

IB PSYCHOLOGY | SL AND HL

Human Development

BONUS Model Essay — 15 MARKS • ANNOTATED • SECTION C

The Complete Revision Notes

Written for the new IB Psychology syllabus, first assessment 2027

ALSO INSIDE
A model 15-mark essay, annotated line by line back to these notes

8	15	6	2027
TOPICS	KEY STUDIES	IB CONCEPTS	FIRST EXAMS

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Excelling Psychology | excellingpsychology.com

PREVIEW EDITION

One booklet for the whole context

Every topic in Human Development for the new IB Psychology syllabus (first exams 2027), written for SL and HL, laid out the same clear way from the first page to the last.

8	15	6	8	1
topics	key studies	IB concepts	one-page recaps	annotated model answer

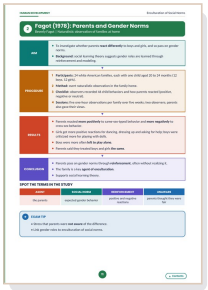
Every topic follows the same route



1

Key terms

Exam-ready definitions, each with an everyday example.



2

Key studies

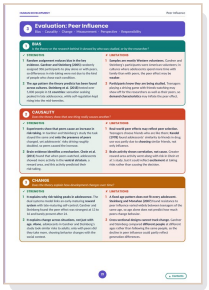
Aim, procedure, results and conclusion, cleanly set out.



3

See it in action

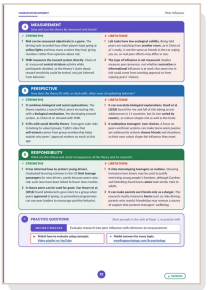
Illustrated pages that make each study stick.



4

Evaluation

Strengths and limitations under all six IB concepts.



5

Practice

Short prompts in the style of Paper 1 to practise with.



6

At a glance

The whole topic on one page for the night before.

THE BONUS

A model 15-mark Section C answer

Written the way a strong HL student would write it, with margin notes that show exactly which page of the notes every key term, study and evaluation point comes from.

- ✓ Built from one topic only
- ✓ About 780 words
- ✓ 14 margin notes



In this preview

The contents and exam overview, sample pages from six different topics, and the opening of the model answer.

Contents

IN THIS PREVIEW
Highlighted entries are included. Tap one to go to it.

✓ IN PREVIEW Full booklet only

1 Attachment ✓ IN PREVIEW · Key terms p. 1
Key terms p. 1 | Ainsworth and Bell (1970) p. 3 | Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988) p. 4 | Evaluation pp. 7-8 | At a glance

2 Enculturation of Social Norms ✓ IN PREVIEW · Fagot visuals p. 9
Key terms p. 9 | Fagot (1978) p. 11 | Evaluation pp. 13-14 | At a glance

3 Peer Influence ✓ IN PREVIEW · Evaluation, part p. 15
Key terms p. 15 | Gardner and Steinberg (2005) p. 17 | Chein et al. (2011) p. 18 | Evaluation pp. 21-22 | At a glance

4 Role of Childhood Experiences ✓ IN PREVIEW · Cover + Nelson et al. p. 23
Key terms p. 23 | Nelson et al. (2007) p. 25 | Felitti et al. (1998) p. 26 | Evaluation pp. 29-30 | At a glance

5 Sociocultural Factors in Development p. 31
Key terms p. 31 | Hart and Risley (1995) p. 33 | Noble et al. (2015) p. 34 | Evaluation pp. 37-38 | At a glance

6 Stage Theories and Continuous Models ✓ IN PREVIEW · At a glance p. 39
Key terms p. 39 | Piaget and Inhelder (1956) p. 41 | Hughes (1975) p. 42 | Evaluation pp. 45-46 | At a glance

7 Theory of Mind ✓ IN PREVIEW · Sally-Anne visuals p. 47
Key terms p. 47 | Baron-Cohen et al. (1985) p. 49 | Wimmer and Perner (1983) p. 50 | Evaluation pp. 53-54 | At a glance

8 Brain Development p. 55
Key terms p. 55 | Giedd et al. (1999) p. 57 | Gogtay et al. (2004) p. 58 | Evaluation pp. 60-61 | At a glance

INCLUDED | BONUS **Model Paper 1 Section C Answer** ✓ IN PREVIEW · Page 1 of 3
Role of childhood experiences and responsibility, 15 marks | 3 pages

▲ Contents

Where This Fits in the Exam

Based on the IB Psychology guide (first assessment 2027). Human development is one of the four contexts and is examined in **Paper 1** and **Paper 2**.

