Suggested Answers to In-Text Questions

# Chapter 1: Understanding Human Development: Approaches and Theories

Contents

[Cultural Influences on Development: Defining Culture - What Do You Think? (p. 8) 1](#_Toc518559744)

[Thinking in Context 1.1 (p. 7) 2](#_Toc518559745)

[Thinking in Context 1.2 (p. 11) 3](#_Toc518559746)

[Lives in Context: Sociohistorical Influences on Development - What Do You Think? (p. 21) 4](#_Toc518559747)

[Thinking in Context 1.3 (p. 23) 5](#_Toc518559748)

[Brain and Biological Influences on Development: Methods of Studying the Brain - What Do You Think? 6](#_Toc518559749)

[Thinking in Context 1.4 (p. 29) 6](#_Toc518559750)

[Applying Developmental Science: The Real-World Significance of Developmental Research - What Do You Think? 7](#_Toc518559751)

[Thinking in Context 1.5 7](#_Toc518559752)

[Apply Your Knowledge (p. 33) 8](#_Toc518559753)

# Cultural Influences on Development: Defining Culture - What Do You Think? (p. 8)

1. **How would you describe North American culture? Can you identify aspects of North American culture that describe most, if not all, people who live there? Are there aspects of culture in which people or subgroups of people differ?**

American culture is very diverse in that it is a melting pot of many people from around the world.

People in American culture have many similarities. The first is freedom. We all have the opportunity to attend public school and receive an education, and we have the freedom to express our thoughts and opinions. We have the right to practice the religion we choose, and we have the right to vote. Children in American culture have a childhood. They are able to play games and attend extracurricular activities.

There are many aspects in which people or subgroups differ. Children born to lower socioeconomic status families live in neighborhoods with lower socioeconomic statuses. Higher socioeconomic status families live in neighborhoods with higher socioeconomic statuses. Schools in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods receive less funding than schools in higher socioeconomic neighborhoods.

Religion is also diverse in the United States. Each person has the right to practice his or her own way.

Some people in the United States do not have the same opportunities as others. Many families are homeless or hungry, and there isn’t enough funding to help them all have homes and food.

1. **What subcultures can you identify in your own neighborhood, state, or region of the country? What characterizes each of these subcultures?**

Student answers to these questions will vary. They may talk about different cultures who live in their neighborhoods, the different socioeconomic statuses, the different family statuses, the educational opportunities, the extracurricular opportunities. They may talk about race and religion.

1. **Consider your own experience. With which culture or subculture do you identify? How much of a role do you think your cultural membership has had in your own development?**

Student answers will vary. Look for examples that have several details to back up their responses.

# Thinking in Context 1.1 (p. 7)

1. **Describe your own development. In what ways have you changed over your lifetime? What characteristics have remained the same?**

Student answers will vary. However, some of the similarities may be developmental milestones in crawling, walking, going to preschool, attending elementary school, middle school, high school, and college. Some students may have already been in their first serious relationship. Some may be married and have children of their own. All of these events will be similar events, but the students’ reactions and ways of coping with each event will be individual.

1. **Consider your own experience and provide examples from your life that illustrate the multidimensional nature of your development. Can you do the same for multi-directionality and for plasticity? How has the context in which you were raised and live influenced your development?**

Student answers will vary. Look for answers that give specific details about life events and cover multiple levels of development. For example, if someone moved a lot, who were their friends? Who were the adults who played a role in their development? Did the student talk about school and how academic work may be easier or more difficult in different schools? Do they talk about how they influenced their own development by choosing to play sports or engage in other extracurricular activities?

1. **Compare the historical context in which you, your parents, and your grandparents were raised. How did historical and societal influences have affected your grandparents’ development, their worldview, and their child-rearing strategies? What about your parents? How might historical influences affect your own development, worldview, and perspective on parenting?**

Student answers will vary. Students raised outside the United States or who have parents or grandparents that were raised outside the United States will have various answers. Those who live in the United States will talk about how their grandparents were baby boomers. There were many children born in families. Their parents may have grown up in families with fewer children and less responsibility. Their parents may have had more of a childhood with more extracurricular activities and more material possessions. Young adults just entering college often had even fewer responsibilities than their parents and more material possessions.

Grandparents were raised by parents who faced the Great Depression and knew what it was like to live with very little. This influenced their decisions to have fewer children. Women entered the workforce instead of staying home to raise the kids. Their children then received even more. This, along with new innovations in technology, has led Americans to be more materialistic and want more things.

