

Chapter 1
Culture and Meaning

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The fundamental goal that links anthropology with other sciences, both natural and social, is:
- a) understanding what biological similarities link all people.
 - b) categorizing human experiences across cultural lines.
 - c) recognizing the patterns that are found behind everyday experiential actions.
 - d) resolving human conflict.

ANS: C TOP: Introduction LO: Fact

2. The chairs in a classroom are:
- a) a traditional feature of higher education.
 - b) an example of technology in the classroom.
 - c) designed to place students in a specific posture.
 - d) provided for student safety and comfort.

ANS: C TOP: Introduction LO: concept

3. People differ in how they view the world because:
- a) they live in different geographical locations.
 - b) religions have different views of the world.
 - c) cultures and hence cultural norms differ.
 - d) of biological differences.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

4. The common life events that all people experience differ mainly in the:
- a) languages used to explain these events.
 - b) meanings people give to these events.
 - c) geographical locations in which these events occur.
 - d) ways certain families explain and experience these events.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

5. According to Clifford Geertz, people impose meaning on their actions and experiences because:
- a) without these, all actions and experiences would appear to be pointless and emotional.
 - b) our brains compel us to do so.
 - c) otherwise, they would be unsure of how to act.

- d) without such meanings outsiders would be unable to understand these experiences.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Applied

6. How do anthropologists account for fundamental cultural differences such as how people marry, contemplate death, or recognize what counts as food?
- a) People's views on these issues are products of their environment.
 - b) Certain perspectives are less modern, and most likely will disappear.
 - c) Meanings are ascribed by those who share, use, and experience these issues.
 - d) These differences are by-products of biological differences.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Applied

7. The ethnocentric fallacy is the notion that our beliefs are:
- a) right while those of other people are wrong.
 - b) shared by all other peoples.
 - c) influenced by our language.
 - d) influenced by those outside our belief system.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

8. In order to deal with the grief they feel at the death of kin, the Ilongot people of the Philippines:
- a) require a close female relative to cut off part of a finger.
 - b) require widows to shave their heads.
 - c) are expected to kill an enemy and dispose of the head.
 - d) cremate widows at their husband's funeral.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

9. A relativist position assumes that a specific belief or behavior can best be understood:
- a) in relation to other cultures with similar beliefs and behaviors.
 - b) by finding a similar belief or behavior in your own culture.
 - c) by dissecting and analyzing its structure and meaning.
 - d) in relation to the cultural systems of meaning in which it is embedded.

ANS: D TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Applied

10. The relativistic fallacy is the notion that:
- a) certain cultural values are morally superior to others.
 - b) the values of more traditional cultures are more humane than the values of industrial societies.

- c) one cannot make moral or ethical judgments about the beliefs or practices found in other cultures.
- d) it is impossible to not think your own values are better than other values.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

11. When Michael Kearney got a skin infection after visiting and helping a similarly afflicted woman who attributed her illness to witchcraft, he:
- a) feared he had acquired a dangerous disease.
 - b) wondered if he too had been the victim of witchcraft.
 - c) needed to leave town for treatment.
 - d) assumed he caught it from the woman.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Applied

12. To understand the practice of virginity testing in Turkey, one must first understand:
- a) how Turkish villagers understand the reproductive process.
 - b) the role of in-laws in the family structure.
 - c) the history of the Ottoman Empire.
 - d) the role of women in the Turkish family.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

13. What does the “seed and soil” metaphor describe in Turkish village society?
- a) Reproduction
 - b) Land rights
 - c) Horticulture
 - d) Agricultural methods

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.2 PG: 11 LO: Fact SOURCE: Pickup

14. For the Wari, burial of the dead introduced by missionaries:
- a) was a welcome change from traditional cannibalism.
 - b) made them remember their dead and worry about their comfort.
 - c) was a better means of accepting their loss.
 - d) was an indication that they had accepted Christianity.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

15. Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues that anthropologists must:
- a) strive to be as objective as possible.
 - b) be critically grounded, morally engaged, and politically committed.
 - c) not delve into local politics while engaging in research.

d) try to maintain the idea of moral relativism.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

16. Why do human rights activists usually reject moral and cultural relativism?
- a) They have little interest in other societies and cultures.
 - b) Their main focus is on international law.
 - c) Relativism assumes that there is a universally accepted value system.
 - d) Relativism requires observers to accept all values and practices.

