

Dantes General Anthropology Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What is one characteristic of hominids?**
 - A. Only consume plants**
 - B. Live in isolation**
 - C. Possess large complex brains**
 - D. All exhibit vocal communication**
- 2. What does linguistics focus on in its study?**
 - A. The evolution of human cultures**
 - B. The practices of ethnographic fieldwork**
 - C. The structure and meaning of language**
 - D. The demographics of language users**
- 3. What common quality do kinship relationships share?**
 - A. Economic alliances**
 - B. Shared ancestry**
 - C. Social stratification**
 - D. Geographic proximity**
- 4. Which of the following would NOT be classified as a universal practice?**
 - A. Language**
 - B. Cooking methods**
 - C. Religious beliefs**
 - D. Greeting rituals**
- 5. What is the primary belief associated with Cargo Cults?**
 - A. Performing rituals to attract spiritual guidance**
 - B. Seeking recognition from ancestors to receive valuable cargo**
 - C. Establishing a new form of governance based on myths**
 - D. Creating communal economic systems to distribute wealth**
- 6. Which group of animals includes lemurs, monkeys, apes, and humans?**
 - A. Primate**
 - B. Carnivore**
 - C. Herbivore**
 - D. Insectivore**

- 7. What term describes the children of a parent's siblings of the opposite sex?**
- A. Cross-cousins**
 - B. First cousins**
 - C. Half-siblings**
 - D. Second cousins**
- 8. Which term refers to things that all people do the same way, such as language?**
- A. Specialties**
 - B. Individual peculiarities**
 - C. Universalities**
 - D. Alternatives**
- 9. What is the primary language family of the Olmec civilization?**
- A. Mixe-Zoque**
 - B. Mayan**
 - C. Uto-Aztecan**
 - D. Quechuan**
- 10. What is a characteristic of myths in cultural contexts?**
- A. They always reflect scientific truths**
 - B. They often contain deep symbolic meanings and explanations**
 - C. They are mainly historical accounts**
 - D. They focus solely on supernatural events**

Answers

SAMPLE

- 1. C**
- 2. C**
- 3. B**
- 4. B**
- 5. B**
- 6. A**
- 7. A**
- 8. C**
- 9. A**
- 10. B**

SAMPLE

Explanations

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1. What is one characteristic of hominids?

- A. Only consume plants
- B. Live in isolation
- C. Possess large complex brains**
- D. All exhibit vocal communication

Hominids are distinguished by several key characteristics, one of which is the possession of large and complex brains. This trait is significant as it is closely linked to increased cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving, abstract thinking, and social interaction. The development of a larger brain has allowed hominids to create complex social structures, use sophisticated tools, and communicate in more nuanced ways. In contrast, while some hominids may have herbivorous diets, they are not exclusively plant eaters, which rules out the first option. Living in isolation is also not a typical characteristic, as hominids are generally known for their social behaviors and interactions with others in their species. Moreover, although vocal communication is present in many hominids, not all hominid species exhibit vocal communication to the same extent or complexity. Thus, having large complex brains stands out as a defining feature that significantly impacts behavior and survival.

2. What does linguistics focus on in its study?

- A. The evolution of human cultures
- B. The practices of ethnographic fieldwork
- C. The structure and meaning of language**
- D. The demographics of language users

Linguistics fundamentally centers on understanding the structure and meaning of language. This field examines how languages are formed, how they convey meaning, and how individuals communicate through language. It investigates various components such as syntax (sentence structure), semantics (meaning), phonetics (sounds), and morphology (word formation), providing insights into both the universal aspects of language as well as its variations across different cultures. The study of linguistics provides essential tools for analyzing not only how language works in theory but also its practical applications in communication, cognitive science, and social interaction. By focusing on language itself, linguistics explores both the rules that govern language use and the ways in which language reflects and shapes human experience.

