Lesson 1 - The Essence of Anthropology
Anthropology is the study of human beings, but to phrase the definition in these simple terms is to diminish the grand scope of this discipline overall. Anthropology delves deeply into every aspect of humankind, from its beginnings millions of years ago to the present day. Its subject matter ranges from the exotic to the ordinary, from faraway tribes to the structure of the human foot. This lesson explains the four fields of anthropology; defines the concept of holism; and describes how anthropologists approach their subject matter from a holistic and comparative cross-cultural perspective in order to reach the broadest, most inclusive conclusions possible on their subject of interest. Each major field – cultural, physical (biological) and linguistic anthropology, and archaeology – is described, and situational material is included to illustrate how each field functions and interconnects with the others. Subfields to the four major fields, such as forensics and paleoanthropology, are introduced and discussed, and the concept that humans are biocultural beings because of the simultaneous adaptations of our biology with culture is illustrated. The video also introduces the student to the way anthropologists carry out their analyses through rigorous fieldwork and participant observation in order to create the ethnographies that describe humans cross-culturally. Applied anthropology, sometimes referred to as the fifth subfield of anthropology, is introduced.

Lesson 2 - Characteristics of Culture
The state of Oaxaca, Mexico, is the backdrop of this lesson, which explores the nature of culture and how cultures are studied. The Oaxacan society is used to illustrate the basic characteristics of culture: an integrated, dynamic system of beliefs, values, and behaviors that are shared by the members of a society wholly; learned and based on symbolic systems; and constituting humankind’s most important method of adaptation. Jayne Howell’s work in Oaxaca aims to determine how this society in transition is adapting to the pressures imposed by outside forces. It illustrates some of the methods of research that ethnographers employ in a biocultural approach to discovering how the world’s diverse cultures function.

Lesson 3 - Becoming Human
Humans are first a biological species, Homo sapiens, but they are unique among all species in their capacity for cultural adaptations. This lesson first compares humans to modern primates, especially the great apes, in terms of biology, genetics, and behaviors. Next, it surveys the evolution of the line of pre-human ancestors from the first bipedal species that emerged about 6 million years ago up to anatomically modern humans and their increasingly sophisticated cultural innovations. Finally, the concept of race is discussed as a social construct that has no biological validity.

Lesson 4 - Communication & Culture
This program focuses on the efforts of the Serrano tribe of Native Americans to revitalize their dying cultural traditions and language. The features and structures of human language in general are discussed, showing some examples from the Serrano language, and the role played by the descriptive linguist assisting them is examined. A discussion of sign languages reveals that they are in every way like all other human languages except that they are based on gestures instead of sounds. Nonverbal human communication systems are explored, as are various aspects of the fields of ethnolinguistics and sociolinguistics. African-American Vernacular English is discussed as an example of a social dialect that marks membership in a group. The film closes with a focus on the Serrano children, who it is hoped will carry on the tribal language and traditions.

Lesson 5 - Social Identity, Personality & Gender
One of our universal questions is, "Who am I?" The answer is complex and begins with enculturation. Enculturation influences how you think, feel, and behave, and it starts at birth. It begins with being given a name. Naming ceremonies vary from culture to culture, but what you are called is an important device for self-definition, and it also allows individuals to take their place within their group’s culture. As children develop physically, they also develop emotionally and psychologically. One aspect of this maturation is the development of self-awareness. This is important for the individual and also for the entire community. Not only does everyone have a name, but individuals have their own personalities. It is now recognized that one’s personality is the product of both enculturation and one’s own genetic make-up. When studying how personality develops, we cannot ignore the role that sex and gender may play, nor can we overlook the biological factors that may influence and differentiate male and female behaviors. Determining whether gender roles influence personality and social identity or vice versa may be difficult, but we know that gender roles vary greatly from culture to culture. It is also recognized that every culture has individuals who are transgenders—people who do not fall neatly within the proscribed male and female categories. Western cultures prefer to think exclusively in male and female gender roles, but many other cultures have created a “third gender” or even a “fourth gender” in which to place these individuals. As individuals, we not only need to know who we are but also how we fit in and belong to the culture into which we were born. Sometimes it gets complicated.
Lesson 6 - Subsistence Systems
Regardless of language, geographic location or culture, the question is the same: “What are we going to eat today?” The response depends upon the subsistence system used by those asking the question. This lesson focuses on three types of subsistence patterns: foraging, horticultural/agricultural, and pastoralism. The Ju/'hoansi of southern Africa exemplify foraging cultures in which food is not produced but rather collected as needed and distributed immediately according to the process known as generalized reciprocity. The Yolmo of Nepal traditionally practiced pastoralism and subsistence farming, using an exchange system of balanced reciprocity combined with redistribution. A Ghanian market run by women illustrates a traditional form of market exchange, and a Japanese fish market exemplifies the wholesale commercial market with international participants but with face-to-face transactions, according to Japanese cultural practices.

