

# Adolescence: Cognitive and Moral Development

## Overview

The physical changes of puberty are accompanied by changes in adolescent thinking and moral reasoning. As adolescent thinking becomes more logical and abstract, it is limited by adolescent egocentrism.

The type of schools that foster adolescent thinking and learning are those which provide a variety of academic experiences and encourage interactions between students and teachers, and students and students.

Adolescents are receptive to their culture, to the models they see at home, in school and in the mass media. These observations influence moral reasoning and moral behavior. Decisions regarding sexual behavior are influenced by their ability to think and reason, their values, and their educational experience.

## Questions To Consider

1. How do adolescents think?
2. What do adolescents think about themselves?
3. What are the best schools for adolescent learning?
4. What is the difference between moral reasoning and moral behavior?
5. What influences the adolescent's decisions regarding sexual behavior?

## Vocabulary

Read these terms with their definitions before viewing the program.

**Abstract Thinking** The ability to manipulate ideas, imagine possibilities and to understand and use symbols.

**Adolescent Egocentrism** A characteristic of adolescent thought that leads the young person to think of his or her own case as unique.

**Analogy** Reasoning in which from certain observed relations others are inferred.

**Cognitive** The aspect of human development that includes the mental processes through which the individual learns.

**Formal Operations** The stage of thinking in which logical and abstract thought becomes possible.

**Hypothesis** A set of assumptions provisionally accepted as the basis of experiment.

**Imaginary Audience** Adolescents imagine themselves to be under constant scrutiny.

**Invincibility Fable** The idea that one is immune to normal troubles and dangers.

**Personal Fable** The adolescent's idea that they are special and destined for great accomplishments.

## Instructional Objectives

When you have successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

1. Identify the characteristics of adolescent thinking.
2. Describe what is meant by adolescent egocentrism.
3. Describe the aspects of education which are likely to foster adolescent learning and thinking.
4. Identify the characteristics of moral reasoning and moral behavior during adolescence.
5. Identify the factors which influence decision making regarding sexual behavior

---

### Self-Test

After studying the objectives and watching the video take the self-test to check your progress.

1. List four characteristics of adolescent thinking:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

2. Complete each of the following statements about adolescent egocentrism:

- a. Adolescents believe nothing can happen to them, that they are \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Adolescents see themselves as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. This is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ fable.
- c. Adolescents create an \_\_\_\_\_ audience. They think everyone is \_\_\_\_\_ them.

3. Describe the type of school that increases the adolescent's capacity for formal operational thinking:

Next to each statement write the letter of the phrase which best completes the statement.

- 4. \_\_\_\_ Moral reasoning and moral behavior
  - a. always are in harmony.
  - b. frequently do not correlate.
  - c. do not respond to peer pressure.
  - d. are rarely questioned by the adolescent.
- 5. \_\_\_\_ Parents influence the adolescent's decisions regarding sexual behavior by
  - a. the way they offer information about sex.
  - b. their even approach to the topic with both sons and daughters.
  - c. their willingness to face the issue of adolescent sexuality.
  - d. all of the above.
- 6. \_\_\_\_ The school's most successful approach to sex education is
  - a. the biological, mechanical.
  - b. to focus on teens who are already sexually active.
  - c. innovative involving the teens.
  - d. none of the above.