3. What common quality do kinship relationships share?

- A. Economic alliances
- B. Shared ancestry**
- C. Social stratification
- D. Geographic proximity

Kinship relationships are fundamentally built upon the concept of shared ancestry. This common quality reflects the biological and social connections that link individuals through familial bonds, such as blood relations, marriage, and adoption. In many cultures, these ties can dictate social roles, inheritance rights, and obligations, further establishing the foundation for a network of support and identity. While economic alliances, social stratification, and geographic proximity can influence the nature and dynamics of kinship in various contexts, the core essence lies in the recognition of shared ancestry. This shared history and lineage create a social framework where individuals identify with each other as part of a larger family group, thus emphasizing the significance of relationships shaped by common descent and familial connections. The concept of shared ancestry is integral to understanding kinship as it encapsulates the biological and cultural dimensions that form the basis of social organization within families and communities.

4. Which of the following would NOT be classified as a universal practice?

- A. Language
- B. Cooking methods**
- C. Religious beliefs
- D. Greeting rituals

Universal practices in anthropology refer to behaviors or customs that are found across all human cultures, despite variations in expression. Language is a fundamental aspect of all human societies, as every human culture has developed some form of communication to facilitate interaction. Similarly, religious beliefs can be universally observed, as nearly all cultures have developed some system of spirituality or belief in the sacred. Greeting rituals also tend to be universally practiced since societies across the world exhibit methods of acknowledging others, though the specific customs and practices vary greatly from one culture to another. This demonstrates a shared human need for social connection and acknowledgment. Cooking methods, however, are not universally classified in the same way. While cooking is a common practice, the specific methods, ingredients, and culinary traditions vary widely among different cultures. Each culture has developed its unique practices surrounding food preparation, reflecting local resources, tastes, and social customs. Therefore, cooking methods are not seen as a universal practice, as they lack the consistency that characterizes practices like language, religion, and greeting rituals.

5. What is the primary belief associated with Cargo Cults?

- A. Performing rituals to attract spiritual guidance**
- B. Seeking recognition from ancestors to receive valuable cargo**
- C. Establishing a new form of governance based on myths**
- D. Creating communal economic systems to distribute wealth**

Cargo cults are primarily associated with the belief that ancestral spirits or supernatural beings will provide material wealth, often in the form of goods or "cargo." This phenomenon developed, particularly in Melanesia, during and after World War II when indigenous people saw extensive material goods being brought to their shores by Western military forces. Cargo cults emerged as these communities began to believe that they could attract similar material wealth by replicating rituals they observed in Western societies or through specific ceremonies aimed at invoking the favor of ancestral spirits. The focus on seeking recognition from ancestors to receive valuable cargo reflects the core of what motivates the practices within cargo cults. Adherents often engage in elaborate rituals and ceremonies that they believe will lead to the intervention of spiritual figures, resulting in the physical manifestation of desired goods. This underscores the cult's underlying belief in a direct connection between spiritual acknowledgment and the resulting bounty, humanizing and rendering tangible the abstract notion of wealth and prosperity.

6. Which group of animals includes lemurs, monkeys, apes, and humans?

- A. Primate**
- B. Carnivore**
- C. Herbivore**
- D. Insectivore**

The correct response is the group known as primates. This classification encompasses a diverse array of species, including lemurs, monkeys, apes, and humans. Primates are characterized by specific anatomical and behavioral traits such as flexible limbs, forward-facing eyes, and a high degree of social complexity. These adaptations have allowed them to thrive in various environments, but they share a common evolutionary lineage that distinguishes them from other animal groups. In contrast, the other classifications—carnivores, herbivores, and insectivores—refer to dietary preferences and particular ecological niches rather than a shared evolutionary ancestry. Carnivores primarily consume meat, herbivores focus on plant materials, and insectivores specialize in eating insects. None of these groups include all the species listed in the question, as they do not share the common characteristics and evolutionary background that define primates. Thus, primates is the only term that accurately encompasses the listed animals.