# Thinking in Context 1.2 (p. 11)

1. **Can you identify ways you have changed very gradually over the years? Were there other times in which you showed abrupt change, such as physical growth, strength and coordination, thinking abilities, or social skills? In other words, in what ways is your development characterized by continuity? Discontinuity?**

Students may talk about how their abilities to succeed in athletics increased during their teenage years. They probably went through a growth spurt in middle school, and they went through puberty. The classes in middle school and high school introduced them to more abstract thinking and hypothetical reasoning. Also, middle school is a time of bullying and trying to fit into new situations.

1. **Are people active or passive participants in their development? What role did your physical and social environment play in your growth? In what ways, if any, did you take an active role in your own development?**

Student answers will vary. Did they have parents who made choices for them, or did they have autonomy to choose their extracurricular activities or athletics? Did their parents work many jobs, requiring them to stay at home alone? Did their parents have time to take them to extracurricular activities? Did they live in a neighborhood with other children or were they secluded in a rural environment?

1. **How much of who you are today is a function of nature? Nurture?**

Student answers will vary. Look for answers that clearly state how who they are is a function of nature and evidence to support this, and look for the same in their responses about nurture.

# Lives in Context: Sociohistorical Influences on Development - What Do You Think? (p. 21)

1. **Consider the sociohistorical context in which you were raised. What historical and societal events may have influenced you? What events have shaped your generation’s childhood and adolescence?**

Student answers will vary. Students born and raised in the United States may discuss the bombing of the World Trade Center, the war in Iraq, the death of Osama Bin Laden, etc. Students may also discuss events shown on TV such as school shootings. Also, television shows influence lives. Due to people living in fear that bad things may happen, children do not have as many freedoms as they used to. Look for answers that describe these events and provide several details to back up how they influenced their lives.

1. **Consider the societal and cultural events that your parents may have experienced in childhood and adolescence. What technology was available? What historical events did they experience? What were the popular fads of their youth? What influence do you think these sociohistorical factors may have had on your parents’ development?**

Students whose parents grew up in the 80s and 90s will remember things like the Space Shuttle Challenger exploding and JFK Jr. dying. They may also remember the Gulf War. At that time, the only technology available was household telephones and television. The fads for females included wearing their hair big and wearing colorful makeup. People rolled up their pants bottoms, wore leg warmers, and watched popular TV shows.

# Thinking in Context 1.3 (p. 23)

1. **What advice would a psychoanalytic theorist give Maria and Fernando? Contrast psychoanalytic with behaviorist perspectives. How might a behaviorist theorist approach this problem?**

A psychoanalytic theorist would say that their baby will need them to meet his oral needs. He will have needs such as being fed, and the parents need to make sure they meet all those needs. A behaviorist will say that the baby will learn through conditioning. The baby will learn about the environment based on pairing stimuli with responses and through rewards and punishments.

1. **How might an evolutionary developmental theorist explain bonding between parents and infants? What advice might an evolutionary developmental theorist give to Maria and Fernando?**

An evolutionary developmental theorist will look at development in two ways. These are nature and nurture. What is going on biologically? Babies cry because they need food. This is a natural response to the need they need, and the purpose is to make sure the baby survives. They also have other reflexes that are seen at birth. These reflexes allow the baby to begin to interact with the world. When something is placed by his mouth, the baby will begin to root and want to suck when the object is in his mouth. Hormones will be released in the parents, and these will make them want to respond to their baby’s needs. Also nurture will play a role because over generations, parents have had different ideas about what to do with babies. As we become more and more educated about how to take care of babies, the instructions for taking care of them changes. For example, we now place babies on their backs to sleep but they used to sleep on their bellies.

1. **Considering bioecological systems theory, what microsystem and mesosystem factors influence the parent–child bond? What role might exosystem and macrosystem factors take?**

Factors that will influence the bond will be how the baby interacts with siblings and parents in the home, how the baby interacts with caregivers if the parents are at work, and society’s expectations. Parents will hear advice from grandparents, coworkers, and the baby’s other caregivers. All of this advice will be based on each person’s own experiences or education level. Parents will also purchase toys that toy companies design to stimulate brain development, purchase car seats that companies design for the best protection in case of an accident, and purchase many other items that companies make to care for the babies. Therefore, the baby’s bond will be enhanced on multiple levels.

