

I'm not a robot































Elements of culture include our norms, languages, rituals, holidays, food and diet, art, and architecture. It's often hard to picture what a culture will look like. There are so many subtle things that inform our cultural identities. But the above elements can help us visualize some key building blocks of any culture. Every culture has its own norms. Norms comes from the same origin as the word 'normal'. Our cultural norms are the things we do that seem normal or natural within our culture. But different cultures will have different norms. That's why in your own culture you may feel comfortable and completely 'normal', but when you travel to another culture, you might seem a little strange! Think about, for example, eating with a fork. This is a norm in Western cultures. But go to parts of Asia and they might think you're a little weird, or even have poor dexterity, because you don't know how to use chopsticks. Chopsticks are the norm in many Asian cultures. Other norms include ways of saying 'hello' and 'goodbye', how to dress in the workplace, and even which side of the footpath you should walk on! Related: The 4 Types of Norms Examples of Folkways Examples of Mores (Moral Norms) Most cultures are brought together by a common language and way of speaking. But even within languages (like English or French) there are regional dialects. And this is often where cultures express themselves most. We will often identify common euphemisms within a cultural group, for example. American culture has euphemisms like: A home run. This baseball idiom means to have an amazing success. This comes from baseball. It grinds my gears - A euphemism for being annoyed by something. When I lived in England, they found it funny that I used this term! Monday-morning quarterback - This is a person who judges something after the event with the benefit of hindsight. This comes from US Football. By contrast, Australian culture has its own euphemisms like: Flat out like a lizard drinking - To be very busy. Chuck a sickie - To call in sick from work for a day. You little ripper - An exclamation used when you are excited by something. Cultures often celebrate their uniqueness and identities through festivals. The festivals often show-off the clothing and outifts of a culture, as well as the food and music. Cultural festivals are also very regularly (but not always) oriented around religious beliefs or superstitions. An example of a cultural festival that's linked to superstition is Día de los Muertos, a festival in Mexico designed to celebrate and commemorate their deceased loved ones. In the United States, festivals are often oriented around music, such as the famous Burning Man festival. Read More: Examples of Cultures Cultural rituals and ceremonies are similar to festivals but often have a more solemn and commemorative element. Cultural rituals and ceremonies are similar to festivals but often have a more solemn and commemorative element. In the United States, we could consider Veteran's Day to be an important national ritual to remember fallen soldiers. This is usually a flag to half mast as a sign of mourning. It's still very important to the nation's culture. Another common ritual is to lower a flag to half mast as a sign of mourning. But many types of rituals can also be intertwined with other parts of culture such as religion. For example, when someone does, well, often have a funeral for them. This is usually in a Church or other place of worship. In India, the cremation is often a much more central part of the burial ritual than in Western culture. Some cultures have very important holidays where everyone decides not to work for the day. In the UK, which has its own national culture but also shares elements of a Western cultural identity, they celebrate what's called bank holidays. Bank holidays are days that everyone gets off to rest and relax. Thanksgiving is a common holiday in the United States that's not celebrated in many other countries. It has its origins in the founding of the nation as well as a harvest celebration. All cultures have their own unique pastimes. These often revolve around sports but also could include activities like hiking and following certain television shows! Baseball is called 'America's Pastime' because it's so popular in the United States. Another cultural pastime (or, rather, subculture pastime) is video gaming in South Korea. Being incredibly popular there, it has come to be associated with South Korean youth. In the 21st Century, where sub-cultures and countercultures are emerging online via digital media, shared pastimes are becoming increasingly important in bringing together disparate people to form cultural groups, such as cosplay and blogging cultures. Read More: In Groups vs Out Groups Many cultures develop their own tastes for particular foods and diets. Famously Italian culture is oriented around coffee, pasta, and pizza. Japanese culture is well-known for sushi and other seafood and salmon-based dishes. Mexican culture is well-known for its spicy foods and tacos. Interestingly, the south of the United States has appropriated parts of Mexican culture into its own cultural dishes, often considered Tex-Mex. This is an example of cultural diffusion. When traveling the world, you can see different architectural influences in different countries. Here, we can see how culture shapes architectural choices. Head to old Soviet countries and there is a lot of solid concrete architecture, tall buildings, and grey colors. The architecture here reflects the communist political ideology that was predominant in Eastern European culture in the mid-20th Century. Other parts of Eastern Europe, like Prague, are influenced by an older Gothic style architecture. This architecture stems from the Goths who were the dominant culture in the region in the late Middle Ages. While religion and culture are different concepts, they also overlap a lot. Cultures are often built upon religions over hundreds of years. Many people in the Western culture believe it's built upon Christianity. While it's more complex than that (secular enlightenment philosophy also had a huge influence), it's true that Christianity and Western culture are traditionally intertwined. For example, some in the United States credit its rapid rise in the 19th and 20th Centuries to the 'protestant work ethic'. There are cultures in India strongly influenced by Hinduism and many in the Arabian peninsula are strongly influenced by Islam and its values. Many cultures coalesce around a certain set of values. 