Human universals compiled by Donald E. Brown


abstraction in speech & thought
actions under self-control distinguished from those not under control
aesthetics
affection expressed and felt
age grades
age statuses
age terms
ambivalence
anthropomorphization
anticipation
antonyms
attachment
baby talk
belief in supernatural/religion
beliefs, false
beliefs about death
beliefs about disease
beliefs about fortune and misfortune
binary cognitive distinctions
biological mother and social mother normally the same person
black (color term)
body adornment
childbirth customs
childcare

magic
magic to increase life
magic to sustain life
magic to win love
making comparisons
male and female and adult and child seen as having different natures
males dominate public/political realm
males engage in more coalitional violence
males more aggressive
males more prone to lethal violence
males more prone to theft
males, on average, travel greater distances over lifetime
manipulate social relations
marking at phonemic, syntactic, and lexical levels
marriage
materialism
meal times
mearning, most units of are non-universal
measuring
medicine
melody
memory
mental maps
childhood fears
childhood fear of loud noises
childhood fear of strangers
choice making (choosing alternatives)
classification
classification of age
classification of behavioral propensities
classification of body parts
classification of colors
classification of fauna
classification of flora
classification of inner states
classification of kin
classification of sex
classification of space
classification of tools
classification of weather conditions
coalitions
collective identities
conflict
conflict, consultation to deal with
conflict, means of dealing with
conflict, mediation of
conjectural reasoning
containers
continua (ordering as cognitive pattern)
contrasting marked and nonmarked sememes (meaningful elements in language)
cooking
cooperation
cooperative labor
copulation normally conducted in privacy
corporate (perpetual) statuses
coyness display
critical learning periods
crying
cultural variability
culture
mentalese
metaphor
metonym
mood- or consciousness-altering techniques and/or substances
moral sentiments
moral sentiments, limited effective range of morphemes
mother normally has consort during child-rearing years
mourning
murder proscribed
music
music, children's
music related in part to dance
music related in part to religious activity
music seen as art (a creation)
music, vocal
music, vocal, includes speech forms
musical redundancy
musical reptition
musical variation
myths
narrative
nomenclature (perhaps the same as classification)
nonbodily decorative art
normal distinguished from abnormal states
nouns
numerals (counting)
Oedipus complex
oligarchy (de facto)
one (numeral)
onomatopoeia
overestimating objectivity of thought
pain
past/present/future
person, concept of
personal names
culture/nature distinction
customary greetings
daily routines
dance
death rituals
decision making
decision making, collective
differential valuations
directions, giving of
discrepancies between speech, thought, and action
dispersed groups
distinguishing right and wrong
diurnality
divination
division of labor
division of labor by age
division of labor by sex
dominance/submission
dreams
dream interpretation
economic inequalities
economic inequalities, consciousness of emotions
empathy
entification (treating patterns and relations as things)
environment, adjustments to envy
ever, symbolic means of coping with ethnocentrism
etiquette
explanation
face (word for)
facial communication
facial expression of anger
facial expression of contempt
facial expression of disgust
facial expression of fear
phonemes
phonemes defined by set of minimally contrasting features
phonemes, merging of
phonemes, range from 10 to 70 in number
phonemic change, inevitability of
phonemic change, rules of
phonemic system
planning
planning for future
play
play to perfect skills
poetry/rhetoric
poetic line, uniform length range
poetic lines characterized by repetition and variation
poetic lines demarcated by pauses
polysemy (one word has several meanings)
possessive, intimate
possessive, loose
practice to improve skills
precedence, concept of (that's how the leopard got its spots)
preference for own children and close kin (nepotism)
prestige inequalities
pretend play
pride
private inner life
promise
pronouns
pronouns, minimum two numbers
pronouns, minimum three persons
proper names
property
proverbs, sayings
proverbs, sayings - in mutually contradictory forms
psychological defense mechanisms
facial expression of happiness
facial expression of surprise
facial expressions, masking/modifying of
fairness (equity), concept of
family (or household)
father and mother, separate kin terms for
fears
fear of death
fears, ability to overcome some
feasting
females do more direct childcare
figurative speech
fire
folklore
food preferences
food sharing
future, attempts to predict
generosity admired
gestures
gift giving
good and bad distinguished
gossip
government
grammar
group living
groups that are not based on family
habitation
hairstyles
hand (word for)
healing the sick (or attempting to)
hope
hospitality
husband older than wife on average
hygienic care
identity, collective
imagery
incest between mother and son
unthinkable or tabooed

rape
rape proscribed
reciprocal exchanges (of labor, goods, or services)
reciprocity, negative (revenge, retaliation)
recognition of individuals by face
redress of wrongs
resistance to abuse of poser, to dominance
rhythm
right-handedness as population norm
risk-taking
rites of passage
rituals
role and personality seen in dynamic interrelationship (i.e., departures from role can be explained in terms of individual personality)
sanctions
sanctions for crimes against the collectivity
sanctions include removal from the social unit
self-control
self distinguished from other
self as neither wholly passive nor wholly autonomous
self as subject and object
self-image, awareness of (concern for what others think)
self-image, manipulation of
self-image, wanted to be positive
self is responsible
semantics
semantic category of affecting things and people
semantic category of dimension
semantic category of giving
semantic category of location
semantic category of motion
semantic category of other physical properties
semantic components
semantic components, generation
semantic components, sex
incest, prevention or avoidance
in-group distinguished from out-group(s)
in-group biases in favor of
inheritance rules
institutions (organized co-activities)
insulting
intention
interest in bioforms (living things or things that resemble them)
interpolation
interpreting behavior
intertwining (e.g., weaving)
jokes
judging others
kin, close distinguished from distant kin groups
kin terms translatable by basic relations of procreation
kinship statuses
language
language employed to manipulate others
language employed to misinform or mislead
language is translatable
language not a simple reflection of reality
language, prestige from proficient use of law (rights and obligations)
language, prestige from proficient use of law (rules of membership)
leaders
lever
likes and dislikes
linguistic redundancy
logical notions
logical notion of "and"
logical notion of "equivalent"
logical notion of "general/particular"
logical notion of "not"
logical notion of "opposite"
logical notion of "part/whole"

sememes, commonly used ones are short, infrequently used ones are longer
senses unified
sex differences in spatial cognition and behavior
sex (gender) terminology is fundamentally binary
sex statuses
sexual attraction
sexual attractiveness
sexual jealousy
sexual modesty
sexual regulation
sexual regulation includes incest prevention
sexuality as focus of interest
shame
shelter
sickness and death seen as related
snakes, wariness around
social structure
socialization
socialization expected from senior kin
socialization includes toilet training
spear
special speech for special occasions
statuses and roles
statuses, ascribed and achieved
statuses distinguished from individuals
statuses on other than sex, age, or kinship bases
stinginess, disapproval of
stop/nonstop contrasts (in speech sounds)
succession
sucking wounds
sweets preferred
symbolism
symbolic speech
synesthetic metaphors
synonyms
taboos
tabooed foods
logical notion of "same"

  tabooed utterances
taxonomy
territoriality
thumb sucking
tickling
time
time, cyclicity of
tools
tool dependency
tool making
tools for cutting
tools to make tools
tools patterned culturally
tools, permanent
tools for pounding
toys, playthings
trade
triangular awareness (assessing relationships among the self and two other people)
true and false distinguished)
turn-taking
two (numeral)
tying material (i.e., something like string)
units of time
verbs
violence, some forms of proscribed
visiting
vocalic/nonvocalic contrasts in phonemes
vowel contrasts
weaning
weapons
weather control (attempts to)
while (color term)
world view