1. Syllabus topics and where to find them

Tap a row to go to that topic.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		
1 **Attachment**	Ainsworth and Bell (1970), Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988)	p. 1 ›
2 **Enculturation of Social Norms**	Fagot (1978)	p. 9 ›
3 **Peer Influence**	Gardner and Steinberg (2005), Chein et al. (2011)	p. 15 ›
4 **Role of Childhood Experiences**	Nelson et al. (2007), Felitti et al. (1998)	p. 23 ›
5 **Sociocultural Factors in Development**	Hart and Risley (1995), Noble et al. (2015)	p. 31 ›
6 **Stage Theories and Continuous Models**	Piaget and Inhelder (1956), Hughes (1975)	p. 39 ›
7 **Theory of Mind**	Baron-Cohen et al. (1985), Wimmer and Perner (1983)	p. 47 ›
8 **Brain Development**	Giedd et al. (1999), Gogtay et al. (2004)	p. 55 ›

2. Paper 1 (SL and HL, 1 hour 30 minutes, 35 marks)

SECTION A — 8 marks

Two short answers: explain a theory or idea and give an example.

From this context, only **enculturation of social norms** can appear here. Learn its key terms and Fagot (1978) well.

Go to enculturation ›

SECTION B — 12 marks

Two questions applying content to an unseen situation.

Use the **definitions plus the examples**. Practise matching a term to a new scenario, one sentence at a time.

SECTION C — 15 marks

One concept-based essay from two choices, each from a different context.

Build it from accurate **key terms**, **key studies** and the **strengths and limitations** under the concept. Allow about 40 minutes.

See the model answer ›

3. Paper 2

These notes are built for **Paper 1**. Paper 2 tests research methods and your class practical, but its Section B asks you to evaluate an unseen study using the six concepts, so the evaluation pages are good practice for it too.

A habit for every answer

Underline the command term and the concept in the question, then finish with a conclusion that answers it.

▲ Contents

1 Key Terms

Core definitions, each with an everyday example.

CORE IDEAS

TERM	DEFINITION (write this in the exam)	EXAMPLE (for understanding)
Attachment	An **enduring emotional bond** between an infant and a caregiver that gives the infant a sense of security.	A toddler runs to a parent when frightened by a loud noise.
Attachment theory	Bowlby's idea that infants have an **innate drive** to attach to a caregiver because closeness aids survival.	Babies cry and cling, which keeps the caregiver close.
Internal working model	A **mental template** of relationships, built from early attachment, that guides later relationships.	A child who was comforted expects friends to be supportive.
Sensitive responsiveness	A caregiver **noticing the infant's signals** and responding to them quickly and appropriately (Ainsworth).	A parent picks up a crying baby and soothes it straight away.
Secure base	Using the caregiver as a **safe place** from which to explore, and to return to when unsure.	A child plays across the room but keeps glancing back at the parent.
Stranger anxiety	Wariness or distress when an **unfamiliar person** approaches or tries to interact.	A baby turns away and clings when a new babysitter says hello.
Separation anxiety	Distress shown when the **caregiver leaves**, such as crying or searching for them.	A toddler cries at the nursery door as the parent walks away.
Reunion behavior	How the infant responds when the **caregiver returns** after a separation.	Running to be hugged, ignoring the parent, or reaching up then pushing away.

