

Are young people  
more materialistic in  
modern society  
philosophy essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Materialism, in philosophy, a widely held system of thought that explains the nature of the world as entirely dependent on matter, the fundamental and final reality beyond which nothing need be sought. Certain periods in history, usually those associated with scientific advance, are marked by strong materialistic tendencies. The doctrine was formulated as early as the 4th cent. B. C. by Democritus, in whose system of atomism all phenomena are explained by atoms and their motions in space. Other early Greek teaching, such as that of Epicurus and Stoicism, also conceived of reality as material in its nature. The theory was later renewed in the 17th cent. by Pierre Gassendi and Thomas Hobbes, who believed that the sphere of consciousness essentially belongs to the corporeal world, or the senses. The investigations of John Locke were adapted to materialist positions by David Hartley and Joseph Priestley. They were a part of the materialist development of the 18th cent., strongly manifested in France, where the most extreme thought was that of Julien de La Mettrie. The culminating expression of materialist thought in this period was the *Système de la nature* (1770), for which Baron d'Holbach is considered chiefly responsible. A reaction against materialism was felt in the later years of the 18th cent., but the middle of the 19th cent. brought a new movement, largely psychological in interpretation. Two of the modern developments of materialism are dialectical materialism and physicalism, a position formulated by some members of the Logical Positivist movement. Closely related to materialism in origin are naturalism and sensualist.

Materialism is sometimes allied with the methodological principle of reductionism, according to which the objects or phenomena individuated at

one level of description, if they are genuine, must be explicable in terms of the objects or phenomena at some other level of description — typically, a more general level than the reduced one. Non-reductive materialism explicitly rejects this notion, however, taking the material constitution of all particulars to be consistent with the existence of real objects, properties, or phenomena not explicable in the terms canonically used for the basic material constituents. Jerry Fodor influentially argues this view, according to which empirical laws and explanations in “special sciences” like psychology or geology are invisible from the perspective of, say, basic physics. A vigorous literature has grown up around the relation between these views.

“Materialism” has also frequently been understood to designate an entire scientific, “rationalistic” world view, particularly by religious thinkers opposed to it and also by Marxists. It typically contrasts with dualism, phenomenism, idealism, and vitalism.

For Marxism, materialism is central to the “materialist conception of history”, which centers on the empirical world of actual human activity (practice, including labor) and institutions created, reproduced, or destroyed by that activity.

In today’s society, materialism takes part in every person’s life, no matter what social class they are. The idea of being materialistic can be considered immoral, but there is a fine line between morality and personal interests. It is safe to say that everybody is materialistic to a certain extent, whether it be from buying the same brand of jeans because they fit nice, to purchasing a wide variety of hot rods. It is obvious that the latter of the two is the one

which can be considered to cross the line. Buying some nice clothes here and there is normal for people and everybody does it once in a while. While on the other hand, buying 5 or 6 sports cars can be considered somewhat pretentious.

In today's society, the society is more materialistic compared to the society of the past. Nowadays high school students complain that some of their friends are really spoiled. Not just because their parents are rich but because they could get whatever they want. No matter how it is, their parents just hand over the plastic without blinking an eye. Thus, if there is a concern about the cost of an item, these teenagers throw their tantrums until their parents give in. No 15-year-old teenager needs a \$400 purse. Other than being concerned about spending money responsibly, girls seem to be more interested in status and competing to get the most expensive clothes in order to impress other people.

Girls nowadays would spend their energy on making themselves look wealthy. Majority of the girls get weekly manicures, have their hair colored and spend hundreds at day spas. They think they shouldn't have to lift a finger to deserve all this pampering. As much as our excessive society and the worship of celebrities are to blame, parents must be good financial role models for their children to follow. If parents are constantly showering themselves with expensive things like designer clothing and expensive cars, then their children will think that they should follow that type of lifestyle as well, whether they can afford it or not. Instead, parents can show their children the value of money, teach them to shop carefully and make them earn their own spending money.

<https://assignbuster.com/are-young-people-more-materialistic-in-modern-society-philosophy-essay/>

It can make them feel like it is a great accomplishment to find amazing clothes off the clearance racks, especially at the more expensive stores. Anyone can learn how to create their own style on a low budget. Plenty of beautiful and fashionable items may be found at designer label discount stores. Spend money on accessories like belts and fashion jewelry instead of buying major pieces of jewelry. It is simply wasteful to buy retail when everything ends up on sale eventually.

Parents must always teach their children early on the difference between needs and wants. Some parents give a monthly allowance that children can spend at their own discretion on things like clothing, cell phones, gas and also entertainment. However, when the money runs out, the kids might have some trouble. This is a good method of teaching how to budget one's money. Kids will quickly learn ways how to make their money go further. If they are really clever, they may even figure out how to have money left over and start a savings account or donate to a charity.

Encouraging teenagers to work as part-time will help instill the concept of how much work it takes to earn money. While children are too young to do part-time job, they can certainly help with chores around the house or help their neighbors. Parents can discuss how money doesn't buy happiness. There are certainly plenty of current examples to draw upon in the newspapers and television. Also, it wouldn't hurt if children were taught some good old fashioned manners, kindness, respect and humility. We are too self-centered in our society and this is reflected in the rampant materialism and in how poorly people treat each other. It's time to get over

being impressed with designer labels and focus on others instead of ourselves.

## Conclusion

Materialism has also lead some people to adopt a pessimistic nihilism in terms of the viewpoint that life is just a pointless cycle of consumption and reproduction, the continual fruitless striving to avoid pain and the purely malevolent play of volatile physical forces. This is basically what happens when we project a pessimistic value judgement onto determinism that downplays what we can potentially make out of life while we're here. But I don't think that any of this necessarily follows from materialism. It seems like one could just as easily find meaning in life as an individual in a more existentialist sense. The fact that I'm a biological being doesn't have to negate my individuality and the various goals and things that make me happy in life. Such a nihilism is a non-sequitor; materialism does not negate the realm of experience.