

PYC 4805 2026 Complete Exam Guide

Full textbook breakdown for Chapters 1 3 4 7 9 10 and 12

How to use this guide

The 2026 examination scope prescribes the full content of seven textbook chapters: Chapters 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 12. The examination requires more than recall. You must explain how development occurs, compare theories and perspectives, apply concepts to scenarios, analyse interacting causes, and critically evaluate evidence and limitations.

For every topic, learn five things: the definition, the main components or stages, the mechanism of development, an example of application, and at least one qualification or limitation. In an essay, begin with a clear argument, define the concepts you use, organise the body around the question rather than the textbook order, use evidence or examples, and end with an integrated conclusion.

Examination breakdown

Chapter	Full examinable focus	High value comparisons and applications
1	Issues, biopsychosocial forces, neuroscience, developmental theories, research methods and ethics	Nature and nurture; continuity and discontinuity; Piaget and Vygotsky; longitudinal and cross-sectional research; correlation and experiment
3	Newborn competence, growth, brain development, motor development, perception, self-awareness and theory of mind	Maturation and experience; reflexive and voluntary behaviour; dynamic systems; different explanations of theory of mind
4	Piaget, information processing, naive theories, Vygotsky and language development	Piaget and Vygotsky; stage theory and continuous processing change; competing language explanations
7	Family systems, parenting, siblings, divorce, maltreatment, peers, aggression, media and social understanding	Parenting styles across cultures; popularity and rejection; aggression and victimisation; benefits and risks of media
9	Identity, self-esteem, romance, sexuality, careers, unemployment, substance use, depression, violence and resilience	Erikson and Marcia; risk and protective factors; normative development and pathology
10	Emerging adulthood, physical health, adult intelligence, postformal thought, life stories, possible selves and control beliefs	Universality of emerging adulthood; fluid and crystallised intelligence; formal and postformal thought
12	Occupational choice and development, inequality, transitions, unemployment, work-family relations and leisure	Holland, social cognitive career theory and Super; glass ceiling and glass cliff; conflict and enrichment; types and functions of leisure

Chapter 1 The Study of Human Development

Recurring issues in development

Nature and nurture. Nature refers to genetic and hereditary influences; nurture refers to environmental influences such as nutrition, family, education, culture, and historical conditions. Contemporary developmental science rejects a simple either-or answer. Genes influence the range and probability of outcomes, while environments influence whether and how genetic potentials are expressed. Gene-environment correlation also matters: inherited characteristics can affect the environments people evoke, receive, and select. Development is therefore transactional.

Continuity and discontinuity. Continuous development is a smooth quantitative progression produced by essentially similar processes over time. Discontinuous development involves qualitative reorganisation, so different explanations or structures are needed at different ages. Vocabulary growth illustrates much continuity; Piaget's stages propose discontinuous changes in thinking. The same domain can show both, depending on what is measured.

Universal and context-specific development. Universal approaches seek processes shared across humanity. Context-specific approaches emphasise culture, ethnicity, social class, historical period, and individual circumstances. A motor sequence may be broadly common while milestone timing and meaning vary with child-rearing practices. A sound answer recognises common human capacities without treating one cultural pattern as the norm.

The biopsychosocial framework

Force	What it includes	Example
Biological	Genetics, maturation, brain and nervous system, hormones, health, nutrition and disease	Pubertal hormones and brain development
Psychological	Cognition, perception, emotion, personality, motives and coping	Beliefs about competence influencing effort
Sociocultural	Relationships, groups, institutions, ethnicity, social class and culture	Parenting, schooling, discrimination and cultural values
Life-cycle	The timing of events and how people interpret them at a particular point in life	Parenthood in adolescence versus adulthood

The four forces are mutually interactive. For example, adolescent risk-taking reflects neural and hormonal change, emotional goals, peer context, cultural opportunity, and life-stage timing. An explanation based on one force alone is reductionist.

Neuroscience and development

Developmental neuroscience studies brain-behaviour relationships. Structural imaging describes anatomy; functional methods such as fMRI show patterns of activity during tasks. Neuroscience can reveal that different behavioural strategies recruit different networks, that brain specialisation develops, and that experience alters neural organisation. It does not by itself reveal what a person thinks or prove that a behaviour is biologically fixed. Brain findings must be interpreted alongside behavioural and contextual evidence.

Developmental theories

Psychodynamic perspectives. Psychodynamic theories propose that behaviour reflects how people handle inner and social conflicts. Freud emphasised psychosexual stages and unconscious drives. Erikson extended

development across the lifespan and proposed eight psychosocial crises. Each crisis involves a tension between adaptive and potentially problematic tendencies; favourable resolution produces an ego strength. The approach highlights emotion, relationships, and life history, but many concepts are difficult to test and stage claims can be culturally narrow.

Learning perspectives. Operant conditioning explains behaviour through consequences. Reinforcement increases behaviour; punishment decreases it. Social learning theory adds observation, imitation, expectations, and self-efficacy. Children do not copy mechanically: attention, memory, perceived similarity, expected consequences, and belief in personal ability affect learning. Learning approaches generate testable predictions and useful interventions but may understate biological constraints, meaning, and developmental reorganisation.

Cognitive-developmental perspectives. Piaget proposed that children actively construct schemes and adapt through assimilation and accommodation. Qualitative stages reflect reorganised logic. Information-processing theories compare cognition to a system that attends to, stores, transforms, and retrieves information; development involves greater capacity, speed, knowledge, and strategy use. Vygotsky argued that higher mental functions originate in social interaction and are transformed through language and cultural tools.

Ecological and systems perspectives. Bronfenbrenner described nested systems. The microsystem contains immediate settings such as family and school. The mesosystem consists of connections between microsystems. The exosystem includes settings that affect the person indirectly, such as a parent's workplace. The macrosystem includes cultural values, laws, and institutions. The chronosystem captures change over time. Systems influence one another, and the developing person also changes the system.

Competence-environmental press. Adaptation depends on fit between a person's abilities and environmental demands. Too little press can produce under-stimulation; too much can overwhelm. The model is especially useful in later life but illustrates a general systems principle: behaviour cannot be explained by competence or environment alone.

Life-span perspective. Development is lifelong, multidirectional, plastic, historically embedded, and multiply caused. Gains and losses coexist. Plasticity means capacity for change, not unlimited reversibility. Selective optimisation with compensation describes choosing valued goals, investing resources to perform well, and using alternative methods when abilities decline. Life-course theory examines how historical period, social roles, linked lives, and the timing of transitions organise development.