✦ MEMORY TIP

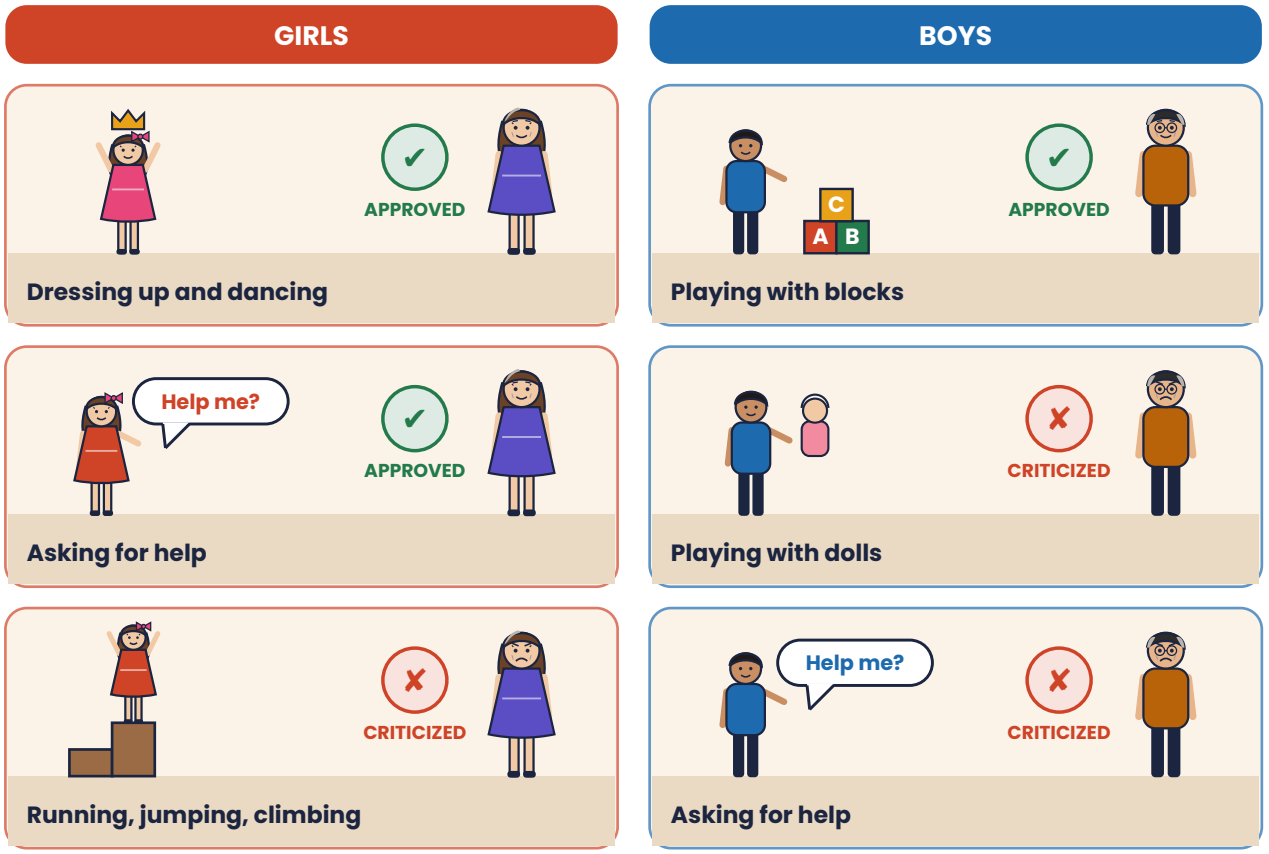
- **A** = Avoidant: stays Away.
- **B** = Best: secure.
- **C** = Clingy: resistant.
- Four behaviors to watch: **base, stranger, separation, reunion**.

★ EXAM TIP

- Describe each type through the **four behaviors**.
- Reunion behavior tells the types apart best.
- Say "attachment type", not "personality".

