

Adolescence
by Ian McMahan

Chapter 2
Adolescence in
Theory and
Research

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Biological And Evolutionary
Theories

- G. Stanley Hall and recapitulationism
- Adolescents as “savages”
- “Storm and stress”
- Evolutionary explanations of adolescence
- The role of reproductive fitness

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Psychoanalytic Theories

- A sequence of psychosexual stages
- Re-emergence in adolescence of childhood conflicts
- Need for separation from the family
- Defense mechanisms in adolescence
- Erikson and psychosocial stages
- Need to develop a sense of identity

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Cognitive Theories

- **Piaget's theory of cognitive stages**
- **Adolescents and formal operations**
- **Vygotsky and role of social relationships**
- **Information processing approaches**
- **Metacognition: Awareness of one's own thinking**

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Learning And Social Cognitive Theories

- **Skinner and operant conditioning**
- **Behavior changed by its consequences**
- **Bandura's social cognitive theory**
- **Learning by observing what others do**
- **Importance of self-efficacy beliefs**

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Social And Anthropological Theories

- **Mead's fieldwork in the South Pacific**
- **Role of society and culture**
- **Adolescence need not be stressful**
- **Benedict: Continuous and discontinuous societies**

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Ecological And Developmental Systems Theories

- **Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory**
- **Adolescents affected by nested levels of social groups**
- **Lerner and developmental systems**
- **Adolescents play active role in own development**
- **Importance of interacting developmental contexts**

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What Is A Scientific Attitude?

- **Two components: Open-mindedness and skepticism**
- **Listen to ideas different from one's own**
- **What is the evidence?**
- **Willingness to re-examine one's beliefs**

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What Is The Scientific Method?

- **Systematic search for objective, empirical evidence**
- **Process of testing hypotheses**
- **Use theory to generate a prediction**
- **Gather evidence that bears on the prediction**
- **Revise theory in light of new evidence**

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Research Approaches To Adolescence

- Populations and representative samples
- Observational methods
- Correlational studies: How are variables linked?
- Correlations do not prove cause and effect
- Experiments manipulate the cause, observe effect
- Independent and dependent variables in experiments

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Strategies For Studying Development

- Cross-sectional research
- Different groups represent different ages
- Longitudinal research
- Same group followed across a span of ages
- Sequential research
- Combines cross-sectional and longitudinal techniques

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The Ethics Of Adolescence Research

- Rights of research participants
- Risks of deception
- American Psychological Association Code of Ethics
- Importance of gaining informed consent

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Underrepresented Groups In Adolescence Research

- White middle-class male adolescents as “the model”
- Gender bias in adolescent research
- Ethnic, cultural, and class biases
- The role of ingroup bias
- Seeing “others” as “all the same”

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Becoming An Educated Consumer Of Research

- What is the source of information?
- How reliable is a particular finding?
- Is a finding of practical importance?
- Can a finding be generalized to other adolescents?
- Does the study show cause and effect relationships?

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