ANS: D TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

17. Anthropologists doing fieldwork must view the culture they are studying like:
- a) children.
 - b) moral guides.
 - c) ethnocentrists.
 - d) doctors.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

18. What makes cultural anthropology different from other forms of social science research?
- a) The use of surveys
 - b) The use of fieldwork and participant observation
 - c) A focus on qualitative research
 - d) The use of opinion polls

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

19. What can we learn from the anthropologist Richard Scaglione's failed attempt to explain Newton's law of gravity to his Abelam friends in Papua New Guinea?
- a) In trying to explain the concept, we need a textbook.
 - b) His audience had no science background and hence could not understand the concept.
 - c) We might not actually understand much of what we take as scientific fact in our society.
 - d) Newton's law did not apply in this context.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

20. The clock was an invention of:
- a) increasing civilization.
 - b) decreased organization.
 - c) greater discipline.

d) improved mathematics.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Fact

21. A researcher uses participant observation to:
- a) offer an objective account of the actions of his or her informants.
 - b) test a beginning hypothesis about his or her informants.
 - c) seek to change the cultural practices of his or her informants.
 - d) both observe and participate in the actions of informants.

ANS: D TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

22. What is the purpose of using the ethnographic method as a research approach?
- a) To try to see the world as others do in order to understand and describe these different views.
 - b) To measure one's personal values against other values.
 - c) To question the beliefs of the society being studied.
 - d) To ask embarrassing questions about other cultures.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

23. The cockfight is important to Balinese men because it:
- a) reveals the violent and aggressive nature of Balinese culture.
 - b) reveals the economic and political natures of the Balinese.
 - c) is a story the Balinese tell themselves about themselves.
 - d) reveals to others what the Balinese culture defines as important.

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Fact

24. In reading American football as a cultural text, it seems that Americans feel about football the same way they feel about:
- a) the workplace.
 - b) war.
 - c) marriage.
 - d) death.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

25. Americans believe that success is the result of:
- a) hard work and sacrifice.
 - b) luck.
 - c) proper education.
 - d) social networks.

ANS: A TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

26. American football best represents which American ideal?
- a) Relations with others as they are supposed to work
 - b) Family as it is supposed to work
 - c) Success as it is supposed to work
 - d) Games as they are supposed to work

ANS: C TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

27. What does it mean to view culture as a form of text?
- a) This is a way to learn the underlying facts about foreign practices.
 - b) This is a way of understanding the symbols associated with cultural practices and performances.
 - c) This is a way of reducing the study of other cultures to books and articles.
 - d) This is a way of avoiding the relativistic fallacy.

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Fact

28. By examining the “Happy Meal” advertised by one fast-food chain, anthropologists can, among other things:
- a) draw broad conclusions about American tastes in food.
 - b) deduce how much our consumption patterns create waste and environmental damage.
 - c) provide insights into industrial and agricultural history and gender roles.
 - d) none of these

ANS: B TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

29. “Happy Meals” shape children’s ideas about gender:
- a) through the use of colored packaging.
 - b) by the kinds of foods included in the meal.
 - c) by the portion size of foods in the meal.
 - d) through the kind of toy choice included with the meal.

ANS: D TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

30. According to the anthropologist Paco Underhill, what factor most influences U.S. shoppers’ positive or negative experiences?
- a) The products available in the store
 - b) The spatial organization of a store
 - c) Their perceived waiting times in the store.
 - d) The prices of items in the store.