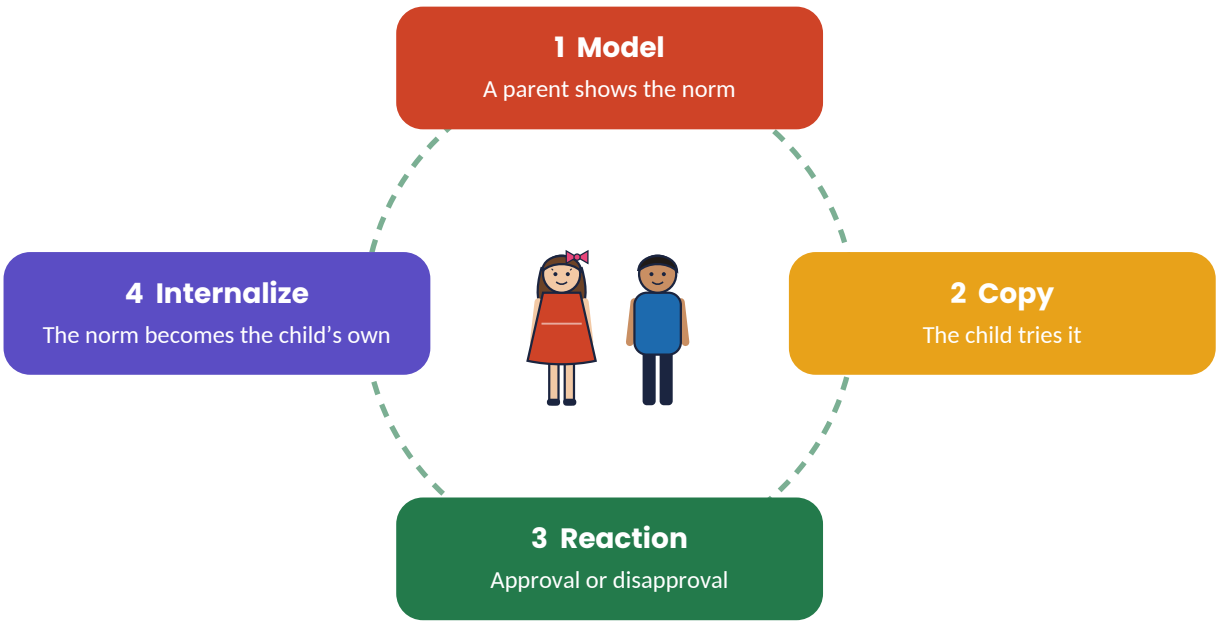
SEE IT IN ACTION: WHAT FAGOT'S OBSERVERS SAW AT HOME

Fagot (1978). Typical parental reactions to toddlers' play. Illustrations, not real quotes.



SEE IT IN ACTION: HOW A NORM BECOMES THE CHILD'S OWN

The enculturation loop, repeated thousands of times across childhood.



Fagot's parents said they treated boys and girls the same: the loop worked without their noticing.

3 Evaluation: Peer Influence

Bias · Causality · Change · Measurement · Perspective · Responsibility

1 BIAS

Is the theory or the research behind it skewed by who was studied, or by the researcher?

✓ STRENGTHS

1 **Random assignment reduces bias in the key evidence. Gardner and Steinberg (2005)** randomly assigned 306 participants to play alone or with peers, so differences in risk-taking were not due to the kind of people who chose each condition.

2 **The age pattern the theory predicts has been found across cultures. Steinberg et al. (2018)** tested over 5,000 people in **11 countries**: sensation seeking peaked in late adolescence, while self-regulation kept rising into the mid-twenties.

✘ LIMITATIONS

1 **Samples are mostly Western volunteers.** Gardner and Steinberg's participants were American volunteers; in cultures where adolescents spend more time with family than with peers, the peer effect may be **weaker**.

2 **Participants know they are being studied.** Teenagers playing a driving game with friends watching may show off for the researchers as well as their peers, so **demand characteristics** may inflate the peer effect.

2 CAUSALITY

Does the theory show that one thing really causes another?