Comparing the major perspectives

Perspective	Primary mechanism	Strength	Important limitation
Psychodynamic	Resolution of age-linked conflicts	Highlights emotion, relationships and lifespan tasks	Concepts and stages can be difficult to test
Learning	Conditioning, modelling and expected consequences	Precise, testable and useful for intervention	Can underplay biology and active meaning-making
Piaget	Active construction and equilibration	Explains qualitative organisation of thought	Underestimates competence and cultural variation
Information processing	Changes in capacity, speed, knowledge and strategies	Describes specific cognitive mechanisms	Can fragment development into separate processes
Vygotsky	Guided participation and cultural tools	Explains social and cultural shaping of cognition	Gives fewer precise age-linked predictions
Ecological systems	Reciprocal person-context interaction	Integrates multiple levels of influence	Broad framework can be difficult to test as one theory
Life-span and life-course	Gains and losses across	Avoids childhood-centred	Description of complexity

	historical and social pathways	and universal assumptions	may not identify one causal mechanism
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Measuring development

Systematic observation records behaviour in naturalistic or structured settings. Naturalistic observation has realism but little control; structured observation makes comparisons easier but can alter behaviour. **Self-reports** provide access to beliefs and experiences but are vulnerable to memory, wording, and social desirability. **Physiological measures** connect bodily processes to behaviour but require careful interpretation.

A measure is **reliable** if it produces consistent results and **valid** if it measures the intended construct. A reliable measure can still be invalid. Representative sampling determines whether findings can be generalised beyond participants.

General research designs

Correlational studies measure naturally occurring relations. Correlations range from -1 to +1 and describe direction and strength. They do not establish causality because direction may be reversed and third variables may explain the association.

Experiments manipulate an independent variable, measure a dependent variable, and use control and random assignment to support causal inference. Their limitations include artificiality, ethical restrictions, and difficulty generalising. Qualitative research provides depth, meaning, and contextual detail and is often combined with quantitative evidence.

Designs for studying age change

Design	Method	Strength	Limitation
Longitudinal	Repeatedly studies the same people	Directly shows individual change and stability	Time, cost, attrition, practice effects and historical specificity
Cross-sectional	Compares different age groups once	Fast and avoids attrition	Cohort differences can be mistaken for age change
Sequential	Combines age groups and repeated measurement	Helps separate age, cohort and measurement-time effects	Complex and costly

Meta-analysis statistically integrates findings across studies, making it possible to estimate overall patterns and moderators. Its quality depends on the included studies and publication practices.

Ethics communication and social policy

Researchers must minimise risk, obtain informed consent or assent, protect privacy, justify any deception, debrief participants, and provide special safeguards for children or vulnerable groups. Scientific findings are communicated through peer-reviewed publications and should be interpreted with replication, effect size, and methodological limits in mind. Research can shape public policy, but policy decisions also involve values, feasibility, cost, and equity.

Application pattern: In a scenario, identify forces at different levels, select a theory that explains the mechanism, state what evidence would be needed, and avoid claiming causation from a correlation.

Chapter 3 Tools for Exploring the World

The newborn

Newborns are dependent but organised and capable. Reflexes help them obtain nutrition, protect themselves, and provide foundations for later voluntary action. Rooting and sucking support feeding; eye blink, withdrawal, coughing, sneezing, and gagging protect; Moro, grasping, stepping, and Babinski responses provide information about neurological functioning. Reflexes must be interpreted developmentally because some disappear as cortical control increases.

The **Apgar score** rapidly assesses colour, heart rate, reflex irritability, muscle tone, and respiration after birth. It identifies immediate need for medical support; it is not a general intelligence test or certain prediction of later development.

States crying sleep and SIDS

Newborn states include alert inactivity, waking activity, crying, and sleeping. Quiet alertness supports attention and interaction. Crying communicates need; textbook distinctions include basic, angry, and pain cries. Sensitive soothing helps infants regulate arousal, although no single technique works universally.

Newborns sleep much of the day and cycle between active REM-like and regular non-REM sleep. Sleep becomes consolidated with maturation and caregiving routines. Sudden infant death syndrome risk is associated with prematurity, low birth weight, prenatal or household smoke, overheating, and prone sleeping. Placing infants on their backs on a firm clear sleep surface reduces risk.

Temperament

Temperament is a characteristic pattern of emotional reactivity, activity, approach, and regulation. The number and labels of dimensions differ across theories, but negative affect, surgency or extraversion, and effortful control are common. Heredity contributes, yet caregiving and culture affect expression. Temperament is moderately stable, not destiny.

The **goodness-of-fit** principle asks whether environmental demands suit the child's temperament. A cautious child may thrive with gradual introduction rather than forced exposure or total avoidance. Temperament also evokes responses from adults, illustrating reciprocal influence.

Physical growth and nutrition

Growth is fastest in infancy. Babies roughly double birth weight in early infancy and triple it around the first birthday, although normal variation is wide. Growth generally follows **cephalocaudal** and **proximodistal** patterns. Heredity strongly influences eventual size, while nutrition, illness, and living conditions influence whether potential is reached.

Infants require high energy and nutrient intake relative to body size. Breast- and formula-feeding can both provide adequate nutrition when safely managed. Malnutrition is especially harmful during rapid brain and body growth and may affect physical size, attention, exploration, and learning. Effective intervention combines improved diet, healthcare, caregiver education, and a stimulating environment.

The developing nervous system

A neuron has a cell body, dendrites that receive signals, and an axon that transmits them. The cerebral hemispheres are joined by the corpus callosum. The cortex supports complex perception, planning, language, and voluntary behaviour. Lateralisation refers to relative specialisation, not an absolute "left-brained" or "right-brained" person.

Neural development includes growth of connections, myelination, specialisation, and pruning. **Experience-expectant growth** depends on common human input during broad sensitive periods, while **experience-dependent growth** reflects individual learning. The young brain's reduced specialisation supports plasticity after some injuries, but plasticity is neither complete nor cost-free.

Locomotion and dynamic systems

Motor development is not caused by maturation alone. Dynamic systems theory argues that skills emerge when strength, balance, posture, perception, motivation, practice, body proportions, and environment cooperate. Development involves **differentiation** of component skills and their later **integration** into coordinated action.

Locomotion progresses through head control, sitting, crawling or alternative movement, standing, cruising, and walking, with broad normal variation. Self-produced movement transforms development: infants gain access to new information, encounter heights and hazards, make choices, and use caregivers for social referencing. Locomotion therefore promotes agency and self-awareness.

