

2 Growing Up

Discovering adolescence



OBJECTIVES :

1. Be able to explain the term 'adolescence' and the physical, emotional, social and cognitive changes associated with it in their own words.
2. Be able to explain the potential problems associated with adolescence in their own words.
3. Be able to explain how adolescent brain differs from an adult brain in their own words.
4. Be able to justify in their own words the need to balance freedom with responsibility.
5. Be able to evaluate between the given choices and justify the choice made.

1. What is adolescence?



Tanvi :

- Physical growth has slowed down in the last few months.
- Focused about her career and future.
- Efforts are set in the right direction.
- Careful about what she does, confident about herself.
- Comfortable in talking to both men and women and working with them.
- Feels responsible towards her family.

Meena :

- Loves to play.
- Carefree and makes friends with both boys and girls.
- Not very self conscious.
- Very close to her parents, goes out with them.
- Shares most of the school happenings with her mother.



Ravi :

- Stays outdoor the whole day playing games.
- Does not mind if somebody comments on his height or clothes.
- Depends on his parents to take decisions for him.





Sadhana :

- Feels energetic.
- Conscious of her body lately.
- Her body has changed rapidly in the last year or two.
- Compares herself with the women on television and cinema.
- Moody, worries whether she looks good enough.
- Attracted towards boys, but does not talk much to them and prefers being in the company of girls.
- Likes to go out with her friends more than her parents. Lost in her own world, not sharing much with her parents. Worries about her clothes, her belongings.

Discuss in class if students have observed that their behaviour has been more like Sadhana / Manish in the last two years.

Explain to the students that Sadhana and Manish are a representation of the age group typically referred to as 'adolescence'.

Manish :

- Manish has good stamina to play and study.
- He has started developing muscles and in the last few months has noticed his height increase very fast.
- Manish is open to taking risks and generally feels he will get away with them.
- He is attracted to girls in his class, but does not talk to them much and prefers being in the company of boys.
- He gets angry very soon and sometimes picks up fights with his parents.
- He worries a lot about how he looks, his clothes, his belongings.



Ali :

- Ali's height has not increased in the last few months.
- Takes great efforts to shape up his career.
- Takes calculated risks, thinks twice before choosing something potentially harmful.
- Feels comfortable about himself and his body, does not worry too much about looks.
- Comfortable in talking to both men and women, does not get angry very easily, solves problems with a cool head.
- Ali thinks about his responsibilities towards his family.

POINTS TO PONDER

The term adolescence has its origins from the Latin word 'adolescere' which means 'to grow' or 'to mature.' It also means 'to achieve identity'. Adolescence is typically the period between the age of 13-19 years. Adolescence is almost a magical transitional period between childhood and adulthood which is marked by many physical, social and emotional changes. Some of these changes might result in problems in coping up with others. Yet it is very important to understand that adolescence is also a period of great possibilities where the adolescents have great energy to learn and work, enhanced curiosity and a dream to create a better world.

2. Characteristics of adolescence :

Divide the class into groups of five. Encourage students to refer to Manish's/Sadhana's case studies and relate them to their own experiences. Students should read the table given and talk about any other changes occurring in adolescence. They should write these changes they have experienced, in their notebook.



Physical changes	Emotional and social changes	Changes in thinking
Some body parts begin to enlarge. (girls)	Physical and emotional attraction to opposite or same sex	Intellectual interests expand and gain importance.
Menstrual periods begin because of estrogen hormone. (girls)	Strong opinions about few things, confused about a lot of things.	Thinking and decisions are influenced by peers.
Testicles and penis grow larger because of androgen hormone. (boys)	Increased self consciousness.	Day dreaming about future.
Skin and hair become oilier, pimples may appear. (girls and boys)	Feeling of awkwardness about their bodies and comparison with others.	Start understanding implicit social norms and beliefs
Body hair grows, voice changes. (boys)	Worries about being accepted by peers and society.	Eager to know new things. Try to prove their own capabilities.

3. Why is adolescence so special?

Adolescence is characterized by rapid changes in not just the body, but also in the brain. However these changes continue till the brain reaches the stage of maturity around the age of 24 years. Thus the adolescent brain is a 'work in progress'. To understand more about how the adolescent brain is special from an adult brain, we need to understand a few basic things about how the brain develops.

