

# What Makes Humans Unique?

by Jacob Sherline and Niklas Krug

# Unique Aspects

- Speech
- Abstract Thinking
- Childhood
- Communication and Learning

# Speech

- Humans have the same basic speaking apparatus as other animals
- However, humans have evolved in order to speak clearly
- This is extremely unique and impressive because the ability to speak is the most complex motor pattern that humans learn
- Fossils have allowed us to make this discovery

# Abstract Thinking

- Humans are innately unselfish, while other animals are not
  - Other animals only share when they get something in return
- Humans are able to think abstractly about others
  - Humans can reason about when they are being deceived, while other animals cannot
- Humans are able to think about abstract ideas, such as their own origin, while other animals are not able to

Why do humans have such a long  
childhood?

# Long Childhood of Humans

- Humans take a long time to get adults
- They need to learn many concepts and information
  - Development of the brain takes much longer
- Brain develops the most in the childhood
  - A great amount of information can be learned
- -> Humans have a great capacity of learning

# Long Childhood of Humans

- **Learning**
  - helps to develop skills and knowledge
  - survival and contribution to our culture
  - skills and knowledge depends on place and time of your birth
  - solving problems in new ways
  - Obtaining, organizing and sharing knowledge changes culture rapidly
    - cultural adaptation
  - Humans make and use tools more than any other animal

# Long Childhood of Humans

- **Language**

- part of the ability of learning
- complicated rules of grammar and and lot of vocabulary
- basic skill to communicate
  - share thoughts and ideas
- seems complex, occurs naturally
  - children learn language by hearing
- part of our normal development
  - like many cultural behaviors
- built social structures
  - get in touch with other people easily
- age 10: capacity of learning language decreases



# Communication & Learning of Animals

- **Communication**

- sounds, smells, displays and movements
- language-like behaviour
  - not considered as a language
    - lack of precise words & grammar

- **Learning**

- learned behaviors
  - behaviors which the organism is born with
- innate behaviors
  - responses of an organism resulting of special interactions with its environment

- **Societies**

- ability to live in very different social structures

# Sources

- Online Textbook
- <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20150706-the-small-list-of-things-that-make-humans-unique>
- <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129083762>