Fine motor skills and handedness

Reaching becomes visually guided and increasingly accurate. Grasping progresses toward coordinated use of fingers and a pincer grip. Infants learn to use both hands independently and then coordinate them toward a common goal. Handedness reflects biological influence and cultural experience and becomes clearer after infancy.

Perceptual development

Smell and taste. Newborns distinguish odours and basic tastes, prefer sweetness, and may recognise a caregiver's smell. **Touch and pain** are functional; infant pain requires treatment. Touch can also support regulation and relationship.

Hearing. Hearing functions before birth. Infants orient to sound, discriminate speech contrasts, and prefer familiar voices and language rhythms. With experience, perception becomes tuned to the contrasts used in the surrounding language.

Vision. Newborn acuity is poor compared with adults but improves rapidly. Colour vision develops as cone systems mature. Infants use kinetic cues, binocular disparity, and pictorial cues for depth. Visual-cliff behaviour depends on locomotor experience as well as visual capacity. Infants prefer patterned, face-like stimuli and form face representations based on frequent experience.

Intermodal perception. Infants combine information across senses, such as matching a voice to a face or recognising visually an object previously explored by touch. Redundant information across senses often captures attention and supports learning.

Becoming self-aware

Mirror self-recognition emerges during the second year and is accompanied by self-reference, knowledge of age or gender, and preference for images of self. Preschool self-concepts emphasise observable features, possessions, preferences, and competencies. Later self-description becomes more psychological, comparative, and integrated.

Theory of mind is understanding that people have mental states that guide behaviour. Preschoolers increasingly understand desires, intentions, knowledge, and false beliefs. Performance depends on language, executive control, social experience, and task demands. Children with autism may find some theory-of-mind tasks difficult, but autism should not be reduced to a single deficit.

Competing explanations emphasise conceptual theory-building, maturation of specialised systems, simulation of others, executive-function growth, and social-language experience. Evidence supports interaction rather than one isolated cause.

Critical synthesis: Chapter 3 repeatedly shows that development emerges from biology plus activity and experience. The newborn contributes capacities and temperament; caregivers and opportunities organise how those capacities develop.

Chapter 4 The Emergence of Thought and Language

Piaget basic principles

Piaget viewed children as active scientists. **Schemes** organise knowledge and action. **Assimilation** interprets experience using an existing scheme; **accommodation** modifies a scheme when it no longer fits.

Equilibration is the drive toward a more adequate balance between understanding and experience.

Sensorimotor thinking

During the sensorimotor period, infants build intelligence through perception and action. Behaviour progresses from reflexes to repeated actions, intentional coordination, experimentation, and mental representation. Major achievements include means-end behaviour, imitation, and object permanence.

Object permanence is understanding that objects continue to exist when not perceived. Piaget believed it developed gradually and interpreted the A-not-B error as incomplete representation. Later research using looking-time methods suggests infants may represent hidden objects earlier than their search behaviour shows. Looking and reaching tasks differ in memory, inhibition, and motor demands, so apparent competence depends on the measure.

Preoperational thinking

Symbolic thought expands rapidly from about age two. Children use language, images, and pretend play but often show **egocentrism**, **centration**, and difficulty with reversible operations. Egocentrism means difficulty coordinating perspectives, not selfishness. Centration leads children to focus on one salient feature and fail conservation tasks. Animism and appearance-reality errors illustrate incomplete differentiation between internal representation and external reality.

Piaget's tasks can underestimate children because instructions, familiarity, language, memory load, and conversational expectations affect performance. Development is more variable and domain-specific than a rigid stage account predicts.

Children naive theories

Children form domain-specific intuitive theories about physics, biology, psychology, and number. These theories organise prediction and explanation but may differ from scientific accounts. Children distinguish living and non-living things, infer internal causes, and build causal explanations from observation, testimony, and culture. Conceptual change requires more than adding facts; misconceptions may need reorganisation.

Information processing

The information-processing approach explains development through attention, learning, memory, processing capacity, speed, knowledge, and strategies. It generally portrays change as continuous and specific rather than stage-like.

Attention becomes more selective and sustained. Infants orient to novelty and habituate to repetition.

Learning occurs through conditioning, imitation, statistical regularities, and categorisation. **Memory** develops from recognition and implicit learning toward increasingly durable recall. Infantile amnesia reflects changes in language, self, brain development, and autobiographical organisation rather than total absence of early learning.

Early number knowledge

Infants discriminate small quantities and approximate larger differences. Preschoolers learn counting principles: one-to-one correspondence, stable order, cardinality, abstraction, and order irrelevance. Reciting number words is not the same as understanding that the final count word represents set size. Language, games, schooling, and everyday numerical experience shape development.

Vygotsky mind and culture

Vygotsky argued that higher mental functions appear first between people and then within the child. Cultural tools, especially language, transform attention, memory, planning, and problem solving.

The **zone of proximal development** is the gap between independent performance and performance possible with skilled help. **Scaffolding** is temporary, contingent support: modelling, prompting, simplifying, questioning, feedback, and gradual withdrawal. Effective support is neither taking over nor leaving the learner unaided.

Private speech is self-directed language that helps children regulate behaviour. It becomes quieter and internalised as inner speech. What Piaget interpreted as immature egocentric speech, Vygotsky interpreted as a tool for self-control.

Piaget and Vygotsky comparison

Question	Piaget	Vygotsky
Image of child	Independent constructor of knowledge	Social learner participating in cultural practice
Primary driver	Exploration, discrepancy and equilibration	Dialogue, instruction and cultural tools
Developmental structure	Universal qualitative stages	No universal stage sequence
Language	Largely reflects cognitive development	Actively reorganises cognition
Teaching	Discovery matched to readiness	Guided participation within the ZPD
Peers and adults	Peers can create cognitive conflict	More knowledgeable partners scaffold learning

Both theories treat children as active and knowledge as constructed. Piaget better highlights self-initiated discovery and structural change; Vygotsky better explains instruction, language, and cultural variation. A synthesis treats cognition as biologically developing, actively explored, and socially supported.

The road to speech

Language development begins with sensitivity to speech rhythm and sound contrasts. Infants coo, babble, use gestures, engage in joint attention, and participate in turn-taking before producing words. Babbling becomes tuned to the surrounding language. Joint attention helps children infer what speakers refer to.

