

Introduction: What is civilization, what is culture?

What is culture

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

The Center for Advance Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.

"Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things," Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, told Live Science.

The word "culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "colere," which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. "It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth," De Rossi said.

Western culture

The term "Western culture" has come to define the culture of European countries as well as those that have been heavily influenced by European immigration, such as the United States. Western culture has its roots in the Classical Period of the Greco-Roman era and the rise of Christianity in the 14th century.

Other drivers of Western culture include Latin, Celtic, Germanic and Hellenic ethnic and linguistic groups. Today, the influences of Western culture can be seen in almost every country in the world.

Eastern culture

Eastern culture generally refers to the societal norms of countries in Far East Asia (including China, Japan, Vietnam, North Korea and South Korea) and the Indian subcontinent. Like the West, Eastern culture was heavily influenced by religion during its early development, but it was also heavily influenced by the growth and harvesting of rice, according to the book "Pathways to Asian Civilizations: Tracing the Origins and Spread of Rice and Rice Cultures" by Dorian Q. Fuller. In general, in Eastern culture there is less of a distinction between secular society and religious philosophy than there is in the West.

Latin culture

Many of the Spanish-speaking nations are considered part of the Latin culture, while the geographic region is widespread. Latin America is typically defined as those parts of the Central America, South America and Mexico where Spanish or Portuguese are the dominant languages. Originally, the term "Latin America" was used by French geographers to differentiate between Anglo and Romance (Latin-based) languages, according to the University of Texas. While Spain and Portugal are on the European continent, they are

considered the key influencers of what is known as Latin culture, which denotes people using languages derived from Latin, also known as Romance languages.

Middle Eastern culture

The countries of the Middle East have some but not all things in common. This is not a surprise, since the area consists of approximately 20 countries. The Arabic language is one thing that is common throughout the region; however, the wide variety of dialect can sometimes make communication difficult. Religion is another cultural area that the countries of the Middle East have in common. The Middle East is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

African culture

The continent of Africa is essential to all cultures. Human life originated on this continent and began to migrate to other areas of the world around 60,000 years ago, according to the Natural History Museum in London. Other researchers believe that the first migration may have been much earlier, as early as 120,000 years ago. Researchers come to these conclusions by studying human genomes from various cultures to trace their DNA to common ancestors.

Africa is home to a number of tribes, ethnic and social groups. One of the key features of this culture is the large number of ethnic groups throughout the 54 countries on the continent. Nigeria alone has more than 300 tribes, for example.

Currently, Africa is divided into two cultural groups: North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. This is because Northwest Africa has strong ties to Middle East, while Sub-Saharan Africa shares historical, physical and social characteristics that are very different from North Africa, according to the University of Colorado. The harsh environment has been a large factor in the development of Sub-Saharan Africa culture, as there are a number of languages, cuisines, art and musical styles that have sprung up among the far-flung populations.

Constant change

No matter what culture a people are a part of, one thing is for certain, it will change. "Culture appears to have become key in our interconnected world, which is made up of so many ethnically diverse societies, but also riddled by conflicts associated with religion, ethnicity, ethical beliefs, and, essentially, the elements which make up culture," De Rossi said. "But culture is no longer fixed, if it ever was. It is essentially fluid and constantly in motion." This makes it so that it is difficult to define any culture in only one way.

While change is inevitable, the past should also be respected and preserved. The United Nations has created a group called The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to identify cultural and natural heritage and to conserve and protect it. Monuments, building and sites are covered by the group's protection, according to the international treaty, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This treaty was adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

What is civilization

We hear a lot about Western civilization. In most colleges and universities there is a required course called Western Civilization. Usually it is broken up into two parts. But, what exactly is a 'civilization?' How is it defined, and what are its core characteristics? That is what we will be discussing in this lesson.

A civilization is generally defined as an advanced state of human society containing highly developed forms of government, culture, industry, and common social norms. Of course, not all scholars agree with this definition. In fact, there is much debate over what constitutes a civilization and what does not. Furthermore, who determines what is 'advanced' and what is not?

There seems to be a bit of subjectivity involved. So yes, on the one hand, this is a bit of a tricky issue. On the other, the general consensus defines civilization in much the same way as I just described. The definition I provided is typically along the lines of what you would see in a dictionary or textbook. So, even if it is an oversimplification, it is the commonly understood definition, and for our purposes, we'll just go with it.

The word itself comes from the Latin root *civilis*, meaning civil. The word 'civilization' first began appearing during the Enlightenment. If you're familiar with the Enlightenment, this is not surprising. The Enlightenment was all about civilizing humankind, using reason, education, and science to bring people up to a high state of human functioning.

Characteristics of civilization

Historians, anthropologists, and other scholars have identified several core characteristics of civilization. Some of the most commonly suggested characteristics include urban centers, agricultural manipulation and storage, irrigation, written language, standards of measurements, craftsmanship technology, social stratification, state government, a common religion and/or ideological outlook, and a shared culture.

Urban centers, of course, would include cities or villages throughout the territory occupied by a civilization. Agricultural manipulation and storage is important because it allows people to ensure their future livelihood, rather than just scrounge for food on a day-by-day basis. Irrigation allows for the growth of crops, and in some cases, clean drinking water and even plumbing.

A written language unites a people, and allows them to communicate ideas with one another. A common system of measurements means that two people understand the same quantity of an object, distance, etc... Craftsmanship technology allows for the building of complex structures, tools, and art.

Social stratification is a fancy way of saying different classes of people - you know, rulers, laborers, slaves, etc... State government refers to a common legal system of political authority. Religion and ideology refer to what a people group believes about God, gods, and/or the way the world works. Perhaps most importantly, **culture** refers to the way of life among a particular group of people.

Difference between Culture and Civilization

1. Culture is by definition smaller than a civilization.
2. Culture can grow and exist without residing in a formal civilization whereas a civilization will never grow and exist without the element of culture.
3. Culture can be tangible or intangible whereas civilization is something that is more tangible because it is what you see as a whole
4. Culture can be transmitted through symbols in the form of language whereas an entire civilization cannot be transmitted by mere language alone.