

Universals of Culture, Sub Topics and Examples or Associated Terms

Alice Ann Cleveland, Jean Craven, Maryanne Dansfelser
Global Perspectives in Education, Inc. May, 1979: 92-93

What are “Universals of Culture”? These “universals” are functions which are found in some form in every culture on earth.

<i>Universal of Culture</i>	<i>Sub Topics</i>	<i>Examples/Terms</i>
1. Material Goods (human-made, can be touched, inanimate) “stuff”/“things”	a) Food b) Clothing and Adornment of the Body c) Tools and Weapons d) Housing and Shelter e) Transportation f) Personal Possessions g) Household Articles	Pencils, hair clips, jewelry, dishes, casseroles, pies, jackets, skateboards, yachts, huts, mobile homes, SUVs, TVs, cellphones, jars, scarves, mugs, wastebaskets, laptops, statues, wallets, basketballs, hockey pucks, picture frames, lightbulbs, books, gum, backpack, bed, hammer, shoes, iPad, bank, bicycle, eyeglasses, soap [Most material goods can also be placed as examples in other universals of culture]
2. The Arts, Play, and Recreation (entertainment)	a) Forms of the Arts, Play, and Recreation b) Folk Arts and Fine Arts c) Standards of beauty d) Sports	Movies, Netflix, YouTube, Minecraft, video games, theater, drama, dance, ballet, museums, reading, Olympics, hobbies, NASCAR, soccer, Connect 4, Broadway show, charades, checkers, playground, Gaslight Theater, poker, sculpture, concerts, traveling
3. Language and Nonverbal Communication	a) Forms of Nonverbal Communication b) Language spoken c) Communication tools	Body language, gestures, alphabets, writing systems, facial expressions, cell phones, profanity, internet, Morse code, sign language, French, Swahili, greetings, manners, avoidance of certain subjects, texting, email, social media, ballet, road signs, newspaper, Braille, book, letter, invitation
4. Social Organization	a) Societies/Classes b) Families, Kinship Systems c) Roles (men, women, children) d) Marriage rituals/beliefs	Weddings, divorce, family reunions, funerals, holiday traditions, social classes, economic classes, age groups, neighborhoods, barrios, extended family, social hierarchies, caste system, rites of passage, social status, slavery, racial groups, formal v. familiar “you” forms
5. Social Control	a) Governmental Institutions b) Rewards and Punishments c) Peer Pressure d) Customs/manners that control	Prison, time out, lunch detention, expulsion, court, law enforcement, fads, trends, popularity, Panther Pride, taboos, school rules, traffic lights, terrorism, laws, parents, school, cliques, road signs
6. Conflict and Warfare	a) Kinds of Conflict b) Kinds of Warfare c) Conflict resolution strategies d) Conflict avoidance techniques	Weaponry, military, holidays that honor soldiers, art that honors military leaders, manners, politeness, compromise, voting, peace treaties, trench/biological/chemical/nuclear warfare, terrorism, mediation, courts, sports, going on strike, civil war, bullying, debates, “agree to disagree,” apologies, tolerance
7. Economic Organization (Money)	a) Systems of Trade and Exchange b) Producing and Manufacturing c) Property d) Division of Labor/Specialization e) Standard of Living	Banks, Stock Market, credit/debit cards, PayPal, Amazon, eBay, currency (paper money), coins, jobs, businesses, shopping, real estate, Shopping malls, barter, taxes, loans, debt, swap meet, Black Friday, minimum wage, poverty level, Communism, Capitalism, savings accounts, checking accounts, pension plans, Social Security
8. Education (Learning)	a) Informal Education b) Formal Education	Pre-school, K-12 Schools, Colleges, Universities, Community Colleges, Trade schools, vocational schools, charter schools, private schools, parochial (religious) schools, homeschooling, family, YouTube, mistakes, experience, Wikipedia, tutors, museums, books, coaches, internships, traveling
9. World View	a) Belief Systems, Values b) Religion c) Attitudes, Perspectives d) Philosophies	Gender roles, God(s), afterlife (concepts of Heaven or Hell), holidays, politics, racism, slavery, homophobia, climate change, guns, rights, cults, morality, rituals, burial, cemeteries, acceptable foods, roles of children, feelings/treatment of elderly [All the other universals of culture will be affected by one’s world view]