Words as symbols and fast mapping

Words are arbitrary symbols that refer beyond the immediate situation. First words often appear near the end of the first year, followed by accelerating vocabulary. **Fast mapping** is forming an initial word-meaning link

after limited exposure. Children use constraints and social cues: they attend to speaker gaze, assume new words may label unnamed objects, and use grammatical context. Initial mappings remain incomplete and require refinement.

Underextension uses a word too narrowly; overextension uses it too broadly. Both show active hypothesis formation rather than random error.

Grammar and sentences

Children progress from one-word utterances to two-word combinations and increasingly complex grammar. Telegraphic speech conveys core meaning while omitting function words. Morphemes are acquired in a broadly regular but not perfectly uniform order. Overregularisation, such as applying a regular past-tense rule to an irregular verb, shows that children generate rules rather than merely imitate.

Communicating with others

Pragmatics involves using language appropriately for context: turn-taking, topic maintenance, politeness, repairing misunderstandings, and adapting speech to the listener. Narrative skills develop as children learn to organise events causally and temporally.

Language explanations are complementary. Learning accounts explain reinforcement and modelling; nativist accounts emphasise biological preparedness; interactionist accounts show how biological capacity, cognitive development, social interaction, and input cooperate. Child-directed speech supports attention and segmentation, but responsive conversation and shared meaning matter more than exaggerated speech alone.

Application pattern: For a learning scenario, contrast what Piaget predicts the child can construct independently, what information-processing demands may limit performance, and how Vygotskian scaffolding could improve it.

Chapter 7 Expanding Social Horizons

The family as a system

A family is an interdependent system. Change in one member or relationship affects others. Direct effects occur within a relationship; indirect effects occur when one relationship alters another, such as marital stress spilling into parenting. Children also influence parents through temperament, behaviour, and development. Families are embedded in work, neighbourhood, economic, cultural, and historical systems.

Dimensions and styles of parenting

The principal dimensions are **warmth or responsiveness** and **control or demandingness**. Warmth includes affection, acceptance, involvement, and sensitivity. Control includes expectations, monitoring, and rule enforcement. Behavioural control should be distinguished from psychological control, which intrudes on thoughts and feelings through guilt, love withdrawal, or manipulation.

Style	Warmth	Control	Typical pattern
Authoritative	High	High but reasoned and autonomy-supportive	Competence, achievement, self-reliance and lower problem behaviour
Authoritarian	Low	High, coercive or obedience-centred	Lower confidence and communication; effects vary with cultural meaning
Indulgent or permissive	High	Low	Warm relationship but possible difficulty with self-

			control and limits
Uninvolved	Low	Low	Weak monitoring and elevated behavioural, academic and emotional risk

Authoritative parenting predicts favourable outcomes across many studies because it combines support, structure, communication, and gradually increasing autonomy. However, associations are not proof of a one-way causal effect. Children evoke parenting, parents and children share genes, and socioeconomic conditions affect both style and outcome.

Culture changes the meaning of control. Strictness may communicate protection in a dangerous environment or commitment in a collectivist culture. Warmth may also be expressed through sacrifice and involvement rather than verbal affection. A critical answer neither abandons the evidence for supportive structured parenting nor treats a Western style label as universally identical.

Genetic socioeconomic and marital influences

Parent personality and genetically influenced child characteristics shape transactions. Socioeconomic hardship can increase stress, unpredictable work, neighbourhood danger, and limited access to services. These pressures constrain parenting without determining it. Constructive co-parenting supports consistency; destructive marital conflict can spill over into harshness or withdrawal. Children may also be drawn into conflict through triangulation.

Siblings

Sibling relationships combine affection, companionship, rivalry, conflict, teaching, and comparison. Older siblings often model skills and social behaviour, while younger siblings create opportunities for caregiving and leadership. Differential parental treatment can be perceived as unfair and intensify rivalry, although different treatment may respond to age or need. Birth-order claims are generally smaller and less consistent than stereotypes suggest. Temperament, spacing, gender, family stress, and culture are more informative.

Divorce and remarriage

Divorce is a process rather than one event. Risk may begin before separation through conflict and continue through financial loss, relocation, changed parenting, and disrupted relationships. Many children experience temporary distress and adapt; a smaller group experiences longer difficulty. Outcomes depend strongly on pre-divorce conflict, continuing hostile conflict, parenting quality, economic resources, contact with supportive adults, and the child's interpretation.

Remarriage requires boundary and role negotiation. Stepparents often build authority gradually through warmth and trust rather than immediate discipline. Loyalty conflicts and unrealistic expectations of an "instant family" complicate adjustment. Family structure alone is a weaker explanation than relationship quality and accumulated transitions.

Child maltreatment

Maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. No single profile identifies a perpetrator or victim. Risk accumulates across levels: caregiver trauma or poor regulation, child vulnerability, partner violence, isolation, poverty, substance misuse, and cultural acceptance of harsh punishment. Poverty does not equal maltreatment, but material deprivation can increase stress and surveillance bias affects reporting.

Consequences may include fear, insecure or disorganised attachment, emotion-regulation difficulty, aggression, withdrawal, learning problems, and altered stress responses. Effects vary with severity, duration,

relationship to the perpetrator, developmental timing, and protection. Intervention requires immediate safety, coordinated services, caregiver treatment, stable responsive care, and trauma-informed support.

Friendships in middle childhood

Friendship becomes based increasingly on trust, loyalty, mutual understanding, shared interests, and reciprocal support. Friends provide companionship, practice in negotiation and conflict resolution, emotional validation, and a context for self-disclosure. Friendship quality matters more than simply having many friends. Children often choose similar peers, and friends then socialise one another, making selection and influence difficult to separate.

Peer groups

Groups establish norms, identity, status, and belonging. Cliques are small friendship-based groups; crowds are larger reputation-based categories. Group membership can support competence and protect against loneliness, but pressure for conformity can encourage exclusion or risky behaviour. Peer influence is strongest when status is uncertain, the behaviour is visible, and the group is valued.

Popularity and rejection

Sociometric popularity reflects being liked, while **perceived popularity** reflects visibility, prestige, or dominance. The two are not identical. Popular children often combine social skill, emotion regulation, cooperation, and assertiveness. Rejected children may be aggressive, disruptive, socially anxious, or withdrawn, but rejection is a relationship between behaviour and peer context, not a fixed trait.

Rejection can become self-reinforcing: a child expects hostility, interprets ambiguous cues as threatening, responds aggressively, and elicits further rejection. Intervention should address social information processing, emotion regulation, opportunities for successful interaction, and the peer ecology rather than “fixing” only the child.

