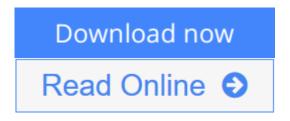# Language, Cognition, and Human Nature

By Steven Pinker

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Language, Cognition, and Human Nature collects together for the first time much of Steven Pinker's most influential scholarly work on language and cognition. Pinker's seminal research explores the workings of language and its connections to cognition, perception, social relationships, child development, human evolution, and theories of human nature.

This eclectic collection spans Pinker's thirty-year career, exploring his favorite themes in greater depth and scientific detail. It includes thirteen of Pinker's classic articles, ranging over topics such as language development in children, mental imagery, the recognition of shapes, the computational architecture of the mind, the meaning and uses of verbs, the evolution of language and cognition, the nature-nurture debate, and the logic of innuendo and euphemism. Each outlines a major theory or takes up an argument with another prominent scholar, such as Stephen Jay Gould, Noam Chomsky, or Richard Dawkins. Featuring a new introduction by Pinker that discusses his books and scholarly work, this collection reflects essential contributions to cognitive science by one of our leading thinkers and public intellectuals.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Pinker is a star, and the world of science is lucky to have him."
-- Richard Dawkins, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 2002

"Steven Pinker is among the best synthesizers in the cognitive sciences. He is unique in the breadth of his interests and the depth of his knowledge. To top it off, his elegant and witty writings speak equally to specialists and to literate individuals everywhere."
-- Howard Gardner, Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education, Harvard University

"Pinker is an intellectual giant in the field, one of the most important psychologists and thinkers in our day. This compilation is outstanding, a fitting crown on his career so far, although I suspect he has much more to contribute. Even though I'd read a handful of these papers before, there were some that I was unaware of that are gems. Even those I'd read before, I re-read, and got even more on the second reading."
-- David Buss, author of *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind*

"With wit and acumen, Pinker introduces us to some of his most important scientific contributions. These glimpses into the development of these foundational articles and of course the articles themselves will be of great interest to academics and to his many fans beyond the walls of academia."
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"Pinker is a rarity among academic psychologists not only as a stylish writer, but also as a profound thinker with an ability to grasp the major issues of human nature and human evolution. *Language, Cognition, and Human Nature: Selected Articles* is as good an introduction as any into the range and depth of his thinking and will have general appeal beyond an academic readership." -Michael Corballis, *PsycCRITIQUES*

About the Author

Steven Pinker is Johnstone Family Professor in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. He conducts research on language and cognition, writes for publications such as the New York Times, Time and The New Republic, and is the author of eight books, including *The Language Instinct, How the Mind Works, Words and Rules, The Blank Slate, The Stuff of Thought, and, most recently, The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.*

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