✓ STRENGTHS

1 **Experiments show that peers cause an increase in risk-taking.** In Gardner and Steinberg's study the task stayed the same and **only the presence of peers** changed, yet adolescents' risky driving roughly doubled, so peers caused the increase.

2 **Brain evidence identifies a mechanism. Chein et al. (2011)** found that when peers watched, adolescents showed more activity in the **ventral striatum**, a reward area, and this activity predicted their risk-taking.

✘ LIMITATIONS

1 **Real-world peer effects may reflect peer selection.** Teenagers choose friends who are like them; **Kandel (1978)** found adolescents' similarity to friends in drug use was partly due to **choosing** similar friends, not only influence.

2 **Brain activity shows correlation, not cause.** Greater reward-area activity went along with risk in Chein et al.'s study, but it could reflect **excitement** at taking risks rather than causing the decision.

3 CHANGE

Does the theory explain how development changes over time?

✓ STRENGTHS

1 **It explains why risk-taking peaks in adolescence.** The dual systems model links an early-maturing **reward system** with late-maturing self-control; Gardner and Steinberg found the peer effect was strongest at 13 to 16 and barely present after 24.

2 **It explains change across situations, not just with age. Alone**, adolescents in Gardner and Steinberg's study took similar risks to adults; only with peers did they take more, showing behavior changes with the social context.

✘ LIMITATIONS

1 **A fixed age pattern does not fit every adolescent. Steinberg and Monahan (2007)** found resistance to peer influence varied widely between teenagers of the same age, so age alone does not predict how much peers change behavior.

2 **Cross-sectional designs cannot track change.** Gardner and Steinberg compared **different people** at different ages rather than following the same people, so the decline in peer influence could partly reflect generation differences.



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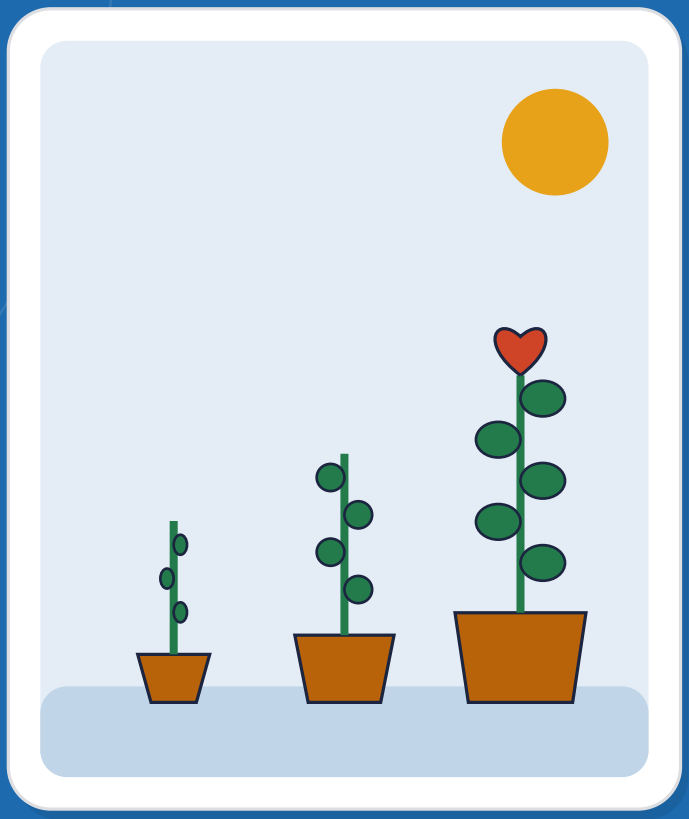
The rest of the Peer Influence evaluation

Measurement, perspective and responsibility: each point built on evidence, plus the practice prompt.