Aggression bullying and victimisation

Aggression may be **instrumental** or **hostile**, and **proactive** or **reactive**. Proactive aggression is deliberate and goal-directed; reactive aggression is an angry response to perceived threat. Physical aggression becomes less common as verbal and relational forms increase. Biological regulation, modelling, reinforcement, hostile attribution, coercive family processes, and peer norms all contribute.

Bullying involves repeated aggression plus a power imbalance. It can be physical, verbal, relational, or digital. Victims may experience anxiety, depression, avoidance, and academic difficulty, while bully-victims often show particularly high risk. Whole-school approaches are stronger than advice that makes victims solely responsible. Effective responses change norms, improve supervision, teach bystanders, support victims, and address perpetrators’ social and emotional needs while maintaining accountability.

Television programmes

Media effects depend on content, age, context, and viewing style. Educational programmes can support vocabulary and knowledge when content is developmentally appropriate and discussed with adults. Fast pace, frightening material, stereotypes, advertising, and displacement of sleep or active play can be harmful. Violent content can increase aggressive scripts, arousal, imitation, and desensitisation, although children are not affected uniformly.

Video games

Games can develop spatial skills, problem solving, persistence, collaboration, and learning. Risks include excessive use, sleep disruption, exposure to violence or toxic social interaction, and displacement of other activities. The important questions are what is played, with whom, for how long, and what the gaming replaces. Small average effects should not be exaggerated into moral panic.

Social media

Social media can support belonging, creativity, identity exploration, and maintenance of relationships. Risks include social comparison, cyberbullying, harassment, privacy loss, exposure to harmful content, and interrupted sleep. Active, reciprocal communication generally differs from passive comparison-based use. Effects are bidirectional: distressed children may use platforms differently, and online experiences may then intensify or relieve distress.

Describing and understanding others

Children's descriptions shift from concrete appearance and behaviour toward stable traits, motives, and context. Perspective taking becomes more coordinated. Theory of mind expands to second-order beliefs, mixed emotions, sarcasm, and awareness that people may conceal feelings. Social understanding improves with language, executive function, friendship, and family conversation.

Prejudice

Children notice social categories early. Prejudice develops through social categorisation, in-group preference, adult modelling, group norms, media, unequal status, and limited contact. It is not simply copied; children actively interpret social patterns. Reduction is more likely when institutions support equality, contact involves cooperation and equal status, adults discuss unfairness directly, and children encounter counter-stereotypical examples.

Critical synthesis: Middle-childhood social development is produced by linked systems. Parenting affects peer competence; peer experiences feed back into family behaviour; media carry cultural norms; and the child actively interprets and changes each setting.

Chapter 9 Moving into the Adult Social World

Erikson identity versus role confusion

Identity is an integrated sense of continuity across values, goals, relationships, group memberships, and future roles. Adolescents reconsider childhood identifications, explore possibilities, and form commitments. Role confusion involves fragmented, absent, or unstable direction. Successful resolution produces **fidelity**, the capacity to sustain commitments while respecting difference. Identity development continues beyond adolescence when life transitions require revision.

Marcia identity statuses

Status	Exploration	Commitment	Interpretation
Diffusion	Low	Low	Little active search and no stable commitment
Foreclosure	Low	High	Commitment adopted without meaningful exploration
Moratorium	High	Low or emerging	Active exploration with

			uncertainty
Achievement	High	High	Commitment following exploration

Statuses are not fixed stages and can differ across occupation, religion, politics, relationships, and ethnicity. Movement can be cyclical. Achievement is generally associated with more mature reasoning and adjustment, but moratorium may temporarily increase distress while promoting growth.

Cognitive contributions to identity

Abstract thought allows comparison of actual and possible selves, ideologies, and future pathways.

Adolescents initially experience contradictions between context-specific selves; later they can integrate these into a differentiated identity. Metacognition increases awareness of being evaluated and can intensify self-consciousness.

Ethnic identity in South Africa

Ethnic identity includes belonging, knowledge, evaluation, and commitment. It develops through family socialisation, language, cultural participation, historical knowledge, discrimination, and contact with other groups. In South Africa, identity is inseparable from apartheid history, continuing inequality, multilingualism, migration, and the interaction of ethnicity with race, class, gender, and nationality.

A secure positive ethnic identity may support self-esteem and resilience, particularly when adolescents can understand discrimination without internalising it. Exploration should not be equated with rejection of family culture, and strong ethnic identity need not imply hostility toward other groups.

Self-esteem and the storm-and-stress myth

Self-esteem is evaluation of personal worth and becomes differentiated across appearance, academics, sport, conduct, and relationships. Puberty, school transitions, comparison, discrimination, and feedback influence trajectories. Supportive relationships, belonging, competence, and realistic encouragement protect self-esteem.

Adolescence is not inevitably a period of severe turmoil. Average increases in conflict, mood variability, or risk do not mean that every adolescent experiences crisis. Most maintain meaningful ties with parents and adapt successfully. The storm-and-stress stereotype can cause adults to dismiss genuine distress as “normal adolescence.”

Romantic relationships

Adolescent romance develops from group interaction and short-lived attractions toward more dyadic, intimate, and committed relationships. These relationships provide companionship, identity exploration, sexual learning, and support, but can also produce jealousy, distraction, pressure, and distress after break-up. Quality, timing, consent, and compatibility with other developmental tasks matter more than dating status alone.

Sexual behaviour

Sexual development involves desire, identity, values, communication, consent, contraception, and health. Behaviour is shaped by puberty, peers, family communication, religion, gender norms, opportunity, media, and perceived risk. Comprehensive sexuality education provides accurate information and decision skills without assuming that information alone controls behaviour. Access to confidential healthcare and contraception changes outcomes.

Consent must be voluntary, informed, specific, and reversible. Power differences, intoxication, coercion, and age or legal context affect whether consent is possible.

Sexual minority youth

Sexual-minority youth vary widely and are not inherently psychologically disordered. Elevated mental-health risk is better explained by minority stress: rejection, victimisation, concealment, discrimination, and barriers to support. Family acceptance, affirming peers and schools, supportive adults, and legal protection are strong protective factors.

Dating and intimate partner violence

Dating violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, or digital. Risk factors include exposure to family violence, acceptance of coercive norms, jealousy, substance misuse, poor regulation, peer approval, and power imbalance. Victim blaming is inaccurate. Prevention requires consent education, relationship skills, bystander action, safe disclosure pathways, and accountability.