# Brain and Biological Influences on Development: Methods of Studying the Brain - What Do You Think?

1. **If you were going to study the brain, which measure would you choose and why? What type of information would you obtain from your chosen measure? Identify a research question that your measure might help you answer.**

Student answers will vary. A student might choose diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) because of their interest in how the brain changes with development and with age-related illnesses. DTI uses an MRI machine to track how water molecules move in and around the fibers connecting different parts of the brain and gauges the thickness and density of the brain’s connections, permitting researches to measure the brain’s white matter. A possible research question would be the amount of change in white matter volume compared between healthy older adults and those suffering from dementia.

# Thinking in Context 1.4 (p. 29)

Dorothy is interested in understanding smoking in middle school students. Specifically, she believes that low self-esteem causes students to smoke.

1. **How might Dorothy gather information to address her hypothesis?**

Dorothy will have to get IRB permission to do research. Then, she will have to get permission to do research in a middle school. She can give surveys to students.

**What kind of research design should Dorothy use? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this design?**

Dorothy will do a quantitative research study. She will use surveys. The advantages are that she can collect a lot of data quickly. The disadvantage is that sometimes people lie or they tell others what they think they want to hear when answering questions.

**What are some of the challenges of measuring behaviors such as smoking and internal characteristics such as self-esteem?**

Students do not always tell the truth. Also, we do not know what extraneous variables will predict the behaviors.

1. **How can her study be improved to overcome the weaknesses you have identified?**

She can take more time to do interviews. If she can get people to trust her and open up, they may give her more honest information. She could also survey the students’ parents to see if they give similar answers as the student or provide more information.

# Applying Developmental Science: The Real-World Significance of Developmental Research - What Do You Think?

1. **What are some of the practical and ethical challenges a researcher might face in studying problems such as risky behavior, child maltreatment, and school dropout? In your view, under what circumstances is passive consent acceptable, if ever?**

Some practical and ethical challenges for researchers studying risky behaviors would be that helping a participant in jeopardy would involve removing them from the study and compromising the study, helping a participant might involve violating confidentiality, and seeking consent from parents may interfere with researcher goals or pose risks to minor participants. Student answers will vary for acceptable passive consent. Passive consent can be used for research on sensitive topics with adolescents, such as research on LGBT+ identity.

# Thinking in Context 1.5

1. **Suppose, as part of your research, you wanted to interview children at school. What ethical principles are most relevant to your work? Why? What challenges do you anticipate?**

A psychologist conducting research with children must clarity her role as scientist and not counselor and help her participants understand that she is simply gathering information from them rather than conducting therapy. She must be mindful of how their findings may be portrayed in the media. She has a special obligation to respect her participants’ autonomy; though children cannot provide informed consent, she can respect their growing capacities for decision making by seeking assent. Challenges may be misinterpreted findings, parents who are confused as to what kind of work the psychologist is doing, and parents who consent to research but the child does not assent.

1. **Consider collecting observations and interviews of older adults in a nursing home. What ethical issues can you anticipate? What principles are most pertinent?**

Dementia, age related illnesses, and advanced age can impair adults’ capacities to provide informed consent. Cognitive capacities can fluctuate, and a researcher must be prepared to tailor their explanations to fluctuating competence. Participants have the right to be informed of the results of research in language that matches their level of understanding. Participants also have the right to privacy and to conceal their identity on all information and reports obtained in the course of research. Principles relating to cognitive capacities (e.g., informed consent and understanding of research results) would be the most pertinent.

# Apply Your Knowledge (p. 33)

1. **As we have seen, each developmental theory has a unique emphasis. How might each theory address Steven’s academic difficulties?**
2. **What factors would psychoanalytic theories point to in order to explain Steven’s functioning?**

Psychoanalysts would want to uncover the unconscious thoughts Steven has and see how they influence his behavior.

1. **How would cognitively oriented theories, such as Piaget’s cognitive-developmental theory and information processing theory, account for and intervene with Steven’s difficulties?**

Piaget would look to see if Steven is performing in the correct stage. Information processing theorists would look at what has happened to him in his environment and how those experiences make him think and react to new situations.

1. **Identify contextual factors that may play a role in Steven’s academic problems; from Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory, what factors may be addressed?**

These factors would be experiences in his immediate family when he was with his abusive mother and how they are different now. They would also look at his experiences in the foster home. Also, factors would include the money that was available to help him when he was younger compared to the money his new parents have to help him. Also, are the new parents educated enough about Steven’s problems to properly help him at home?

**2. Suppose you wanted to conduct research on academic achievement during elementary and middle school.**

1. **Identify a research question appropriate for a correlational research study.**

Student answers will vary.

1. **How would you address that question with a cross-sectional research study? Longitudinal? Sequential?**

Each answer will vary depending on the question.

1. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of study?**

Each answer will vary depending on the question.