Unlock it at excellingpsychology.com

TOPIC

04 / 08



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Role of Childhood Experiences

IB Psychology | Revision Notes

1. **Key Terms**
   definitions and examples
2. **Key Studies**
   Nelson et al. (2007), Felitti et al. (1998)
3. **Evaluation**
   evaluation across the six IB concepts

2 Nelson et al. (2007): The Bucharest Early Intervention Project

Charles Nelson and colleagues | Randomized controlled trial in Romania

AIM

- To investigate whether **foster care** can reverse the effects of early institutional deprivation on cognitive development, and whether **timing** matters.
- **Background:** many Romanian children grew up in poor-quality institutions; earlier studies could not separate the effects of care from who was chosen for adoption.

PROCEDURE

1. **Participants:** 136 children aged 6 to 31 months from six institutions in Bucharest.
2. **Random assignment:** half went to high-quality foster care set up by the researchers; half stayed in usual institutional care.
3. **Comparison group:** 72 children who had never been institutionalized, living with their families.
4. **Testing:** cognitive development (DQ, then IQ) was measured at the start and at 30, 42 and 54 months.

RESULTS

- At 54 months, average IQ was about **109** for never-institutionalized children, **81** for the foster care group and **73** for care as usual.
- The foster care group scored significantly higher than care as usual at 42 and 54 months.
- Children placed **earlier** gained most: at 42 months, those placed before 18 months averaged about 94, against 89 for those placed at 18 to 24 months.

CONCLUSION

- Early institutional deprivation **harms** cognitive development.
- Family care brings real but **incomplete** recovery.
- Suggests a **sensitive period** in the first two years.

SPOT THE TERMS IN THE STUDY

DEPRIVATION	RCT	SENSITIVE PERIOD	COMPARISON
institutional care	random assignment to foster care	gains largest before 2 years	never-institutionalized group

★ EXAM TIP

- Give the three IQ figures: 109, 81, 73.
- Explain why random assignment was important.

LOCKED IN THIS PREVIEW

Felitti et al. (1998): The ACE Study

The second Role of Childhood Experiences study, the illustrated pages, the full evaluation and the one-page recap.

Unlock it at excellingpsychology.com

TOPIC 06 · AT A GLANCE

Stage Theories and Continuous Models

1 Key terms

Stage theory
Development as a series of **qualitatively different stages** in a fixed order.

Continuous model
Development as **gradual, quantitative growth** in skills, with no sudden jumps.

Information processing approach
A continuous model: development as gradual gains in **attention, memory capacity and speed**.

Egocentrism
Difficulty seeing the world **from another's viewpoint** (preoperational stage).

2 Key studies

Piaget and Inhelder (1956)

WHAT THEY DID	WHAT THEY FOUND	WHAT IT SHOWS
Children aged 4 to 12 chose the picture of a doll's view of three mountains.	4-year-olds chose their own view; most 7- to 8-year-olds chose the doll's.	Young children are egocentric; perspective-taking comes later.

Hughes (1975)

WHAT THEY DID	WHAT THEY FOUND	WHAT IT SHOWS
30 children aged 3.5 to 5 hid a boy doll from two policeman dolls.	About 90% hid the boy correctly.	Young children can take others' perspectives when tasks make sense.

3 Key evaluation points

Major points to start with. The full evaluation covers all six concepts.

✓ STRENGTHS

CHANGE
Stage theory explains qualitative change.
Change in kind

CHANGE
Continuous models explain gradual, uneven change.
Siegler (1996)