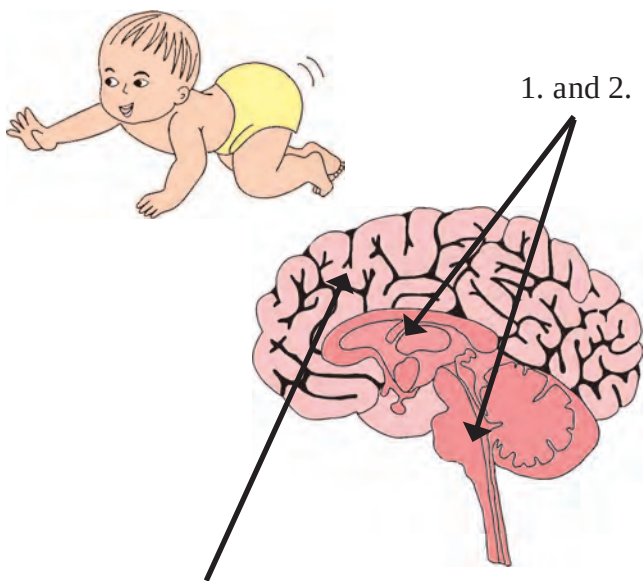
4. Development of the Brain

Human brain has evolved over several thousand years. The structure and functions of the brain are complex. Science has studied the different parts of the brain in depth.

In order to understand the behaviour traits in adolescence, it is important to understand the development of the brain. Let us understand how the three parts of the brain are developed in simple words.

1. Action Brain (The Reptilian Brain) :

This area is fully developed at birth and handles basic functions necessary for sustaining life and movement. This area controls breathing, digestion, heart rate, sleep, hunger, body temperature, etc. and is responsible for controlling reactions in situations of danger.



2. Emotional brain (The Monkey Brain) :

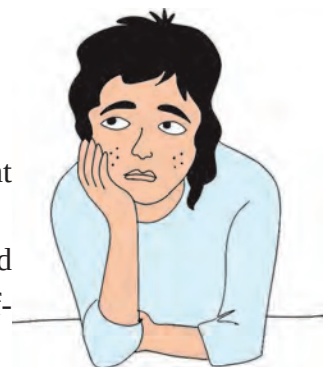
This part of the brain develops during the age of 0-5 years. This area is the seat of our emotions.

It is also responsible for memory, response to stress, nurturing, caring, fear, rage, social bonding and hormone control. All feelings originate from the emotional brain.

3. The Thinking Brain :

This is the last area to be established and its development continues till 20 to 24 years of age.

This part of the brain is responsible for self control, balanced thought, problem-solving, planning attention, creativity, self-awareness and understanding and interpreting emotions.

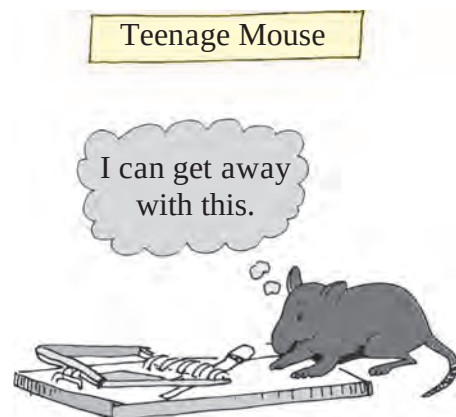


5. How is the adolescent brain different ?

During adolescence, the emotional brain is highly developed but, the thinking brain is still developing !

This imbalance, coupled with rapid physical and hormonal changes makes adolescents behave in an impulsive, therefore risky manner.

Their brains cannot always successfully predict, plan or react properly to harmful situations and hence they may fail to act responsibly.



6. Need for freedom :

Read the sentences given below. Have you ever been troubled by the following ?

1. Your parents or teachers do not allow you to keep a particular hairstyle or wear a particular dress.
2. Your parents do not allow you to stay out till late night or go out late at night.
3. Your parents do not allow you to watch television whenever you want.
4. Your parents do not allow you to eat oily food from roadside vendors.

One thing that adolescents yearn for is 'freedom'. They feel that they do not need to depend on anybody for taking decisions, that they can very well understand what is good for them, that they are entitled to get or do whatever they want.