Lesson 7 - Economic Systems
Economic systems are the means by which a society produces, distributes and consumes resources and are intimately integrated with the other elements of the culture. In this lesson, the economic systems of several societies are examined as examples of how reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange play a central role in the distribution of goods. The Ju/'hoansi of southern Africa exemplify foraging cultures in which food is not produced but rather collected as needed and distributed immediately according to the process known as generalized reciprocity. The Yolmo of Nepal traditionally practiced pastoralism and subsistence farming, using an exchange system of balanced reciprocity combined with redistribution. A Ghanian market run by women illustrates a traditional form of market exchange, and a Japanese fish market exemplifies the wholesale commercial market with international participants but with face-to-face transactions, according to Japanese cultural practices.

Lesson 8 - Sex & Marriage
The lesson opens with a wedding in Long Bow Village, in China, and shows the diverse nature of weddings from one culture to another, emphasizing that weddings are rites of passage, full of ritual and symbols that convey and emphasize the values of that society. The lesson defines marriage and suggests that this is one way that societies regulate sexual relations between men and women. It points out that all cultures include rules on who can marry whom because of the general concern regarding marriage between close family members, or incest. The incest taboo is discussed, and the narrator and expert anthropologists explain how it provides a structuring mechanism for marriage rules, endogamy and exogamy. Also discussed are arranged marriages, how they benefit specific societies, and the attitudes toward them as opposed to the Western ideals of romantic love.

Lesson 9 - Marriage & Family
The lesson begins with Helen Mendoza and Pam Privett explaining that families today take many forms. They are partners in a same-sex marriage, raising children of their own. Lesson 8 explained why some cultures find polygamy a preferred marriage arrangement, and Lesson 9 highlights the familial and household benefits of the polygynous system. However, the lesson points out that not all such marriages are cooperative. Under some circumstances, competition among wives can cause serious tensions. The terms consanguinal family, conjugal family, and fictive kin are defined, and varying family forms such as nuclear family, extended family, and blended family are illustrated. The Yolmo, pastoralists of east-central Nepal, are featured to illustrate how monogamy within a nuclear family organization functions within this group. Residence patterns and marriage customs, such as bride price and bride service, are discussed, and the reasons for their practice are illustrated. The final segment of the lesson comments on newer adaptations of the family made possible because of advances in reproductive technology and changes in adoption laws within the United States.

Lesson 10 - Kinship & Descent
The lesson opens with pictures of Chinese immigrants of the 1850s to the 1900s, explaining how those people faced enormous challenges when they moved to the United States. They faced discrimination and a sense of isolation because they lacked the assistance that had been provided through strong kinship ties in China. The lesson explains that kinships, or the strong familial networks within which individuals function, are made up of groups of family members that provide the essentials for survival. The lesson explains descent groups and lineages and points out that not all lineages trace descent the same way. Several kinds of descent groups are illustrated, and Chinese patrilineal descent is featured. Particular attention is given to explaining this complex system, in which a lineage goes back only four to six generations; conflicts arise in households that have become very large over time, and brothers splinter off and begin lineages of their own. The concept of clan (tsu) is discussed at length. Different systems of kinship are illustrated, where each group has established varying methods of defining relatives. The lesson explains the Eskimo, Iroquois, and Hawaiian systems.
Lesson 11 - Grouping by Gender, Age, Common Interest & Class
This program explores concepts related to non-kin-based social groupings by focusing on the culture of the Black Indians of New Orleans. They are a common interest group that celebrates their own art and culture, culminating in their annual celebration of Mardi Gras separately from the better-known White Carnival. Divisions within the group based on age and gender are discussed, as are its origins and history as an oppressed minority social class excluded from the white Mardi Gras. Finally the lesson examines the effects of hurricane Katrina on the culture of the Mardi Gras Black Indians and on the recovery of the city in general.

