

# The developmental stages of adolescence and adulthood



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

As a growth stage, adolescence is characterized by exponential and dramatic physical milestones which enable an individual develop from childhood to adulthood. It is during this stage that secondary sexual characteristics emerge due to a surge in production of testosterone in boys as well as estrogen in case of girls (Slee, 2002). These hormones continue being produced until total maturation is achieved. Onset of adolescence and puberty begins early in girls than in boys though individual differences exist due to hereditary and environmental factors like diet or exercise. Rapid increase in weight and height is achieved from as early as 9 years and peaks at around 14 years.

Girls develop breast buds during early adolescence with full breast development being achieved at around 12 to 18 years. Hair growth in the pubic area and the armpits begins while the onset of menstrual periods (menarche) begins after two years of breast development. Girls assume a curvier body caused by development of more prominent hips. In males, hair development begins at the onset of adolescence with hair growth being exhibited on the face, pubic area, chest, armpits and on the legs (Slee, 2002). Rapid increase in height and weight is also witnessed in adolescent boys. Appearance of nocturnal emissions also known as wet dreams at the ages of 13 and 17 years primarily marks the adolescence period in boys. The boys notice a considerable enlargement of their sexual organs (i. e. testicles and scrotum). The lengthening of the penis closely follows this development. Deepening of the voice occurs almost along the same time as penile growth. A larger Adams apple then develops.

Q2: Adolescence and cognitive development: Key Milestones

<https://assignbuster.com/the-developmental-stages-of-adolescence-and-adulthood/>

Adolescence is marked with the development of formal logical operations which are more complex. This is unlike the concrete operations witnessed in childhood. During late childhood, the kind of concrete development achieved, enables the children to think in concrete ways since the actions and events performed during this stage can be evidenced or presented (Berger, 2004). A significant change is achieved during adolescence as the person is now able to undertake abstract thinking whereby he/she thinks about possibilities. The adolescence is also able to think about the occurrence of thinking (i. e. why does a person think?). The ability to derive reasoning from already known principles and ideas characterizes this stage. Considerable amount of time is used to make the transition from concrete thinking to logical operations in a teenager. During adolescence, an individual is able to think systematically and derive logical solutions to a problem. Every developing teenager progresses at a personal pace thereby developing personal view of the world.

Here logical application of information especially when undertaking schoolwork is effected. Adolescents are largely emotional, thus when an emotional turmoil occurs, the teenager is unable to think in a complex manner. Before making decisions regarding a particular issue, the adolescent largely question authority as well as pre-existing societal standards. Adolescents form and verbalize their thoughts and forge their taste and preferences on such activities as the sports to play or the personal appearances to adopt. In middle adolescence, the person's cognitive development is geared towards philosophical and futuristic concerns (Berger, 2004). Instances of extensive thinking and questioning are exhibited with the

individual establishing their own identity. Individuals begin to systematically think about their future goals and make plans to make the realization of the goals possible. During late adolescence, the individuals' complex thinking is geared towards more global issues like political views, history or justice. Thoughts of the role they will play as adults as well as career choices are exhibited during this period.

### Q3: Physical development: Key Milestones in Early, Middle and late adulthood

Adulthood is not marked with physical and exceptional growth spurts. During early adulthood, the individual is transiting into adulthood from adolescence and continued physical growth is exhibited especially in shoulder width and chest width being exhibited. Early adulthood is a mark of adult life as body degradation has not started to occur (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2008). The body experiences hormonal changes which may result to increased body build. Middle adulthood is characterized by slow physical changes. A considerable loss of sensory sharpness is exhibited. For instance, there are some level of hearing and sight impairment. Sensitivity to light as well as far sightedness begins to emerge a condition which can be corrected by wearing glasses. Gaining of weight in the abdominal region occurs in men while women's hips and thighs increase considerably. During late adulthood, noticeable impairment is seen. The bone mass dwindles while fertility levels decline. Graying of hair as well as skin wrinkling is also evidenced. During late 40s and early 50s, women experience menopause whereby the ability to give birth again ends. Hormonal levels also drop considerable. Due to thinning of cartilage bones located at the spinal vertebrae, the posture may change (Kail <https://assignbuster.com/the-developmental-stages-of-adolescence-and-adulthood/>)

& Cavanaugh, 2008). It is estimated that women's height shrinks by about 5cm while that of men by 2cm. Illnesses like heart diseases result due to build up of cholesterol level on the blood capillaries, The brain shrinks due to the diminishing blood supply.