Discuss :

Do you see a similarity between the given incidences?

In the given incidences, what is it exactly that bothers you?

7. Actions and Consequences :

Read the following sentences. Think about the questions asked.

1. If a person gets wet in the rain by his free will and as a result catches a cold, would you feel very sad about it ?
2. If a person drives very rash, violates all rules and as a result meets with an accident, would you feel very bad about it?
3. If a person does not study for the entire year and as a result fails in the exams, would you feel very bad about it?

There are consequences associated with every action. They could be good or bad. Hence it is necessary to think about the consequence before doing an action.

8. Freedom and responsibility :

In adolescence, one yearns for “Freedom” and feels that freedom means “getting to do what one wants”. However, this is just one side of the coin. Even though one gets the freedom to do what one wants, there should be an awareness about the consequences of that action. One must be capable enough to face the consequences too.

The consequence of an impulsive action done out of the sense of freedom and entitlement can often create confusion. Adolescents may try to find escape routes which could be even more harmful and may need help from adults.

9. Choosing an option and accepting the responsibility of the choice :

We are faced with numerous options in our daily life.

e.g. Option 1 : To study.

Option 2 : To watch television for a long time, chat with friends etc.

We have the right to choose either of the two options. However, if we choose option 2, we need to reflect on the following –

1. How am I able to take out time for watching television or chatting with friends?
2. The time allotted for which task has been compromised for the above activities?
3. Is it leading to any adverse effects?

E.g. If the time allotted for studying is being used for recreational activities, what is the benefit and what are the losses?

Let us apply what we learnt :

A few situations are given below. In each situation, there are two options to choose from. Which one would you choose and why? You can think of other options and situations if you want.

1. Your friends want to go for a late night movie show at the theatre. But your parents oppose it.

Option 1 : You will go without informing your parents.

Option 2 : You will say no for the movie programme.

2. You have an examination tomorrow. But there is an interesting cricket match on the television today.

Option 1 : You will see the match.

Option 2 : You will study for the examination.

3. Your friends are forcing you to do something bad. You are not sure about what is to be done.

Option 1 : You will give in to their persuasion.

Option 2 : You will politely refuse.

4. The tree in your neighbour's backyard is laden with mangoes. One day, you find out that the neighbours are out of town and you could eat the mangoes.

Option 1 : You will eat the mangoes without permission.

Option 2 : You will not eat the mangoes without the neighbour's permission.

5. You can see that your friend has fallen into bad company.

Option 1 : You will inform his / her parents about it.

Option 2 : You will not inform anyone about it.

6. You have seen a group of your classmates breaking the windows of the class. But another student has been wrongly blamed for it.

Option 1 : You will tell the truth to your class teacher.

Option 2 : You will keep quiet.

Make groups. Allot one situation to each group. Each group should choose one option and also justify their choice by explaining how they could take up the responsibility of the consequences.

POINTS TO PONDER

Growing up

Our elders often tell us that we have grown up and are no longer small. What does it exactly mean? As we grow up, we acquire the freedom to make choices. However when we do make these choices, we need to realise our limits also. The responsibility of our decisions lies solely with us and in case they go wrong, we should be ready to face the consequences. To be able to strike a balance between exercising your freedoms, acknowledging their limits, accepting the responsibility of your actions and being ready to face the consequences is the real meaning of “growing up.”

ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Weightage : 10%				
Criteria	Very Good	Satisfactory	Not - Satisfactory	Marks obtained
Explanation of 'why is adolescent brain different'	Clearly explain why adolescent brain is different.	Explain why adolescent brain is different but the explanation has some gaps.	Incomplete or vague explanation.	
Use of the concepts learned in the chapter in the activity 'Let us apply what we learnt'	Appropriately applied the concepts taught in this chapter.	Applied at least one concept taught in the chapter.	Did not understand the concepts in the chapter. No application was seen.	

You know I have always wondered..
How come you never joined hands
with the baddies, Dhairyadhar ?

Life could have been
so different for you..
Imagine... you could have
flown away from school
all the time, played pranks
on your rivals... It would
have been so much fun !!



May be, Nisha..
It could have
been lot of fun..
But then, I have
always believed
in leading a value
centered life !



Do you lead a
value centered
life ?

