

Adolescence & Emerging Adulthood

NARRATOR:

Adolescence is a distinct stage of life in nearly every culture. Puberty is universal, and all cultures recognize that puberty marks a departure from childhood. The journey through adolescence, however, is crucially shaped by the culture or cultures where it takes place.

LILA:

It's fun being a teenager, because I know more about the world and it's more interesting to like learn about the world and see how I might be able to change it in the future.

NARRATOR:

In some cultures, adolescents take on extensive work and household responsibilities to contribute to their families. In other cultures, adolescents spend most of their day in school.

Adolescence is often followed by emerging adulthood-- a new stage of life from about age 18 to 25, when young people explore possible futures, gradually making their way toward adult roles such as stable work and marriage in the late 20s or beyond.

MALIHA:

My favorite thing is the sheer amount of opportunities I can create for myself also knowing that I'm still young enough that I can explore without feeling like I'm taking time out of my career to do so.

NARRATOR:

Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach, highlights cultural diversity within and across countries.

Chapter 1 presents a worldwide profile of today's adolescents and emerging adults from Asia to Latin America, from Africa to Europe and North America. And it introduces variations within countries in terms of social class, gender, and ethnicity. This first chapter also describes the use of the scientific method to understand and improve the lives of adolescents.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 lay the foundations.

- Discussing puberty and other biological foundations of adolescence in chapter 2.
- Examining cognitive foundations in chapter 3.
- How adolescents thinking grows more complex and socially astute.
- And in chapter 4 on cultural beliefs, describing the crucial impact of cultural, religious, and moral beliefs.

Chapter 5 focuses on how gender is a universal organizing principle of adolescent development and yet how there are tremendous cultural and individual variations.

Chapter 6 zooms in on the development of a sense of self in adolescence and emerging adulthood. One example, we consider how high self esteem is desirable in some cultures but discouraged in other cultures.

Chapter 7 through 12, zoom out to capture the social context that impact adolescent development. Adolescents learn important values from their families described in chapter 7. But they also, typically, spend less and less time with family as they pivot toward friends and peers described in chapter 8.

DARSHAN:

It's corn. A big lump of knobs, it has the juice.

JENNY:

It has the juice.

DARSHAN:

That's a meme.

NARRATOR:

In the course of adolescence and certainly by emerging adulthood, romantic partners often become an important source of both delight and despair explored in chapter 9 on love and sexuality.

The ways that school and work prepare adolescents and emerging adults to make contributions to their societies are detailed in chapters 10 and 11.

A few decades ago media were a pretty small part of most adolescents' lives. Now screen time spent on phones, computers, laptops, and tablets amounts to many, many hours every day. Is that healthy for adolescents? We answer that question and others in chapter 12.

The last chapter, chapter 13, covers problems that, sometimes, arise in adolescence and emerging adulthood such as risky behaviors and depression. But adolescence and emerging adulthood are also times of resilience and hopefulness.

SHAYNE:

I'm looking toward transitioning to becoming a teacher. I feel as though if I'm a teacher, I'll be able to give my 100 percent attention to the school, to the students, making sure that not only that they're learning, but they're also living with a positive impact that I left on them. So yeah. I just want to give back.

NARRATOR:

Almost all of us experience adolescence in some form. Everyone experiences puberty, everyone develops more complex ways of thinking, everyone relies on family or friends or teachers or co-workers to teach them adult skills. But culture also makes adolescence different within and across countries.

Culture fundamentally and dramatically influences how we experience adolescence. From how we interpret the physical changes of puberty, to the gender and sexual norms we learn, to how much education we receive, to the media content we use or create, to the challenges and problems we may face.

Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach, delivers a deeper understanding of young people's developmental journeys and a richer understanding of ourselves.