Q4: Cognitive development: Key Milestones in Early, middle and late adulthood

Cognitive development continues even during adulthood despite the continued brain aging. During early adulthood, alert old people continue to think and act rationally with a lot of alertness. While acting in situations requiring memory and learning prowess, their output is better than that of younger people. This is largely because of experience acquired while accumulating and organizing information (Howe & Brainerd, 2009).

During middle adulthood, cognitive abilities continue to improve. More adaptive and concrete thought line is exhibited within the adult, making possible several rational decisions procedures regarding personal relationships, emotions as well as social issues. Late adulthood which occurs at about 65 years is marked with considerable decline in intellectual abilities. The ability to execute unfamiliar tasks or finding a solution to a complex problem becomes troublesome to the aging adult. Slowed response to situations and information is exhibited during this period. This is because of considerable reduction in mental as well as physical activity. Emotional crises like depression and stress also play a major role in cognitive decline in late adulthood (Howe & Brainerd, 2009). Brain weight reduces thus causing considerable loss in speed and memory losses. This ultimately increases the

reasoning and understanding levels of older people causing them to exhibit wisdom.

#### Q5: Adolescence and Socioemotional development: Key Milestones

Brain segment which controls emotions is developed and matured during adolescence. Adolescents exhibit spontaneous emotional outbursts especially when dealing with peers as well as parents. This possesses a challenge especially to parents and teachers who may be overwhelmed on the manner in which to respond to such outbursts. A gradual process is undertaken in enabling the adolescents to learn how to replace the improper thoughts as well as actions with behaviors which are goal oriented (Pulkkinen, et al 2006). A major conflict which exists in adolescent's development is the eminent desire to obtain more freedom than that allowed by parents and/ or guardians. According to Socioemotional development theory by Erikson, this phase is marked by the improvement on a sense of identity when in a relationship. Adolescents also desire to have independent thoughts regarding their desires especially when focusing of their abilities and goals. Peer relationships are emphasized by the adolescents since they are primarily looking for freedom from parental authoritativeness. Such behaviors as drug and substance abuse and risky sexual behaviors are developed during this period. Adolescent association with deviant peers is common hence the reason why parents need maintain open communication with their adolescent children so as to know when their children risk being involved with such peers (Pulkkinen, et al 2006). Bibliotherapy especially in social groups where literature is used to arm the adolescents with

information regarding the changes occurring in their bodies, is vital in helping the adolescent cope with emotional turmoil.

Q6: Socioemotional development: Key Milestones in Early, middle and late adulthood

Massive Socioemotional changes milestones are exhibited during adulthood characterized by forging newer social relationships as well as positions. Depending on personal experiences, the Socioemotional sentiment differs from one person to the other. Such emotional activities as marrying, death, getting or losing a job, going to school or being abandoned by a spouse contribute to social development of individuals. During early adulthood, individuals decide on the career path to follow and they devote considerable a lot of their time in following their career path. Issues of love feature prominently during this period making many people want to establish their families. The thought of being parents is made evident during this period thus changes in personal and social orientation emerges (Berk, 2004). Middle adulthood is characterized by a midlife crises phase. This period is characterized by individuals trying to modify or even reappraising their lives as well as the relationships already formed. The level of satisfaction and contentment upheld during this period is highly dependent on the type of accomplishments achieved. For instance the kind of job, finances, family and sex life upheld determine whether the individual will be happy or not.

During the late adulthood phase, the emotional maturity is evident in many adults. Active participation in political and social scenes is common. Majority of the people who were in formal employment retire during this period. Life

satisfaction and esteem is high during this period owing the achievements acquired. People adopt an inward looking and conforming lifestyle and enjoy interactions with other family members. Relationships become increasingly satisfying and fulfilling than any other period (Berk, 2004). According to Erikson, the Generativity vs. Stagnation stage is characterized by an increased interest in an individual to guide the development of the next generation. Through genuine care and productive social involvement individuals desires to produce something of real value which will positively impact on the society thereby achieving Generativity. On the contrary, individuals who are self-centered and do not engage in activities beneficial to society suffer from stagnation contributed by their lack of productivity.