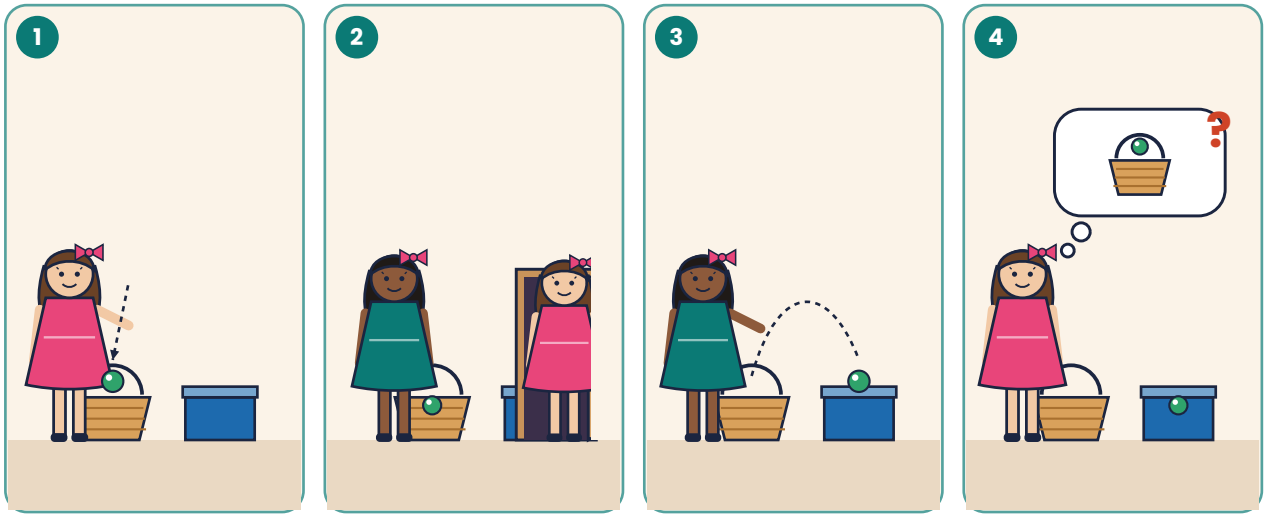
✗ LIMITATIONS

BIAS
Tasks may underestimate young children.
Hughes (1975)

CHANGE
Development is less stage-like than Piaget claimed.
Baillargeon (1987)

SEE IT IN ACTION: THE SALLY–ANNE TASK

Baron-Cohen, Leslie and Frith (1985). Acted out with two dolls in front of each child.

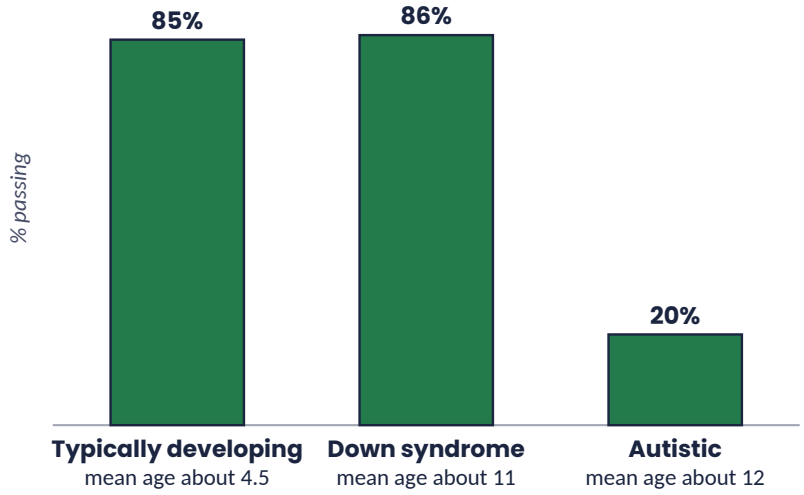


1. Sally puts her marble in her **basket**.
2. Sally goes out for a walk.
3. Anne moves the marble into her **box**.
4. Sally comes back. **Where will Sally look for her marble?**

Correct answer: the basket. Sally did not see the move, so she **falsely believes** the marble is still there. Pointing to the box means answering from your own knowledge.

SEE IT IN ACTION: WHO PASSED THE BELIEF QUESTION?

All children answered the reality and memory questions correctly.



The autistic children had a **higher** verbal mental age than the Down syndrome group, so failing was not explained by general ability.

Baron-Cohen et al. concluded this showed a specific difficulty with **theory of mind** in autism.

BONUS

From notes to a 15-mark answer

Knowing the content is half the job. The other half is turning it into an essay under timed conditions. The full booklet ends with a complete Paper 1 Section C answer, so you can see what a well-built answer looks like when it is made only from these pages.

