

## AP PSYCHOLOGY

# UNIT 6

# Developmental Psychology



**7–9%**

AP EXAM WEIGHTING



**~9–10**

CLASS PERIODS

---

# Developmental Psychology

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do we perceive and understand ourselves?



## Developing Understanding

Developmental psychology encompasses the study of the behavior of organisms from conception to death. In this unit, students will learn to examine the processes that contribute to behavioral change throughout a person's life. The major areas of emphasis in the course include prenatal development, motor development, socialization, cognitive development, adolescence, and adulthood. Developmental psychologists seek to understand how changes in our biology and social situations over a lifespan influence our behaviors and mental processes. Development can be studied from several different perspectives, including biological or cognitive perspectives. Developmental psychologists may focus on one or more developmental periods or the entire course of a lifespan, using cross-sectional and longitudinal research methods.

## Building Course Skills

**1.A 1.B 1.C 3**


Building on knowledge from earlier units, students will pull together aspects of physiological, cognitive, psychological, and moral development to understand how behavior and mental processes change over the course of a person's life. This includes the role of adolescent development and the decline of adults as they age.

Students will reinforce biological, cognitive, and cultural perspectives studied in earlier units while discussing theories of stage development and continuous development. Students are also introduced to cross-sectional research and longitudinal research designs, which build on the research methods learned in Unit 1. Students will further their understanding of analyzing and interpreting data through these new research designs and in relation to the specific context of developmental psychology.

## Preparing for the AP Exam

Students should be able to explain physical, intellectual, social, and moral development, along with the development of personality, in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Additionally, they should be able to explain the comparison between stages of development. A common student error on the AP Exam is failure to provide specific outcomes about how life experience helps or hinders development. Students should provide a thorough explanation of the relationship between life experience and development within the given scenario. Students tend to discuss the stages of development but fail to expand on the concepts to show mastery. It is important to a student's success on the exam that they write complete thoughts with cogent, accurate information. Teachers can provide students with opportunities to write about development at each stage of life in real-world contexts. Students will also answer questions related to research methods, including validity, ethics, and correct method of study. They may be asked about experimental design and should be prepared to answer questions such as What are the flaws in a research study? Would this design pass IRB? What is the appropriate method for a research question?

## UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill	Class Periods
		~9–10 CLASS PERIODS
<b>6.1 The Lifespan and Physical Development in Childhood</b>	<b>3</b> Analyze psychological research studies.	
<b>6.2 Social Development in Childhood</b>	<b>1.C</b> Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.	
<b>6.3 Cognitive Development in Childhood</b>	<b>1.C</b> Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.	
<b>6.4 Adolescent Development</b>	<b>1.B</b> Explain behavior in authentic context.	
<b>6.5 Adulthood and Aging</b>	<b>1.C</b> Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.	
<b>6.6 Moral Development</b>	<b>3</b> Analyze psychological research studies.	
<b>6.7 Gender and Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>1.A</b> Define and/or apply concepts.	
 Go to <b>AP Classroom</b> to assign the <b>Personal Progress Check</b> for Unit 6. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.		

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Scientific Investigation*

**3**

Analyze psychological research studies.

**TOPIC 6.1**

# The Lifespan and Physical Development in Childhood

**LEARNING TARGET**

**6.A**

Explain the process of conception and gestation, including factors that influence successful pre-natal development.

**6.B**

Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations), specifically physical development, in the determination of behavior.

**6.C**

Discuss maturation of motor skills.

**EXAMPLES**

**6.A.1**

Nutrition

**6.A.2**

Illness

**6.A.3**

Substance abuse


**6.A.4**

Teratogens

## TOPIC 6.2

# Social Development in Childhood

## SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Understanding***1.C**

Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.

## LEARNING TARGET

**6.D**

Describe the influence of temperament and other social factors on attachment and appropriate socialization.

**6.E**

Identify the contributions of major researchers in developmental psychology in the area of social development in childhood.

**6.F**

Discuss the interaction of nature and nurture (including cultural variations), specifically social development, in the determination of behavior.

**6.G**

Explain how parenting styles influence development.

## EXAMPLES

**6.E.1**

Contributions of Albert Bandura, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood

**6.E.2**

Contributions of Diana Baumrind, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood

**6.E.3**

Contributions of Konrad Lorenz, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood

**6.E.4**

Contributions of Harry Harlow, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood


**6.E.5**

Contributions of Mary Ainsworth, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood

**6.E.6**

Contributions of Sigmund Freud, key researcher in the area of social development in childhood

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Concept Understanding*

**1.C**

Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.

**TOPIC 6.3**

# Cognitive Development in Childhood

**LEARNING TARGET**

**6.H**

Explain the maturation of cognitive abilities (Piaget's stages, Information process).

**6.I**

Identify the contributions of major researchers in the area of cognitive development in childhood.

**EXAMPLES**

**6.I.1**

Contributions of Lev Vygotsky, key researcher in the area of cognitive development in childhood

**6.I.2**

Contributions of Jean Piaget, key researcher in the area of cognitive development in childhood



## Topic Planning Notes

*Use the space below to plan your approach to the topic.*

.....

.....

.....


.....

.....

## TOPIC 6.4

# Adolescent Development

## SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Understanding***1.B**

Explain behavior in authentic context.

## LEARNING TARGET

**6.J**

Discuss maturational challenges in adolescence, including related family conflicts.



## Topic Planning Notes

*Use the space below to plan your approach to the topic.*

---


---

---

---

---

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Concept Understanding*

**1.C**

Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.

**TOPIC 6.5**

# Adulthood and Aging

**LEARNING TARGET**

**6.K**

Characterize the development of decisions related to intimacy as people mature.

**6.L**

Predict the physical and cognitive changes that emerge through the lifespan, including steps that can be taken to maximize function.

**6.M**

Identify the contributions of key researchers in the area of adulthood and aging.

**EXAMPLES**

**6.M.1**

Contributions of Erik Erikson, key researcher in the area of lifespan development



## Topic Planning Notes

*Use the space below to plan your approach to the topic.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## TOPIC 6.6

# Moral Development

**SUGGESTED SKILL** *Scientific Investigation***3**

Analyze psychological research studies.

**LEARNING TARGET****6.N**

Identify the contributions of major researchers in the area of moral development.

**6.O**

Compare and contrast models of moral development.

**EXAMPLES****6.N.1**

Contributions of Carol Gilligan

**6.N.2**

Contributions of Lawrence Kohlberg

**Topic Planning Notes***Use the space below to plan your approach to the topic.*

---


---

---

---

---

## SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept  
Understanding***1.A**Define and/or  
apply concepts.

## TOPIC 6.7

# Gender and Sexual Orientation

## LEARNING TARGET

**6.P**Describe how sex and gender  
influence socialization  
and other aspects  
of development.

## Topic Planning Notes

*Use the space below to plan your approach to the topic.*

---

---

---

---

---