

Components of culture



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Culture The values, beliefs, behaviour and material objects that form a people's way of life. - Nonmaterial culture Ideas created by members of a society - Material culture Tangible things created by members of a society -

Only humans rely on culture rather than instinct to ensure survival. The

Components of Culture - Although culture vary, they all have five common components: a) Symbols b) Language c) Values d) Beliefs e) Norms A)

Symbols - Anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share culture - Example : Tattoos Not understanding the symbols of a culture leaves a person feeling lost and isolated • Symbolic meaning may

also vary within a single society B) Language - A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another - Language allows for the

community of culture - Cultural transmission - the process by which one generation passes culture to the next - Every society transmits culture

through speech C) Values - Culturally defined standards by which people assess desirability, goodness and beauty and that serve as broad guidelines

for social living. D) Beliefs Values are abstract standards of goodness. -

Beliefs are particular matters that individuals consider true or false E) Norms

- Rules and expectations by which a society guides the behaviour of its members. - Most important norms in a culture apply everywhere and at all

times • Mores: Norm that carries greater moral significance, closely related to the core values of a group and often involves severe repercussions for

violators. • Folkways: Loosely enforced norm that involves common customs, practices or procedures that ensure smooth interaction and acceptance.

Taboo: norm engrained so deeply that even thinking about violating it

evokes strong feelings of disgust, horror, or revulsion for most people. -

Consists of formal (norm that provides an explicit statement about what is

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illegal in a society) and informal (not written down and are unspoken) F)

Material Culture - Artifacts - Every culture includes a wide range of tangible human creations. - A society's artifacts reflect underlying culture. - Material culture also reflects a society's technology • Knowledge that people use to make a way of life in their surroundings.

Cultural Change - Usually change slowly and incrementally, through change can also happen in rapid and dramatic ways. - One of the key ways that material culture can change through technology - Can also occur through cultural diffusion (different groups share their material and nonmaterial culture with each other) - Cultural levelling (occur when cultures that were once distinct become increasingly similar to one another) - Cultural imperialism (imposition of one's culture's beliefs, practices and artifacts on another mass media and consumer products)