Lesson 12 - Politics, Power & Violence
This lesson explores the anthropological concepts of political organization and social control as practiced cross-culturally. It opens with anthropologists Victoria Bernal and Laura Nader discussing the concepts of political organization in terms of power, authority, functions and in its four main forms: bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. Nader and William Ury then explore the various methods of maintaining social order across cultures, including interior and externalized controls, sanctions and laws. Methods of dispute resolution are described by Nader and Ury, and they debate the merits of alternative dispute resolution methods (ADR) in the United States. China’s control over citizens’ use of the Internet is used as an example of the interrelationships between social control, ideology, legitimacy, and the potential for the use of force by ruling powers. Nader and human rights activist Xiao Qiang then describe, in parallel fashion for comparison and contrast, their personal experiences with peaceful student protests at the University of California in Berkeley in the mid-1960s and in Tiananmen Square in China in 1989, both of which brought violent reactions from their respective governments.

Lesson 13 - Religion & Spirituality
The program opens with a general discussion of the anthropological definition of religion contrasted with spirituality. This is followed by a close-up view of some of the history, beliefs, and practices of Islam and Tibetan Buddhism through the eyes of several experts and practitioners. Discussions of anthropological concepts of religion across cultures are offered, with examples of the basic forms of religion, its specialists, and its rituals, as well as magic and witchcraft. The exploration of some of the social and psychological functions of religious practices and belief systems, especially focusing on Islam, conclude the lesson.

Lesson 14 - The Arts
This lesson focuses on visual, verbal and musical art forms. Since art is created in response to social, religious, political, economic, and aesthetic stimuli, anthropologists use it as a guide to understanding the values and ideals of culture. Being able to put art within a cultural context enables anthropologists to observe cultural dynamics. That is why tattoos, hip hop and hula provide insight into past and present cultures. You will also be reintroduced to the Pacific Northwest Potlatch ceremony. This once again will highlight the integrated nature of all aspects of culture.

Lesson 15 - Processes of Change
At the beginning of this lesson, anthropologist Leo Chavez comments that culture “is always transforming itself, always changing. It is always in the process of becoming something else.” Throughout history, cultures have changed because of environmental conditions, internal pressures, or external forces. Change comes quickly, or it may occur slowly. In any event, anthropologists chronicle cultural change and offer explanations as to why it happens. Anthropologist Eugene Cooper has tracked cultural change as reflected in the craft of Chinese furniture-making during the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing that societies change with the use of new technologies. The key term “diffusion” is introduced and discussed within the context of the spread of the English language from the anthropologist to the group she/he studies. The lesson illuminates some of the benefits and problems that immigration poses for a culture. It focuses on the current migration of Mexicans and Central Americans to the United States. It illustrates why the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps was founded, and how their goals were formed in response to the perception that too many Mexican citizens were coming across the border into the United States illegally. In contrast, the human rights organization El Rescate was formed in 1981 in Los Angeles to assist individuals who had escaped the chaos in Central America and who sought refuge here. Both groups offer their own perspective on the impact of immigrants on American culture. The lesson also offers contextual information on post-colonialism and explains the differences between rebellion and revolution.

Lesson 16 - Global Challenges & Anthropology
Program Description
This program explores the phenomenon of globalization, its complex forms, and its impact on the cultures of the world as well as the contributions that anthropology can make toward a better understanding of it. Wal-Mart’s operations in China are shown as an example of how giant global corporations use structural power to expand business and profit in developing countries. The collaboration of the Bolivian government with another U.S.-based global corporation, Bechtel, and the World Bank illustrates how such partnerships can act against the best interests of the people. Finally, a Bangladeshi immigrant to the United States is interviewed, giving a personal perspective on the record-high levels of external and internal migration occurring worldwide.
Lesson 17 - Applied Anthropology

The lesson begins with the anthropological definition of applied anthropology. This field of study refers to the application of method and theory to the analysis and solution of practical problems. It can be used, or “applied,” within the four subdisciplines of anthropology—physical (or biological), cultural, linguistic and archaeological. The lesson shows how a cultural anthropologist, Professor Mikel Hogan, practices applied anthropology within a hospital setting to help resolve some of the on-the-job problems that nurses face at this time of crises within the health-care system in the United States. As the lesson progresses, viewers also see how linguistic anthropologist Breesha Maddrell works on the Isle of Man to help the culture there preserve and maintain the Celtic language of Manx Gaelic. Finally, the third segment of the lesson shows how physical anthropologists Amy Mundorff and Diane Cockle work in the area of forensics. Mundorff explains the educational qualifications required for a career in forensics, explaining that a strong background in biology or chemistry, plus a strong background in anthropology, particularly archaeology, is ideal. In general, this lesson gives very clear, varied examples of where applied anthropology is used in the workforce, how flexible the field is, and how it fits within the subfields of anthropology.