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Even the artistic preferences of cultures can differ. Art works of France are closely associated with famous artists like Monet and Matisse, whereas Turkish art tends to be more associated with miniatures, marbling, and calligraphy. Traditional Australian Aboriginal art embraces dot painting, earthy colors, and artwork that depicts traditional 'dreaming' stories. Traditional Chinese art is called guò huà and associated with gentle, fine strokes often painted on thin tissue paper or silk. See More: Examples of Cultural Preferences Here A culture is a group of people who tend to share the same cultural elements (18 of which are listed above). A cultural identity is the individual's sense of who they are. It involves the cultural elements you identify with that. Your cultural identity is part of who you are. It shows the 'in groups' you identify with and the values you hold. 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Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis: Its history and influence. In J. F. Dovidio, P. S. Glick, & L. A. Rudman (Eds.), *On the nature of prejudice: Fifty years after Allport* (pp. 262-277). Malden, MA: Blackwell. Ray, S. (2007). Politics over official language in the United States. *International Studies*, 44, 235-252. Schneider, L. F., & Silverman, A. (2010). Global intergroup: Introducing five contemporary societies (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Shook, N. J., & Fazio, R. H. (2008). Roommate relationships: A comparison of interracial and same-race living situations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 11, 425-437. Upham, F. K. (1976). *Litigation and moral consciousness in Japan: An interpretive analysis of four Japanese pollution suits*. *Law and Society Review*, 10, 579-619. Whorf, B. (1956). *Language, thought and reality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Culture shapes our identities and influences how we interact with the world. Have you ever wondered what defines a culture? The elements of culture play a crucial role in this intricate tapestry, encompassing everything from language and values to customs and traditions. Each element contributes to the unique identity of a community, making it essential to understand their significance. Culture encompasses various elements that shape how individuals and communities express their identities. Language plays a crucial role, serving as the primary means of communication. For instance, languages like Spanish, Mandarin, and Arabic reflect unique historical backgrounds and values. Values also define a culture's pillars, defining what is considered important within society. In many cultures, family hierarchy may rank higher than individual achievement, influencing social dynamics and decision-making. Customs are practices that arise from cultural beliefs. Examples include holiday celebrations such as Thanksgiving in the U.S., where families gather to share meals and express gratitude. Traditions, passed through generations, hold immense significance. For example, Diwali in India involves lighting lamps to symbolize the victory of light over darkness. Other notable elements include Art forms. Painting styles differ across cultures, for instance, African tribal art often includes vibrant colors and patterns. Religious beliefs. Different religions shape moral values. Christianity emphasizes love and forgiveness. Social norms. Expectations regarding behavior can vary widely; some cultures value direct communication while others prioritize politeness. Understanding these elements enhances your awareness of cultural diversity and its impact on human interactions. Understanding the key elements of culture provides insight into how communities express their identities. These elements shape interactions and influence daily life. Values and beliefs form the foundation of any culture. They determine what is important to a community. For instance, in many Western cultures, individualism is highly valued, reflecting a belief in personal success. In contrast, some Asian cultures emphasize collectivism, prioritizing family and community over self-interest. Recognizing these differences helps you appreciate diverse perspectives. Norms dictate acceptable behavior within a culture, while customs are established practices or rituals. For example, greeting someone with a handshake is common in the United States, but may differ elsewhere, bowing shows respect in Japan. Additionally, customs surrounding holidays vary significantly: Thanksgiving in America focuses on gratitude and family gatherings, while Diwali in India celebrates light triumphing over darkness. Language serves as a primary means of communication within any culture. It reflects not only words but also cultural nuances. For example, some languages have specific terms for familial relationships that emphasize closeness—like “abuela” for grandmother in Spanish-speaking cultures—while others may lack such distinctions altogether. Furthermore, non-verbal communication varies widely; eye contact can signify confidence or disrespect depending on cultural context. Symbols represent ideas or concepts inherent to a culture. Flags symbolize national pride; religious icons reflect spiritual beliefs. Artifacts—physical items like pottery or clothing—carry historical significance that connects people to their heritage. For instance, Native American dreamcatchers symbolize protection against negative dreams while showcasing intricate craftsmanship unique to their traditions. By recognizing these elements—values and beliefs, norms and customs, language and communication symbols and artifacts—you gain deeper insights into the rich tapestry of global cultures around you. Culture plays a vital role in shaping societal interactions and individual behaviors. It creates frameworks within which communities define themselves and relate to one another. Cultural identity reflects the shared characteristics of a group, influencing how individuals see themselves. For example, strong cultural identities emerge from traditions like Diwali in India or Thanksgiving in the United States. These celebrations foster a sense of belonging among participants. Additionally, diversity enriches society by introducing various perspectives, as seen in multicultural cities like New York or London where different languages, cuisines, and customs coexist. Globalization significantly affects local cultures by promoting cross-cultural exchanges. As you travel, you might notice fast food chains like McDonald's adapting their menus to include local flavors, blending global standards with regional preferences. Moreover, media platforms allow for instant sharing of cultural practices worldwide; for instance, K-pop's rise has influenced music across continents. However, globalization can also lead to homogenization, risking the loss of unique cultural traits over time. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

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