

“A list of 200 human universals — a set of traits and behaviours, tools and tastes shared by every human civilisation on the planet.”
— **Sagarika Sundarim**

A
Abstraction in speech & thought
Actions under self-control distinguished from those not under control
Aesthetics
Affection expressed and felt
Age...
 grades
 statuses
 terms
Ambivalence
Anthropomorphization
Anticipation
Antonyms
Attachment

B
Baby talk
Belief in supernatural/religion
Beliefs, false
Beliefs about...
 death
 disease
 fortune and misfortune
Binary cognitive distinctions
Biological mother and social mother normally the same person
Black (color term)
Body adornment

C
Childbirth customs
Childcare
Childhood fears
Childhood fear of loud

noises
Childhood fear of strangers
Choice making (choosing alternatives)
Classification
Classification of...
 age
 behavioral propensities
 body parts
 colors
 fauna
 flora
 inner states
 kin
 sex
 space
 of tools
 weather conditions

Coalitions
Collective identities
Conflict
Conflict, ...
 consultation to deal with
 means of dealing with
 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
Culture/nature distinction
Customary greetings

D
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...
 by age
 by sex
Dominance/submission
Dreams
Dream interpretation

E
Economic inequalities
Economic inequalities, consciousness of
Emotions
Empathy
Entification (treating patterns and relations as things)
Environment, adjustments to
Envy
Envy, symbolic means of coping with
Ethnocentrism
Etiquette
Explanation

F
Face (word for)
Facial communication
Facial expression...
 of anger
 of contempt
 of disgust
 of fear
 of happiness
 of surprise
 masking or 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

G
Generosity admired
Gestures
Gift giving
Good and bad distinguished
Gossip
Government
Grammar
Group living
Groups that are not based on family

H
Habituation
Hairstyles
Hand (word for)
Healing the sick (or attempting to)
Hope
Hospitality
Husband older than wife on average
Hygienic care

I
Identity, collective
Imagery
Incest between mother and son unthinkable or tabooed
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)

J
Jokes
Judging others

K
Kin...
 close distinguished from distant groups
 terms translatable by basic relations of procreation
Kinship statuses

L
Language...
 employed to manipulate others
 employed to misinform or mislead
 is translatable
 not a simple reflection of reality
 prestige from proficient use of
Law (rights and obligations)
Law (rules of membership)
Leaders
Lever
Likes and dislikes
Linguistic redundancy
Logical notions...
 of "and"
 of "equivalent"
 of "general/
 particular"
 of "not"
 of "opposite"
 of "part/whole"
 of "same"

M
Magic...
 to increase life
 to sustain life
 to win love
Making comparisons
Male and female and adult and child seen as having different natures
Males...
 dominate public/political realm
 engage in more coalitional violence
 more aggressive
 more prone to lethal violence
 more prone to theft on average, travel greater distances over lifetime
Manipulate social relations
Marking at phonemic, syntactic, and lexical levels
Marriage
Materialism
Meal times
Meaning, most units of are non-universal
Measuring
Medicine
Melody
Memory
Mental maps
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...
 children's
 related in part to dance
 related in part to religious activity
 seen as art (a creation)
 vocal
 vocal, includes speech forms
Musical...
 redundancy
 repetition
 variation
Myths

N
Narrative
Nomenclature (perhaps the same as classification)
Nonbodily decorative art
Normal distinguished from abnormal states
Nouns
Numerals (counting)

O
Oedipus complex
Oligarchy (de facto)
One (numeral)
Onomatopoeia
Overestimating objectivity of thought

P
Pain
Past/present/future
Person, concept of
Personal names
Phonemes...
 defined by set of minimally constrasting features
 merging of
 range from 10 to 70 in number
Phonemic...
 change, inevitability of
 change, rules of system
Planning
Planning for future
Play
Play to perfect skills
Poetry/rhetoric
Poetic line...
 uniform length range
 characterized by repetition and variation
 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...
 minimum two numbers
 minimum three persons
Proper names
Property
Proverbs, sayings
Proverbs, sayings - in mutually contradictory forms
Psychological defense mechanisms

R
Rape
Rape proscribed
Reciprocal exchanges (of labor, goods, or services)
Reciprocity, negative (revenge, retaliation)
Regognition of individuals by face
Redress of wrongs
Resistance to abuse of
 power, to dominance
Rhythm
Right-handedness as population norm
Risk-taking
Rites of passage
Rituals
Role and personality seen in dynamic
interrlationship (i.E., Departures from role can be explained in terms of individual personality)
Sanctions...
 for crimes against the collectivity
 include removal from the social unit
Self...
 -control
 distinguished from other
 as neither wholly passive nor wholly autonomous
 as subject and object
 -image, awareness of (concern for what others think)
 -image, manipulation of
 -image, wanted to be positive
 is responsible
Semantics
Semantic category of...
 affecting things and people
 dimension
 giving
 location
 motion
 other physical properties
Semantic components...
 generation
 sex
Sememes, commonly used ones are short, infrequently used ones are longer
Senses unified
Sex...
 differences in spatial cognition and behavior (gender)
 terminology is fundamentally binary
 statuses
Sexual...
 attraction
 attractiveness
 jealousy
 modesty
 regulation
 regulation includes incest prevention
Sexuality as focus of interest
Shame
Shelter
Sickness and death seen as related
Snakes, wariness around
Social structure
Socialization...
 expected from senior kin
 includes toilet training
Spear
Special speech for special occasions
Statuses and roles
Statuses...
 ascribed and achieved
 distinguished from individuals
 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

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for crimes against the collectivity
include removal from the social unit
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T
Taboos
Tabooed foods
Tabooed utterances
Taxonomy
Territoriality
Thumb sucking
Tickling
Time
Time, cyclicity of
Tools...
 dependency making
 for cutting
 to make tools
 patterned culturally
 permament
 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)

U
Units of time
V
Verbs
Violence, some forms of proscribed
Visiting
Vocalic/nonvocalic contrasts in phonemes
Vowel contrasts

W
Weaning
Weapons
Weather control (attempts to)
White (color term)
World view

Human Universals compiled by Donald E. Brown
As published in **The Blank Slate** by **Steven Pinker, 2002, New York: Viking Press**

Brown, D.E. 1991. Human universals. New York: McGraw-Hill

Also see Brown, D.E., 2000. Human universals and their implications. In N. Roughley (Ed.) Being humans: Anthropological universality and particularity in transdisciplinary perspectives. New York: Walter de Gruyter.