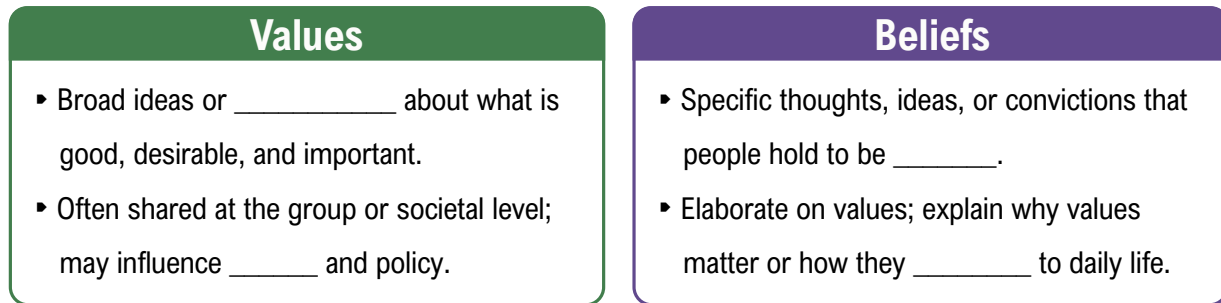


TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Values and Beliefs

- ◆ Values and beliefs serve as guidelines for social living.



Education

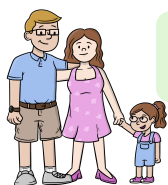
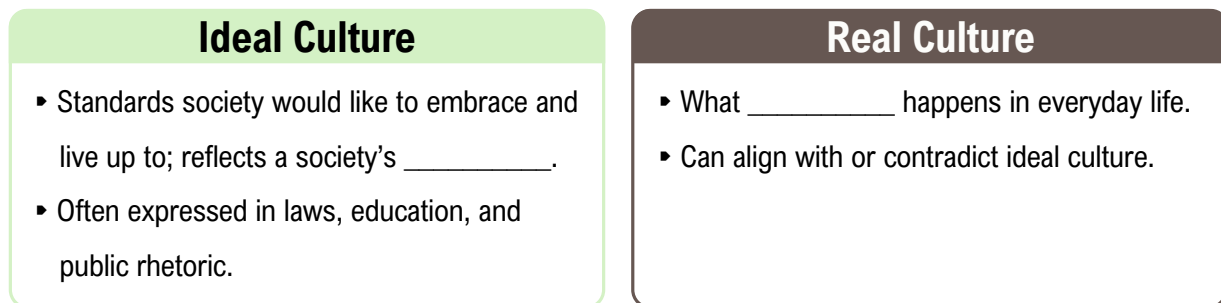
Everyone should have access to free, high-quality education.

Individual Responsibility

Success should come from personal effort and hard work, not government assistance.



- ◆ Sociologists distinguish between ideal culture and real culture.



“Family comes first”

Align: Some employers offer generous parental leave policies.

Contradict: U.S. federal government does not mandate paid parental leave.

84% of Americans say it is “**very important**” that the rights and freedoms of all people are respected.

Only **14%** of Americans reported that “the rights and freedoms of all people are respected” describes the U.S. “**very well.**”

Reference:

Pew Research Center, 2020. Accessed January 2026 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/04/26/2-views-of-american-democratic-values-and-principles/>

TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

EXAMPLE

Which of the following best describes a value?

- a) A specific rule or standard that all people in a society must follow.
- b) A shared idea about what is good or desirable.
- c) A specific idea that someone holds as true.
- d) A law enforced by formal sanctions.

PRACTICE

The United States frequently emphasizes its history as a nation built by immigrants and celebrates its identity as a multicultural “melting pot.” At the same time, some presidential administrations have supported immigration policies that emphasize exclusion and the punitive treatment of immigrants. This is an example of:

- a) Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- b) Primary and secondary groups.
- c) Ideal culture and real culture.
- d) Values and cultural harmony.

TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Norms

- ◆ **Norms:** Shared rules and expectations.
 - Serve to _____ behavior and maintain order in a society.

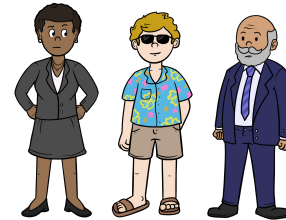
Mores

- Norms that are widely observed and have _____ significance.
- Violations of mores are shameful or potentially _____.



Folkways

- Norms for routine and casual interactions; _____ strong moral underpinnings.
- Violations of folkways are considered _____ or odd.



EXAMPLE

Label the following scenarios as mores (“M”) or folkways (“F”).

1	A student cheating on an exam.	
2	A couple at a restaurant orders dessert before dinner.	
3	Committing an act of domestic violence.	
4	A woman goes to the grocery store wearing a bathing suit.	
5	Jack’s coworker pays for his dinner, and he does not say thank you.	

PRACTICE

Which of the following most clearly distinguishes mores from folkways:

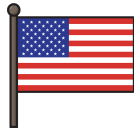
- a) Mores are based heavily around morality, whereas folkways don’t have strong moral underpinnings.
- b) Mores are informal, whereas folkways are more formal and violations may even be illegal.
- c) Mores only apply to specific cultural groups, and folkways are more general.
- d) Mores are optional social norms, whereas folkways are perceived as mandatory.

TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Symbols and Language

Symbol

Anything that carries a particular _____, recognized by people who share a culture.





Language

A system of symbols that allow people to communicate and _____ culture across generations.



- ◆ **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis:** People see and understand the world through the cultural lens of _____.
- Ex: Boroditsky et al., (2003) conducted an experiment on German and Spanish speakers.
 - Both languages assign gender to nouns. Participants asked to describe gendered nouns in English.
 - Participants described words as more masculine or feminine based on their native language.
- ◆ This hypothesis has mixed evidence; language does not determine reality, but it may _____ it.

	German Noun: Masculine	Spanish Noun: Feminine
Key 	“Hard” “Jagged”	“Shiny” “Intricate”
Bridge 	“Strong” “Sturdy”	“Elegant” “Graceful”

Reference:

Boroditsky, L., Schmidt, L. A., & Phillips, W. (2003). Sex, syntax, and semantics. *Language in mind: Advances in the study of language and thought*, 22(61-79), 1.

TOPIC: ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

EXAMPLE

Which of the following statements are true about language?

- I. Language is a system of symbols that allow people to communicate complex ideas.
- II. Language allows for cultural transmission across generations.
- III. Languages completely determine a person's reality.

-
- a) I & II. b) I & III. c) II & III. d) I, II, & III.

PRACTICE

In one society, a road sign shaped like an octagon signals that drivers must stop. In another culture, an octagonal road sign signals that drivers must yield to traffic merging into their lane. This example illustrates that...

-
- a) Mores differ across cultures and societies.
 - b) Symbols tend to have universal meaning.
 - c) Symbols can have different meanings across cultures.
 - d) Language is innate among humans.

PRACTICE

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis posits that...

-
- a) Language reflects the reality that we live in.
 - b) All languages contain a universal grammar.
 - c) The language we use can influence how we perceive and think about the world.
 - d) The use of symbols is an innate feature of the human brain.