

# Primary and secondary sex characteristics

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Primary and Secondary Sex Characteristics Introduction Living things are defined as either female or male except on rare occasions when both features appear in a single living organism. Primary sex characteristics are the physical sex organs that have a direct link to reproduction (Frayer, 2006). In most cases, these characteristics are present at birth. Depending on the type of living organism however, such organs have different names. On the contrary, secondary sex characteristics refer to features that bring the difference between the two types of sexes but do not have a direct link in reproduction. They occur during the adolescence stage. However, their presence helps in initiating courtship and interaction.

Primary sex characteristics in male mammals (Hall: pp. 67).

Penis

Testes

Scrotum

Primary sex characteristics in female mammals

Ovaries

Vagina and the vaginal canal

Clitoris and clitoral hood

Uterus

cervix

Secondary sex characteristics in male mammals

An increase in body strength and muscles

An increase in penile size

An increase in stature

In humans, males grow facial hair, manes in lions, horns in goats, long bright feathers among the peacocks, bright colorations in most bird and fish

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species and tusks in male elephant seals among others (Judson, Olivia: pp. 105).

In humans, there is an increase in the Adam's apple, which leads to a deepening in voice (Weininger: pp. 24)

Rough skin texture

Secondary sex characteristics in female mammals

Breast enlargement

Wide hips

More fat distribution in areas around the thighs, buttocks and hips as compared to other areas.

Tightening of the voice

Hyperextension in the elbows

Softening of the skin and hair

Lengthening of the shoulders (Morris: pp. 84)

Conclusion

Both the primary and secondary sex characteristics help in determining the gender roles in a society. In a way also, they influence behavior.

Work cited

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