Chapter 4
The 7 Elements of Culture

Culture: everything that makes up a person’s entire way of life

#1-Social Organization

When a culture organizes its members into smaller groups

What might some smaller groups be in a culture?
- Families
- Friends
- Religious groups
- Social classes
- Interest Groups
- Occupations

Family: the most important unit of social organization
- Nuclear family: husband, wife, children
- Extended family: several generations in one household
  *** respect for elders is usually strong in extended families

Social classes: a way to rank people in order of status

- What can social class be based on?
  - Money
  - Occupation
  - Education
  - Race
  - Etc.

#2. Customs and Traditions

- rules of behavior (written and unwritten)
#3-Language
- Important for communication and passing on traditions and beliefs
- There is some debate about making English the official language of the United States.

#4. Arts and Literature
- Teach about a culture’s values
- Promote cultural pride and unity
- Could include technology and entertainment

#5. Religion
- Monotheism: belief in one god
- Polytheism: belief in more than one god
- Major World Religions
  - Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism

#6. Forms of Government
- People form governments to provide for their common needs
- Types
  - Democracy: people have supreme power
  - Republic: people choose leaders to represent them
  - Dictatorship: a ruler or group holds power by force

#7. Economic Systems
- Resources a community has
- Four types
  1. Traditional: people produce most of what they need to survive
  2. Market: basic economic questions are answered by buying/selling goods and services
  3. Command: government controls answers to economic questions
  4. Mixed: individuals make some economic decisions, the government makes others

Ways Cultures Change
1. Technology
   - Cars, telephone, computers, TV dinners
2. Environment Changes
3. New Ideas (like recycling)
4. Diffusion: movement of customs and ideas from one place to another
Be Careful of…

-Ethnocentrism: judging other cultures by the standards of your own
  » Assuming your own culture to be the best

-Racism: belief that one racial group is naturally superior to another