Career development

Career choice develops through interests, abilities, self-efficacy, opportunities, values, gender and cultural expectations, education, labour-market conditions, and family resources. Exploration becomes more realistic as adolescents coordinate self-knowledge with occupational information. Vocational maturity involves readiness to make and revise informed choices, not knowing one permanent career early.

Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment delays financial independence and can undermine identity, hope, mental health, and social participation. Causes are not reducible to motivation: economic conditions, geographic mismatch, unequal schooling, discrimination, lack of experience, transport, and social networks matter. Support includes skills development linked to real opportunities, career guidance, placement, income protection, and macroeconomic policy.

Drinking and smoking

Substance use reflects sensation seeking, peer norms, modelling, availability, stress coping, advertising, and perceived harm. Early frequent use can disrupt health, judgement, schooling, and relationships and may become entrenched. Risk rises when multiple vulnerabilities combine. Protective factors include warm monitoring, school connection, prosocial peers, regulation skills, and restricted access. Prevention should correct norms and strengthen environments rather than rely only on fear.

Depression

Depression involves persistent mood and cognitive, motivational, behavioural, and physical changes that impair functioning. Irritability may be prominent in adolescents. Risk factors include genetic vulnerability, negative thinking, trauma, chronic stress, rejection, discrimination, family conflict, and isolation. Girls often show higher diagnosed rates after puberty, but gender patterns are influenced by exposure, coping, and reporting.

Suicidal talk or behaviour requires direct assessment and urgent support; it should never be dismissed as attention-seeking. Evidence-based help may include psychotherapy, family support, school accommodation, safety planning, and medical treatment.

Violence and crime

Violence emerges from interacting individual, family, peer, school, neighbourhood, and societal factors. Impulsivity or hostile attribution may increase vulnerability, but exposure to violence, exclusion, inequality, weapons, gang norms, and weak institutions shape opportunity. Most adolescents do not engage in serious persistent offending. Developmental pathways distinguish limited experimentation from early-onset persistent antisocial behaviour.

Resilience

Resilience is positive adaptation despite significant adversity. It is a dynamic process, not invulnerability or a fixed trait. Protective factors include self-regulation, problem solving, meaning, supportive caregivers, mentors, school connection, safe community resources, and opportunities for competence. One reliable adult relationship can matter greatly, but structural conditions remain important.

Application pattern: Identify risk and protective factors across levels, distinguish normal exploration from impairment, and explain reciprocal processes. Avoid blaming adolescents for conditions produced by families, institutions, and labour markets.

Chapter 10 Becoming an Adult

Emerging adulthood

Emerging adulthood is a proposed period from the late teens through the twenties characterised by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and perceived possibilities. It is most visible in societies and social groups where education and economic resources allow adult roles to be delayed. It is not a universal biological stage.

Traditional role transitions include completing education, entering stable work, financial independence, leaving the parental home, marriage, and parenthood. Contemporary transitions are less standardised, occur in different orders, and can reverse. Subjective markers such as accepting responsibility, making independent decisions, and becoming financially self-supporting often matter more than a birthday.

Cross-cultural evaluation is essential. In settings where work, family care, marriage, or parenthood begin early, prolonged self-focused exploration may be unavailable or undesirable. Living with extended family may express valued interdependence rather than failed independence. Economic insecurity can delay roles without creating freedom. Emerging adulthood is therefore a useful description of some demographic pathways, not a universal requirement.

Neuroscience behaviour and emerging adulthood

Brain systems supporting planning, inhibition, and coordination continue to develop into the twenties, while reward and emotion systems remain highly responsive. Experience, sleep, stress, peers, and opportunity influence whether mature capacities are used. Neuroscience does not mean emerging adults are incapable of decisions; it explains why performance may be especially context-sensitive.

Education work and intimacy milestones

Education can expand cognitive skill, identity exploration, networks, and occupational opportunity, but access and debt vary. Entry into work builds competence and independence yet may involve unstable or mismatched employment. Role accumulation can promote maturity when demands are manageable.

Erikson's **intimacy versus isolation** concerns the capacity to share oneself in a committed relationship without losing identity. Intimacy includes trust, mutuality, vulnerability, sexuality, friendship, and care; it is not

restricted to marriage. Successful resolution produces love. Identity may support intimacy, but relationships also shape identity, so development is reciprocal rather than strictly sequential.

Physical peak and change

Young adulthood is a peak period for strength, reaction time, coordination, sensory acuity, and reproductive functioning. Peak does not mean all young adults are healthy or that decline begins abruptly. Physical functioning reflects accumulated childhood conditions, disability, work demands, healthcare, and lifestyle.

Lifestyle and health

Smoking damages cardiovascular and respiratory health and creates dependence. Alcohol effects depend on amount, pattern, context, and individual vulnerability; binge drinking raises accident, violence, sexual-risk, and health risk. Nutrition and activity influence weight, cardiovascular health, bone, mood, and later disease. Sleep is crucial for regulation and cognition.

Health inequality reflects more than personal choice. Income, education, food access, housing, neighbourhood safety, work conditions, discrimination, and healthcare shape exposure and options. South African young adults face a dual burden of communicable and non-communicable disease, injury, and unequal access. Prevention must combine individual behaviour change with structural improvement.

Intelligence in adulthood

Adult intelligence is multidimensional. **Primary mental abilities** are clusters such as verbal meaning, number, spatial relations, word fluency, memory, perceptual speed, and inductive reasoning. Related primary abilities can form broader **secondary mental abilities**.

Age patterns vary by ability and cohort. Cross-sectional studies may exaggerate age differences because cohorts differ in education, health, and test experience. Longitudinal studies can be biased by practice and selective attrition. Sequential evidence gives a more balanced picture.

Fluid and crystallised intelligence

Ability	Meaning	Typical course and qualification
Fluid intelligence	Flexible reasoning and solving novel problems with little reliance on acquired knowledge	Often peaks earlier and later declines, but training, health and task demands matter
Crystallised intelligence	Culturally acquired knowledge and expertise	Often grows through adulthood and remains strong until late life

The distinction explains why an adult may process novel information less quickly yet solve familiar professional problems better. Expertise organises knowledge efficiently and can compensate for some processing limitations.

Neuroscience and intelligence

The parieto-frontal integration theory proposes that intelligence depends on efficient coordination across distributed regions rather than one “intelligence centre.” Brain volume or activation correlations do not establish a fixed biological rank. Education and experience alter neural networks, and intelligence tests capture only selected forms of performance.

