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The discovery of 'linguistic universals' - the properties that all languages have in common - is a fundamental goal of linguistic research. Linguists face the task of accounting for why languages, which apparently differ so greatly from one another on the surface, display striking similarities in their underlying structure. This volume brings together a team of leading experts to show how different linguistic theories have approached this challenge. Drawing on work from both formal and functional perspectives, it provides a comprehensive overview of the most notable work on linguistic universals - with chapters on syntax, semantics, phonology, morphology and typology - and explores a range of central issues, such as the relationship between linguistic universals and the language faculty, and what linguistic universals can tell us about our biological make-up and cognitive abilities. Clear, succinct, and up-to-date, it will be invaluable to anyone seeking a greater understanding of the phenomenon that is human language.