

Adolescence

adəˈles(ə)ns/

noun

noun: **adolescence**

1. the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult.

"Mary spent her childhood and adolescence in Europe"

teenage years, [teens](#), [youth](#), young adulthood, young days, early life;

More

synonyms: [pubescence](#), [puberty](#);

rare [juvenescence](#), juvenility

"they spent their adolescence hanging out together"

Origin

late Middle English: from French, from Latin *adolescētia*, from *adolescere* ‘grow to maturity’ (see [adolescent](#)).

Translate adolescence to

Use over time for: adolescence

Adolescence

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"Teen" and "Teenagers" redirect here. For other uses, see [Teen \(disambiguation\)](#).

"Adolescents" redirects here. For other uses, see [Adolescents \(disambiguation\)](#).

"Teenage girls" redirects here. For the EP by Love Kills, see [Teenage Girls \(EP\)](#).



Two adolescents listening to music

Adolescence (from [Latin](#) *adolescere*, meaning "to grow up")^[1] is a transitional stage of [physical](#) and [psychological human development](#) that generally occurs during the period from [puberty](#) to legal [adulthood](#) ([age of majority](#)).^{[1][2][3]} The period of adolescence is most closely associated with the teenage years,^{[3][4][5][6]} though its physical, psychological and cultural

expressions may begin earlier and end later. For example, although puberty has been historically associated with the onset of adolescent development,^{[7][8][9]} it now typically begins prior to the teenage years and there has been a normative shift of it occurring in [preadolescence](#), particularly in females (see [precocious puberty](#)).^{[4][10][11]} Physical growth, as distinct from puberty (particularly in males), and cognitive development generally seen in adolescence, can also extend into the early twenties. Thus chronological age provides only a rough marker of adolescence, and scholars have found it difficult to agree upon a precise definition of adolescence.^{[10][11][12][13]}

A thorough understanding of adolescence in society depends on information from various perspectives, including [psychology](#), [biology](#), [history](#), [sociology](#), [education](#), and [anthropology](#). Within all of these perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, whose cultural purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles.^[14] It is a period of multiple transitions involving education, training, employment and unemployment, as well as transitions from one living circumstance to another.^[15]

The end of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood varies by country and by function. Furthermore, even within a single [nation state](#) or culture there can be different ages at which an individual is considered (chronologically and legally) mature enough for society to entrust them with certain privileges and responsibilities. Such [milestones](#) include driving a vehicle, having legal sexual relations, serving in the armed forces or on a [jury](#), purchasing and drinking [alcohol](#), voting, entering into contracts, finishing certain levels of education, and [marriage](#). Adolescence is usually accompanied by an increased independence allowed by the parents or legal guardians, including less supervision as compared to preadolescence.



Adolescents of diverse backgrounds in [Oslo](#)

In studying adolescent development,^[16] adolescence can be defined biologically, as the physical transition marked by the onset of puberty and the termination of physical growth; cognitively, as changes in the ability to think abstractly and multi-dimensionally; or socially, as a period of preparation for adult roles. Major pubertal and biological changes include changes to the [sex organs](#), height, weight, and [muscle mass](#), as well as major changes in brain structure and organization. [Cognitive](#) advances encompass both increases in knowledge and in the ability to think abstractly and to reason more effectively. The study of adolescent development often involves interdisciplinary collaborations. For example, researchers in [neuroscience](#) or [bio-behavioral health](#) might focus on pubertal changes in brain structure and its effects on cognition or social relations. [Sociologists](#) interested in adolescence might focus on the acquisition of social roles (e.g., worker or romantic partner) and how this varies across cultures or social conditions.^[17] [Developmental psychologists](#) might focus on changes in relations with parents and peers as a function of school structure and pubertal status.^[18]