

Chapter Themes	Discusses the key anthropological concept of culture—its fundamental characteristics, its biocultural basis, its evolution along with biological evolution, and the methods and ethics of gathering cultural data
Chapter Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp the difficulties of trying to define culture • Be familiar with E. B. Tylor’s classic definition of culture • Know the main features of human culture: learned, shared, symbolic, integrated, and adaptive • Understand that culture is produced and circulated, not static or bound to or within any one group or society • Recognize the biocultural basis of culture—the physical traits that make cultural learning possible and necessary • Be able to explain the major primate traits and how they contribute to culture • Know the major primate behavioral and social characteristics and recognize their pedigree for humans • Be familiar with the major pre-modern human species and their cultural advances • Understand the nature and importance of fieldwork and participant observation • Be able to discuss the ethical requirements of fieldwork
Chapter Highlights	The key concept in the language of cultural anthropology is culture, a word borrowed from everyday English but used with special meaning in anthropology.

While there is no official or universally-accepted definition of culture, E. B. Tylor's early definition is often quoted because it raises most of the essential issues in anthropology.

Culture is learned, but in an active process of "guided reinvention of culture." During enculturation, public and pre-existing ways of thinking, feeling, and acting become part of the individual.

An individual without culture would not be fully functional socially.

Culture is shared, usually within a society. But culture is not evenly or universally shared within the group; rather it is distributed, from widely shared to narrowly shared. Any society contains cultural differences based on age, gender, region, expertise, etc. producing subcultures and even countercultures.

Culture is symbolic, based on the human ability and need to make, store, and share meaning in objective and public representations.

Culture is integrated, with all of its parts (at least loosely) interconnected.

Culture is how humans adapt to their natural and social worlds, so the environment must be considered in investigating culture. This does not mean that every aspect of a culture is beneficial for every member of a

society or even the whole society.

Culture is produced and reproduced by human activity and circulated between individuals, groups, and classes within a society as well as between societies. Culture does not stop at a society's boundaries but flows along trade, travel, and media links around the globe.

While no particular culture is in-born, the possibility of culture depends on physical characteristics, including brain, senses, limbs and locomotion, and maturation processes. Culture and biology are linked into a biocultural complex.

Culture is not all-or-nothing: many non-human species can learn, and some non-human species must learn in order to survive.

The specific primate physical traits include grasping hands, large brains, good visual acuity, bipedalism with upright posture, and a long life with a long juvenile period.

Most primates, like humans, are social beings, with organizational characteristics like dominance systems and hierarchies, territoriality, communication skills, and—at least among chimpanzees—the capacity to make and use simple tools and to engage in collective hunting activity.

Human cultural abilities developed over millions of years, along with

	<p>human physical traits. As humans acquired larger brains and better bipedalism and manual dexterity, their tool technologies and social organization gradually evolved more and more closely to modern humans’.</p> <p>Anthropological knowledge requires long and intimate contact with another culture, resulting in fieldwork based on participant observation.</p> <p>During fieldwork, a cultural anthropologist may practice various methods, such as collecting genealogies, conducting structured or unstructured interviews, and accompanying members on their routine and special activities. Fieldwork always depends on the cooperation of informants or consultants, members of the society willing to share and teach.</p> <p>In the modern globalized world, fieldwork often carries the anthropologist to multiple locations to observe the national, regional, and even global systems and forces that affect the local situation.</p> <p>Anthropological fieldwork, like all research on human subjects, raises pointed ethical challenges, and the fieldworker must be sensitive to his/her impact on the local people.</p>
<p>Chapter Key Terms</p>	<p>Acheulian, Australopithecus, Biocultural, Bipedalism, Counterculture, Enculturation, Erectness, Fieldwork, Functionalism, Genealogy, Guided reinvention of culture, Homo, Homo erectus, Homo habilis, Homo sapiens, Mousterian, Neandertal, Oldowan, Participant observation, Primate, Socialization, Society, Structured interview, Subculture, Symbol,</p>

	Unstructured interview
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