



# INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY

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## Introduction



### 1. What is Anthropology?

Anthropo-logy (from the Greek word *άνθρωπος* = *human*, and *λογότυπα* = *reason*) is the scientific study of human beings, particularly their social relations and culture.

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## A.2. Origins



**2a. Ibn Khaldun** (1332 – 1406 AD) is considered by many to be the father of anthropology, and of social sciences in general,<sup>[17] [18]</sup> for anticipating many elements of these disciplines centuries before they were founded in the West.

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## Origins



### 2. Origins of Anthropology:

- a. Anthropology arose out of the 18<sup>th</sup> century historical period of the “Enlightenment,” an age of reason and science which also birthed the fields of formal law, history, and sociology.
- b. Some important figures which were beginning to think of other cultures and explore new, scientific explanations of human beings were Voltaire, Goethe, Schiller, and Marx & Engels.

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## Origins



### 2. Origins of Anthropology:

- b. American anthropology arose out of concern for the history and cultures of Native North Americans. [Ely S. Parker](#) was a Seneca Indian who made important contributions to early anthropology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*By 1879, American anthropology was developing a body of basic concepts about culture that was to be its principal contribution to international scholarship.*

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## Origins



### C. [Franz Boas](#) is often considered the “father” of academic anthropology.

In his 1907 essay, “Anthropology,” Boas identified two basic questions for anthropologists: “Why are the tribes and nations of the world different, and how have the present differences developed?”

*The four-field approach was one of Boas’s fundamental contributions to the discipline made in the early 1900s.*

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## Introduction

### 3. The Discipline of Anthropology



is split into four fields:

- a. **Biological (Physical) Anthropology**
- b. **Archaeology/Prehistory**
- c. **Cultural Anthropology**
- d. **Linguistics**

You should recognize that there is **cross-fertilization of ideas and methods** between the four fields.

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## The Four Fields

### a. Biological (Physical) Anthropology



Study of human evolution, human biological variation, human genetics, and primatology.

- Bio-anthropologists [investigate the fossil record](#) (like paleontologists) and try to solve [the riddle of human origins](#).

It is within this field of anthropology that much of the evidence has been collected to prove that humans, in fact, [evolved into their present state of \*homo sapiens\*](#).

See [www.talkorigins.org](http://www.talkorigins.org) for debate on this topic.

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## The Four Fields

### b. Archaeology



The study of past cultures by observing, measuring, and theorizing their artifacts. see [ArchaeologyInfo.com](http://ArchaeologyInfo.com)

- Archaeology is often seen as the most exciting field of anthropology. The [Indiana Jones](#) film franchise did a lot to create this glamorous image of archaeology.

- However, **much of archaeological work is laborious and is done in a laboratory.**

- Archaeologists can investigate not only the ruins of *ancient* civilizations, but also the artifacts of *modern-day* cultures.

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## The Four Fields

### c. Cultural Anthropology



The study of contemporary cultures through fieldwork.

Cultural anthropology is best recognized in the work of famous anthropologists such as [Margaret Mead](#), who studied Samoans in great detail early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (before much was known of these people).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some anthropologists ([Hakken](#), [Reymers](#)) study cultures more familiar with us, yet far removed from each other – “*Cyberethnography*”, or the study of online life, is a brand new area of cultural anthropology.

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## The Four Fields

### d. Linguistics



Describes the physical, psychological, and historical/social dimensions of human speech and communication.

Linguists [investigate recorded documents](#) (both current and ancient) to learn more about a people.

Language is as diverse as culture. Linguists create maps of the historic patterns of language diversity.



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## Anthropology Applied

The four subfields are *academic research* perspectives. Each can relate to “real-world” work:



### e. Applied Anthropology

Anthropological work applied to some (governmental or non-governmental) political purpose.

- [Conservation](#)
- [Education](#)
- [World Health](#)
- [Legal Investigation](#) (Forensics)
- [Government](#)
- [Business](#)

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## Main Themes of Anthropology: Holism

### a. ho-lis-m

Pronunciation: hO-'lis-em

Function: *adjective*



**1** : relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts <*holistic* medicine attempts to treat both the mind and the body> <*holistic* ecology views man and the environment as a single system>

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## Holism

**b.** Holism provides for the most complete understanding of the social relationships between and within cultures.



- The principal of holism allows anthropologists to integrate the four fields.

- While traditionally problematic, *holism* has become more widely accepted in science today (medical, biological, even [physics](#)).

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Does this picture [disturb](#) you?



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## Main Theme of Anthropology: Awareness of Ethnocentricity

### a. eth-no-cen-tricity



Pronunciation: "eth-nO-'sen-trik

Function: *adjective*

: characterized by or based on the attitude that one's own group is superior

Why do human groups tend to be ethnocentric?

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## Does this picture disturb you?



Perhaps you are just being ethnocentric?

(clicky pic)

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## Ethnocentricity

b. Ethnocentricity arises out of cultural diversity and the need for protection of one's cultural practices.



- It is *helpful* in enhancing group survival. Culture depends upon shared knowledge.

- It is *harmful* when groups come into contact that have very different values which cannot be negotiated or understood.

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## Cultural Relativism

### C. "Cultural Relativism" ≠ Ethnocentricity



It is a "reaction to the fact of cultural diversity in which one attempts to understand and **to judge the behavior of another culture in terms of its standards of good, normal, moral, legal, etc. rather than one's own.**"

<http://w.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415485395/glossary.asp>

Franz Boas first articulated the idea in 1887: "...civilization is **not something absolute**, but ... is relative, and ... our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes," but he did not actually coin the term "cultural relativism."

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_relativism](en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_relativism)

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## A.4. Demonstration

On the *holistic, non-ethnocentric perspective*....

...and getting the BIG PICTURE!



## Powers of 10

### Exponential Notation

**Earth** =  $12.76 \times 10^6 = 12,760,000$  meters wide  
(12.76 million meters)

**Cell** =  $12.76 \times 10^{-6} = 0.00001276$  meters wide  
(12.76 millionths of a meter)

["Potencias de 10" \(YouTube\)](#) (en Español)

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