Beyond formal operations

Postformal thought recognises that knowledge may be relative to context, ambiguity and contradiction are common, and workable solutions require integration of logic, experience, values, and emotion. **Reflective judgement** develops from assuming that knowledge is certain, through recognising uncertainty, toward evaluating evidence and defending conclusions while accepting revision.

Postformal thought is not a universal formal stage. It is more likely in domains where people have education, experience, motivation, and responsibility. Adults can reason reflectively in one domain and simplistically in another.

Integrating emotion and logic

Mature decision-making does not eliminate emotion. Emotion identifies relevance and value; logic evaluates evidence and consequences. **Emotional intelligence** includes accurately perceiving, understanding, using, and regulating emotion. It can support relationships and judgement, but self-report emotional-intelligence scales may overlap with personality.

Impression formation involves organising information about others and revising first impressions. Adults may integrate traits, situations, motives, and contradictions more flexibly, though stereotypes and confirmation bias remain possible.

Life span construct life stories and social clock

Young adults create a **life-span construct**, a unified sense of past, present, and anticipated future. A **scenario** maps expected future events, often using a cultural **social clock** for education, work, marriage, or parenthood. A **life story** organises remembered events into an autobiographical narrative that provides continuity and meaning.

Life stories are reconstructed rather than objective recordings. Redemption sequences, contamination sequences, agency, communion, and cultural master narratives influence identity. Events that violate the social clock may produce stress, but alternative pathways can become meaningful.

Possible selves

Possible selves include what people hope to become, expect to become, and fear becoming. They connect identity to motivation by giving goals emotional meaning. They guide behaviour best when they are specific, plausible, linked to strategies, and supported by opportunity. A feared self can motivate avoidance, but excessive threat without efficacy can produce disengagement.

Personal control beliefs

Control beliefs concern whether outcomes are shaped by one's own actions or external forces. **Primary control** attempts to change the environment; **secondary control** adjusts goals, interpretation, or the self. A sense of control generally supports persistence and well-being, but realistic flexibility is better than denying uncontrollable constraints. Socioeconomic conditions and discrimination affect actual and perceived control.

Critical synthesis: Young adulthood combines biological strengths with variable social opportunity. Adult cognition shows both gains and losses, while identity is organised through culturally shaped stories, possible selves, and control beliefs.

Chapter 12 Working and Relaxing

Why people work

Work provides income, identity, structure, social contact, competence, status, and contribution. The balance differs among individuals and across circumstances. **Meaning-mission fit** occurs when personal values align with an organisation's purpose; it can strengthen commitment, but organisations can exploit a sense of calling if working conditions are poor.

Holland occupational choice theory

Holland proposed that people seek environments fitting six interest-personality types:

Type	Preferred activities and environments
Realistic	Practical, technical, mechanical and outdoor activity
Investigative	Analytical, scientific and problem-solving activity
Artistic	Creative, expressive and unstructured activity
Social	Helping, teaching and interpersonal activity
Enterprising	Persuading, leading and commercial activity
Conventional	Organising, clerical and structured data activity

Congruence between person and environment predicts satisfaction and persistence. The model is practical but interests are not fixed, jobs contain mixed demands, and opportunity, discrimination, education, and labour-market conditions limit choice.

Social cognitive career theory

Social cognitive career theory explains career interests, choices, and performance through **self-efficacy**, **outcome expectations**, and **goals**, within supports and barriers. Successful experiences strengthen efficacy; modelling and encouragement also contribute. A person may have interest but not choose a career if expected barriers appear insurmountable. The theory integrates agency with context better than pure trait matching.

Super developmental theory

Super viewed career as implementation of self-concept across the life course. People explore, establish, maintain, disengage, and recycle through stages as work and life change. Career maturity or adaptability involves concern, control, curiosity, and confidence in managing transitions. The approach recognises development but can assume orderly careers that are unavailable in unstable labour markets.

Comparing career theories

Theory	Central question	Developmental mechanism	Best application
Holland	Which environment fits my interests and traits	Person-environment congruence	Comparing occupational fields
Social cognitive career theory	What do I believe I can do and what will happen	Efficacy, expectations, goals, supports and barriers	Explaining constrained or expanding choices
Super	How does work express my changing self-concept	Life stages, roles and adaptation	Understanding career development and transition

Occupational development reality shock and mentoring

Reality shock occurs when the actual job differs from expectations. It can involve workload, organisational politics, ethics, autonomy, or emotional demands. Realistic previews and supportive induction reduce shock.

Mentors and developmental coaches teach skills, provide feedback, explain unwritten rules, sponsor opportunity, and support identity. Mentoring can reproduce inequality if access depends on similarity or informal networks. Effective programmes make access and expectations transparent.

Job satisfaction alienation burnout and passion

Job satisfaction reflects tasks, relationships, pay, fairness, autonomy, meaning, conditions, and fit. Older workers often report greater satisfaction, partly because dissatisfied workers leave, priorities change, and fit improves.

Alienation is estrangement or lack of meaning and control. **Burnout** involves exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalisation, and reduced efficacy after chronic work stress. Burnout is not simply personal weakness; workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values matter.

Vallerand distinguishes **harmonious passion**, freely integrated with identity and balanced with other roles, from **obsessive passion**, controlled by pressure and difficult to disengage from. Enjoyment alone does not protect against overwork.

Gendered occupational selection

Children receive gendered messages about competence and suitable work. Role models, subject exposure, self-efficacy, anticipated family roles, discrimination, and workplace climate shape selection. People entering gender-atypical occupations may face stereotyping, isolation, heightened scrutiny, or assumptions about competence.

Women may leave well-paid work because of caregiving demands, inflexible workplaces, harassment, blocked advancement, or unequal reward rather than lack of ambition. Adequate childcare, supportive partners, flexibility without career penalty, and transparent promotion support continuation.

Previously disadvantaged workers and discrimination

South African occupational development must be interpreted through apartheid's educational, spatial, and labour legacy and continuing inequality. Disadvantage affects school quality, networks, transport, credentials, wealth, and exposure to bias. Employment equity seeks to address systemic exclusion, but formal access alone does not eliminate informal barriers or hostile climates.

Discrimination may be overt or embedded in apparently neutral criteria. Stereotype threat and repeated subtle bias can impair belonging and performance. Organisational accountability, transparent criteria, representative leadership, fair pay, and safe reporting are more effective than expecting individuals to adapt alone.