7. What term describes the children of a parent's siblings of the opposite sex?

A. Cross-cousins

B. First cousins

C. Half-siblings

D. Second cousins

The term that describes the children of a parent's siblings of the opposite sex is "cross-cousins." In kinship terminology, cross-cousins refer specifically to the children of a parent's brother and the children of a parent's sister. This relationship is important in many cultures, particularly those that have specific marriage practices or alliances. For example, if a woman's brother has a daughter and her sister has a son, those children are cross-cousins to each other. This concept often helps define social relationships and obligations within a community. In contrast, first cousins are the children of two siblings who are of the same sex (e.g., a man's children with his sister's children). Half-siblings are those who share one biological parent but not both, while second cousins are the children of first cousins. Understanding these distinctions helps clarify family relationships and how they might impact social structures, inheritance, and marriage patterns in various societies.

8. Which term refers to things that all people do the same way, such as language?

A. Specialties

B. Individual peculiarities

C. Universalities

D. Alternatives

The term that refers to things that all people do in a similar way, such as language, is universalities. This concept encompasses practices, beliefs, or characteristics that are found across different cultures and societies, highlighting shared human experiences and characteristics. For instance, every known culture has a form of language, which serves as a means of communication and brings people together through a common tool of expression. Universalities suggest that despite the variations that exist between cultures, there are fundamental similarities that unite humanity. This can apply not only to language but also to other aspects such as familial structures, rituals, and moral systems, which can be observed in various forms around the globe. In contrast, specialties would refer to particular practices or customs that are unique to specific cultures, while individual peculiarities highlight the uniqueness of persons within their cultural contexts. Alternatives denote different choices or paths that can be taken, rather than emphasizing the commonalities across cultures. Thus, universalities encapsulate the idea of shared human behaviors and practices effectively.

9. What is the primary language family of the Olmec civilization?

A. Mixe-Zoque

B. Mayan

C. Uto-Aztecan

D. Quechuan

The primary language family associated with the Olmec civilization is the Mixe-Zoque family. This conclusion is drawn from linguistic studies and anthropological research that suggest the Olmec, one of the earliest advanced civilizations in Mesoamerica, spoke languages belonging to this family. The Mixe-Zoquean languages are believed to have originated in the region where the Olmec established their society, primarily along the Gulf Coast of Mexico. These languages are crucial for understanding not only the Olmec's communication but also their cultural and social interactions with neighboring groups. The evidence points to a significant connection between the Olmec civilization and the Mixe-Zoquean languages, supporting the idea that this language family was central to their societal development. While other language families, such as Mayan, Uto-Aztecan, and Quechuan, are significant in their respective regions and cultures, they do not have a direct association with the Olmec civilization. Mayan languages are primarily linked to the later Maya civilization, Uto-Aztecan is connected to groups in northern and western Mexico, and Quechuan is predominantly associated with the Andean cultures of South America. Thus, the Mixe-Zoquean family stands out as the correct

10. What is a characteristic of myths in cultural contexts?

A. They always reflect scientific truths

B. They often contain deep symbolic meanings and explanations

C. They are mainly historical accounts

D. They focus solely on supernatural events

Myths play a crucial role in cultural contexts as they often embody deep symbolic meanings and provide explanations for complex phenomena in the world. They serve to communicate values, beliefs, and cultural narratives, enabling societies to understand their origins, morals, and existential questions. Through rich storytelling, myths facilitate a sense of identity and continuity within a culture. The significance of myths varies widely, but they typically address foundational aspects of human experience, including life's mysteries, creation, and moral lessons, rather than strictly adhering to empirical or scientific truths. This characteristic underscores their importance in shaping worldviews and cultural heritage, making them more than just historical accounts or simplistic tales of supernatural events. Rather, they are complex and layered narratives that resonate with individuals and communities, enriching their understanding of both the tangible and intangible elements of life.