have little importance in humans' adaptation to the sub-Arctic.
ANS: F
PG: 41
14. Human adaptation is due to Darwinian natural selection and also, to a great extent, to culture.
ANS: T
PG: 40
MSC: WWW
15. Conversational distance varies between cultures.
ANS: T
PG: 43
16. Items of material culture are more likely to be diffused than ideas and beliefs.
ANS: T
PG: 46
17. Acculturation is a type of cultural diffusion.
ANS: T
PG: 47
18. Societies with very simple technology are called primitive societies by most anthropologists today.
ANS: F
PG: 48
19. In the 21st century, Americans are no longer the only nationality with the reputation of being insensitive tourists when traveling abroad.
ANS: T
PG: 49
20. Hikikomori, the severe withdrawal found among an alarming numbers of teenage boys and young men in Japan, is found to a similar degree in Britain, France, and the United States.
ANS: F
PG: 49

Short Answer

1. How do anthropologists define the concept of culture? Consider the three components of culture.
ANS: Culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society. It includes material objects, ideas, values, and attitudes, and behavior patterns.
PG: 28-9
2. What is culture shock?
ANS: Culture shock is a form of psychological distress that can result in depression, overeating, or irritability brought on when trying to operate in an unfamiliar culture.
PG: 31
3. What are pluralistic societies? Provide an example of one.
ANS: Pluralistic societies are composed of a number of subcultural groups. The Amish in the U.S. are an example.
PG: 32
4. Compare and contrast a monochronic and a polychronic culture.
ANS: Monochronic culture places high emphasis on punctuality and completion of one task at a time; polychronic culture values social relationships and numerous tasks simultaneously, even if it forces their daily plan and routine to change. Both deal with the ways that a culture manages time.
PG: 35
5. Give examples of variations in cultural attitudes concerning male and female attractiveness.
ANS: Some examples include Burmese women elongating their necks with brass rings, Chinese foot binding, scarification, tattooing, ear piercing.
PG: 37
6. What is a social control system? Why do you think this is a cultural universal?
ANS: It is a set of mechanisms that coerce people to obey the social norms of a society so that people can live and work together.
PG: 38
7. Define the organic analogy made popular by some of the early functionalist anthropologists.
ANS: The organic analogy is a comparison between a culture and a living organism such as the human body that has systems that work together to maintain the overall health of the organism
PG: 41
8. What is conversational distance and how might it affect a cross-cultural exchange?
ANS: It is the approximate distance from one mouth to another during a conversation. It affects how friendly or hostile the exchange is seen by the participants.
PG: 43
9. Distinguish between invention, innovation, and cultural diffusion.
ANS: Invention is a new combination of existing cultural features; innovation is change brought about by a recombination of existing cultural features; and cultural diffusion is the spreading of a cultural trait from one society to another.
PG: 44

10. Why is the word "primitive" ethnocentric?
ANS: It implies that something primitive is both inferior and earlier in a chronological sense.
There are other terms that can be used in its place.
PG: 44

Essay

1. In your own words, how would you define the concept of culture? What general statements hold true for all cultures of the world?
ANS: Will vary
2. What is "culture shock" and what suggestions might you put forth for minimizing some of its more harmful effects?
ANS: Will vary
3. How many things that you do during your waking hours are purely biologically based? Give at least 3 examples of routine behavior and distinguish the learned cultural practices from biology.
ANS: Will vary
4. One of the most important technological changes that took place in the United States was the mass use of television during the 1950s. How has the introduction of that one new gadget influenced or changed other parts of American culture, such as politics, education, religion, and family life?
ANS: Will vary
5. Write an essay illustrating how the concept of "culture influencing biological processes" has affected American culture. Use personal examples, if you choose.
ANS: Will vary
6. There are many cultural universals, yet cultures are still so very different. Why do you think that despite the common needs of all human beings, we still live in distinct cultural groups?
ANS: Will vary
7. Discuss how culture is adaptive and use examples to illustrate your points.
ANS: Will vary
8. What types of problems of cultural adjustment would a Japanese teenager face when enrolling in a public high school in the suburbs of Chicago? What advice could you offer this student if you were his/her cross-cultural coach?
ANS: Will vary
9. Discuss the importance of invention, innovation, and cultural diffusion and illustrate each of these concepts by using examples with which you are familiar in your own culture.
ANS: Will vary
10. Culture exerts a powerful force on individuals. Discuss some examples of how culture affects and pressures the individual.
ANS: Will vary