Glass ceiling glass cliff pay inequity and harassment

The **glass ceiling** is an invisible barrier to senior advancement. The **glass cliff** places women or minority leaders in high-risk positions where failure is likely and support is limited. Pay gaps reflect occupational segregation, caregiving penalties, negotiation structures, and discrimination.

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual conduct and sex-based hostility that affects working conditions. Power and organisational climate are central. A reasonable-person standard, clear policy, confidential reporting, protection from retaliation, and prompt fair investigation are necessary.

Occupational transitions and retraining

People change occupations because of interests, health, family, obsolescence, burnout, opportunity, redundancy, technology, and economic restructuring. Change can be voluntary or forced. Retraining is most effective when linked to genuine labour demand, accessible to adults with responsibilities, and supported by recognition of prior learning.

Career plateauing may be structural, where promotion is unavailable, or content-based, where work no longer challenges. Development can occur through lateral moves, enriched roles, mentoring, or learning rather than promotion alone.

Occupational insecurity and unemployment

Occupational insecurity is fear of job loss or deteriorating conditions. Uncertainty can produce more sustained anxiety than a known outcome because planning is difficult. Job loss affects income, identity, routine, social contact, family relationships, and health. Distress depends on financial strain, attachment to the role, duration, social support, and perceived employability.

Coping includes problem-focused job search and retraining, emotion-focused support and recovery, financial and practical assistance, and collective or policy responses. Blaming unemployed people ignores economic conditions and discrimination. Re-employment may not fully restore well-being if the new work is insecure or poor quality.

Dependent care dilemma

Employed adults may care for children, disabled relatives, or ageing parents. The “sandwich generation” may face simultaneous care demands, although intensity varies. Caregiving creates time pressure, emergencies, emotional strain, transport and healthcare coordination, career interruption, and cost. It can also bring closeness, meaning, and reciprocity.

Women often carry more routine and time-sensitive care because of gender norms and wage structures. Paid leave, affordable childcare, respite services, flexible predictable work, and protection from discrimination change outcomes.

Juggling multiple roles

Work-family conflict occurs when demands are incompatible. Work-to-family and family-to-work conflict can be time-based, strain-based, or behaviour-based. Spillover transfers mood or behaviour between domains; crossover occurs when one person’s stress affects another.

Multiple roles can also create **enrichment** through income, skill, confidence, positive mood, and social support. Outcomes depend on role quality and resources, not number alone. Boundary control, supervisor support, equitable household labour, partner communication, and recovery time are protective. Individual time management cannot solve structurally impossible workloads.

Leisure

Leisure is discretionary activity and includes relaxation, enjoyment, social participation, mastery, creativity, and contribution. Types include passive rest, physical activity, hobbies, cultural activity, volunteering, socialising, travel, and digital recreation. The same activity can be work for one person and leisure for another depending on choice and meaning.

Emerging adults often try a wider range of activities; midlife care and work can constrain time; retirement may create opportunity but health and income shape access. **Place attachment** develops when a location supports identity, memory, belonging, and meaning.

Leisure can improve physical health, recovery, competence, creativity, social connection, and well-being. It can also involve risk, expense, conflict, or compulsive use. Benefits depend on autonomy, fit, engagement, and balance. Unequal access to safe spaces, time, money, and transport must be recognised.

Critical synthesis: Occupational development is never just choosing a job. Interests and self-concepts operate within unequal opportunity structures. Work can support identity and health or produce insecurity and burnout, while family resources and leisure determine whether adults can recover and flourish.

Higher Order Examination Toolkit

Command words

Command	What the answer must do
Discuss	Explain the concept, mechanisms, evidence, implications and qualifications in a connected argument
Compare and contrast	Use the same dimensions for both theories, identify similarities and differences, then reach a conclusion
Apply	Map specific facts in the scenario to named concepts and explain why the concept fits
Analyse	Break the situation into interacting causes or processes and show relationships between them
Critically discuss or evaluate	Present strengths, evidence, limitations, alternatives and a justified overall judgement

Reliable essay structure

- **Introduction:** Define the central construct, answer the question in one clear thesis, and name the dimensions you will cover.
- **Body:** One argument per paragraph. State the claim, explain the mechanism, use an example or evidence, and connect it back to the question.
- **Comparison:** Compare theories point by point rather than describing one completely and then the other.
- **Application:** Quote or paraphrase a fact from the scenario, name the relevant construct, and explain the link.
- **Critical element:** Identify what the theory explains well, what it overlooks, and which contextual or methodological qualifications matter.
- **Conclusion:** Integrate the argument without introducing new material.

Scenario analysis grid

1. Identify the person's developmental period and task.
2. Separate biological, psychological, sociocultural, and life-cycle influences.
3. Identify reciprocal effects and not only one-way causation.
4. Select the theory with the clearest mechanism.
5. Consider an alternative explanation.
6. State what evidence would distinguish the explanations.
7. Recommend support that changes both the person's resources and the environment where appropriate.

Frequent errors to avoid

- Reproducing definitions without answering the question.
- Treating correlations as proof that one factor caused another.

- Describing stages as rigid, universal, or irreversible.
- Ignoring culture, socioeconomic inequality, history, or access to opportunity.
- Treating group averages as true of every individual.
- Presenting the child or adolescent as passive rather than reciprocally influencing others.
- Listing theory strengths and weaknesses without reaching a reasoned judgement.
- Using examples that illustrate a concept but do not explain its developmental mechanism.

Rapid Revision Map

If the question concerns	Begin with	Then connect to
How development occurs	Chapter 1 biopsychosocial and relevant theory	Evidence, context and reciprocal influence
Infant competence	Reflexes, states, perception and motor action	Caregiver interaction and plasticity
Early cognition	Piaget or information processing	Vygotsky, language and task demands
Middle childhood behaviour	Family system and parenting	Peers, media, social cognition and culture
Adolescent difficulty	Identity and developmental context	Risk and protective factors across multiple levels
Becoming adult	Role transitions and cultural opportunity	Intimacy, health, cognition and identity narrative
Work choice or distress	Career theory or occupational conditions	Discrimination, family roles, transitions and leisure

Source map

This guide follows the 2026 scope and the supplied textbook's printed pagination: Chapter 1 pages 2 to 35; Chapter 3 pages 74 to 114; Chapter 4 pages 116 to 153; Chapter 7 pages 222 to 256; Chapter 9 pages 280 to 306; Chapter 10 pages 308 to 341; and Chapter 12 pages 370 to 401. All seven chapters are treated as fully examinable because the 2026 guidance specifies chapters rather than narrow themes.