

# Juvenile part -1

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# Juvenile

- It can be derisive, as in "Don't act so **juvenile**," suggesting a silliness unbecoming an adult. The **word comes from** the Latin *juvenilis*, meaning "youthful" — similar, but much more flattering. **Juveniles** are generally defined as persons under the **age** of 18 and above the **age** of 10. An individual's **age** is usually established by testimony or a birth certificate. Each state and the federal government have unique laws defining the beginning and end **age** of **juveniles**.
- Juvenile means childish or immature. It is an adjective, which is enlisted in the law for relating to a young person who is not yet old enough to be considered an adult, as per the Cambridge dictionary. It can be used as a noun in the law.
- Overall the word Juvenile is used for the age group of preadolescence and adolescence. Now first we should understand the period of life adolescence.

# What is Adolescence in Biology and Culture?

Adolescence marks the end of childhood and the onset of the transition to adulthood. The changes adolescents undergo in their bodies, minds, and social relations are as profound as any that the human faces across the entire life span. Just prior to adolescence, the bodies of children have not developed sexual characteristics, and there is not much to physically distinguish boys from girls. In school, lessons are still mainly concerned with basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills; preadolescents are not yet ready to reason abstractly. On their own among their peers, preteens are usually just beginning to notice the opposite sex and awkwardly participate in mixed-sex activities. Most are still very involved with and influenced by their parents on a day-to-day basis. By the end of adolescence a few short years later, young adults are mature physically, mentally, and socially. They may be starting to work, off at school, in the military married, and may even be parents. Clearly the teenage years are a time of deep and dramatic changes.

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Adolescence is stereotypically seen as a time of turbulence and intensity. Most of us who care to recall our own teenage years probably remember it as both better and worse than it actually was. Perhaps no time in life has been as alternately romanticised and feared. Stereotyped exaggerations and overgeneralisations abound. These plague those who would serve youth because they must always deal with the negative image of adolescence presented by the mass media, indeed in the culture as a whole. The experience of adolescence can be likened to passing over a narrow and shaky bridge; the security of childhood is forever behind, the stability of adulthood looms far ahead. There is no way to go except forward. While on the bridge it seems an immeasurable distance, and falling off is a constant threat, though relatively few actually do. What are the changes occurring along the way? How can we make the passage safer?

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- The very existence of adolescence illustrates the nature of human development. There are certain specific biological events occurring in the teenage years to both boys and girls. Yet the meaning and importance of these physical changes vary from culture to culture and over historical periods. In many cultures, and indeed, in our own culture until the present century, there was no period of life recognised as adolescence. Children simply matured and became adults as soon as they were able to take on adult roles. Adolescence as we know it today emerged as teenagers were consigned to a kind of social limbo (in school and out of the workforce). Thus, we must consider adolescence in historical and cultural context, as well as in terms of the biological, mental, and social dimensions of young people's experiences.

- There really is no perfect time to mature sexually nor perfect physical development, and most teens suffer anxiety over real or imagined physical flaws. One classic study found that 61 per cent of the boys and 72 per cent of the girls in the tenth grade desired some change in their physical selves: in their complexion, proportion, weight, hair, and so on (Fransier & Lisonbee, 1950). No doubt, all people feel some dissatisfaction with their appearance, but the rapid changes and new social involvements in the early teenage years intensify physical self-consciousness. At the same time that puberty is occurring, equally drastic changes take place in the thinking of many adolescents. Abstract reasoning, the ability to develop theories and think hypothetically ("what if • . . .?"), typically begins around the age of twelve (Piaget, 1967). Piaget called this stage formal operations, and it is the ultimate stage of cognitive development. Adolescents are now capable of the same kind of logical and intellectual processes as adults. Formal operations extend to self-reflection as well. Bruner describes this cognitive development thus: "The child now can conjure up systematically the full range of possibilities that could exist at any give time" (Bruner, 1960).

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- ◉ The individual personality begins to arise out of the ability to imagine one's own "life plan" and to exert discipline over the self in trying to realise one's goals (Piaget, 1967). The basic mental and physical changes of early adolescence set the stage for the personal and social involvements that develop through the teenage years. It is important to understand the links between the mental, physical, and social aspects of the adolescent's life. As teenagers begin to look and feel more like adults, they consequently develop changing conceptions of themselves that reflect their new appearance. Changing appearance and new interests lead to new social contacts, that can upset the stability of childhood. Altogether, the adolescent is thrown into a challenging, perhaps even overwhelming, situation—a situation that we will now examine more closely.

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