THE QUESTION | PAPER 1 | SECTION C | 15 MARKS

In the context of human development, discuss how responsible research on the role of childhood experiences has been.

Built from one topic: Role of Childhood Experiences

KEY TERMS	Childhood experiences, deprivation, sensitive period, adverse childhood experiences	pp. 23-24
KEY STUDIES	Nelson et al. (2007), Felitti et al. (1998)	pp. 25-26
EVALUATION	Two strengths and two limitations under Responsibility	p. 30
JUDGMENT	A clear answer to “how responsible” in the first paragraph, carried through to the conclusion	

What makes it useful

- ✓ **About 780 words** within the 800 allowed, built only from what is in the notes.
- ✓ **A student’s voice** clear and well argued, the way a top HL student writes, not a textbook.
- ✓ **14 margin notes** each joined by a line to the exact sentence it explains.
- ✓ **Tap to check** every note links straight to the page in the notes it draws on.

The first page of the answer follows.

BONUS

A Model Section C Answer

PAPER 1 | SECTION C | 15 MARKS | UP TO 800 WORDS

In the context of human development, discuss how responsible research on the role of childhood experiences has been. [15 marks]

Key term · Key study · Evaluation · Answering the question

Each margin note shows where that idea is in the notes. Tap a note to go to the page.

Childhood experiences are the events and conditions of childhood, such as care, stress and deprivation, that can shape later development. [1] Responsibility concerns the ethical and social consequences of research: how participants are treated and how the findings are used. This essay argues that research on childhood experiences has been largely responsible, because its findings have improved how children are cared for and supported, although leaving children in institutions and labelling people with ACE scores carry real ethical costs. [2]

Deprivation is a lack of basic needs, care or stimulation during development, and a sensitive period is a time when the brain is especially responsive to certain experiences, so later change is harder but possible. [3] Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events in childhood, such as abuse, neglect and household dysfunction.

Nelson et al. (2007) carried out the Bucharest Early Intervention Project, a randomized controlled trial. 136 children aged 6 to 31 months from six institutions in Bucharest were randomly assigned to high-quality foster care set up by the researchers or to usual institutional care, and compared with 72 children who had never been institutionalized. At 54 months, average IQ was about 109 for the never-institutionalized group, 81 for the foster care group and 73 for care as usual, and children placed earlier gained most. [4] This suggests that early deprivation harms development and that family care brings real but incomplete recovery.

Felitti et al. (1998) sent a questionnaire about seven categories of adverse childhood experience to adults who had a health check in San Diego, and 9,508 responded. People with four or more categories had a 4- to 12-fold higher risk of alcoholism, drug abuse, depression and suicide attempts than those with none. [5] The more categories people

1 KEY TERM p. 23
Childhood experiences, defined as in the notes.

2 ANSWERS THE QUESTION
A clear judgment from the start. The conclusion comes back to it.

3 KEY TERMS p. 23
Deprivation and sensitive period, word for word from the table.

4 KEY STUDY p. 25
Bucharest project: design, sample and all three IQ figures.

5 KEY STUDY p. 26
ACE study: sample and the main finding.

▲ Contents

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The answer continues

Two strengths and two limitations under responsibility, each developed with evidence, and a conclusion that weighs both sides.

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THE FULL BOOKLET

Everything you need for Human Development

You have seen how the pages work. The full booklet gives you the same treatment for every topic in the context, from attachment to brain development.

- ✓ **All 8 topics** every topic in the Human Development context
- ✓ **15 key studies** each with aim, procedure, results and conclusion, plus illustrated pages
- ✓ **Full evaluation** strengths and limitations for every topic under bias, causality, change, measurement, perspective and responsibility
- ✓ **8 one-page recaps** the whole topic on a single page for quick revision
- ✓ **Practice prompts** Section C practice for every topic, plus Section A for enculturation
- ✓ **The model answer** all three pages, annotated line by line back to the notes
- ✓ **Fully linked** tap any contents entry, page reference or margin note to jump straight there

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