ANS: C TOP: Case Study LO: Fact

True/False Questions

1. Human food choices are generally similar because of our basic human biology.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

2. Because people in different societies give different meanings to events, objects, and people they experience, differences in cultures exist.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

3. To assert that a man from a different society dressed in ceremonial attire looks odd demonstrates the ethnocentric fallacy.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Applied

4. According to Scheper-Hughes, anthropologists should always strive for objectivity in the field.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

5. Human attitudes toward death are generally similar.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

6. Humans are unique among the world's species in giving meaning to people, events, and the objects around them.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

7. *Sati* is the practice of a widow burning herself on her husband's funeral pyre in India.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

8. A warrior in Papua New Guinea who has a nose ornament can readily understand piercing-for-beauty in the Western world.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

9. Cannibalism is a practice historically found only in non-European societies.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

10. The purpose of the ethnographic method is to provide objective, value-free information about a different culture.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

11. Embarrassing moments in the field may help anthropologists better understand a culture.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

12. The Balinese cock fight provides information about Balinese ideas of social status.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Fact

13. Winning and losing football games is as important to Americans as winning and losing cockfights is to Balinese.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

14. The Wari people of South America practiced cannibalism due to food shortages.

ANS: F TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

15. After hearing detailed horror stories of death, disappearance, and torture in Guatemala, anthropologist Linda Green began having nighttime hysteria and nightmares.

ANS: T TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How do Turkish villager views of conception and the reproductive process compare to normative American views?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

2. What are the ethical limits to adapting a pure relativist position towards human rights?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Concept

3. Field anthropology can be one of the most dangerous occupations. Explain how and why anthropology could be dangerous.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Concept

4. Using the discussion of the “Happy Meal” as an example, analyze the meaning of social media sites like Facebook. What does it say about the U.S?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Appl.

5. How might ethnographic methods be used to analyze a college library?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

6. How do general cultural attitudes of Americans towards the body of a dead person contrast with those of the Wari people?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Fact

7. How would you describe the conflict between ethnocentrism and relativism?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Concept

8. What does Clifford Geertz mean when he says that human beings are "incomplete or unfinished animals?"

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Fact

9. How does ethnocentrism apply in a case in which you are confronted with food choices unfamiliar to you?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Appl.

10. Sherlock Holmes described in detail Watson’s brother, based on his watch. If Holmes were an anthropologist, what inferences might he have drawn about the society in which the watch was created ?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Appl.

11. In what ways might your classroom be readable as a cultural text?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.4 LO: Fact

12. What does an American college football game tell observers about American gender norms when it comes to public sports?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

13. Compare and contrast an American college football game and college basketball game, analyzing these events as cultural texts.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

14. In what ways does an American football game replicate the practices of a corporate board room?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.5 LO: Fact

15. Discuss an example of when personal embarrassment or awkwardness in a social situation helped you learn about the practices, values, and beliefs of a different community.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Fact

Essay Questions

1. Describe cultural ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. What are the main inadequacies of each for understanding other cultures?

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Concept

2. Why is it difficult for an anthropologist to judge a society based solely on the concepts of relativism or ethnocentrism? Use examples from the Abelam tribe of New Guinea, Turkish villagers, and the Indian practice of sati.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.2 LO: Concept

3. Describe Wari traditional death rituals from an ethnocentric viewpoint. Then defend them based on a relativist viewpoint.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.1 LO: Concept

4. Describe what is meant by "participant-observation." Indicate all the ways that this approach can provide the researcher with useful information.

ANS: Will vary TOP: Question 1.3 LO: Applied

5. What did Michael Kearney's experience with witchcraft in Santa Catarina teach him about his own belief system? What happened to his view of the Ixtepejanos' world view after this incident?

ANS: Will vary

TOP: Question 1.3

LO: Applied

6. The cultural context of football and “Happy Meals” reveals various meanings in popular American culture. Analyze one other activity or item from our everyday American lifestyle and explain how cultural norms and practices are expressed through hidden meanings within this activity.

ANS: Will vary

TOP: Question 1.5

LO: Applied