

# The Adolescent in Society

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## Chapter 6

# Section 1: Adolescence in Our Society

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## Question

How did adolescence develop as a distinct stage of the life cycle in the United States?

# Section 1: Adolescence in Our Society

**Prior to 1860s**  
Adolescence did not exist as a separate life stage; children treated as small adults

**Education**  
Children stay in school longer; extended period of dependence

**Work**  
Laws restricted child labor, also increasing length of dependency

**Courts**  
Juvenile-justice system legally distinguished between youth and adults

**Effect**  
Development of adolescence as a distinct life stage between childhood and adulthood

# Section 1: Adolescence in Our Society

## Five General Characteristics of Adolescence

- ***Biological Growth and Development***—various biological changes such as changes in body proportions and acne
- ***Undefined Status***—expectations for adolescents are often vague
- ***Increased Decision Making***—must make some of their own decisions

# Section 1: Adolescence in Our Society

## Five General Characteristics of Adolescence

- ***Increased Pressure***—adolescents are faced with pressure from many sources
- ***The Search for Self***—deciding what is really important

# Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

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## Question

How did dating develop as a form of social interaction?

## Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

- **Industrial Revolution**—People moved from the farms to the cities where young adults could gain more economic freedom and establish their own homes. As a result, parental control over young adults and courtship decreased.
- **Public Education**—By the 1900s, most secondary school students attended coeducational public schools which increased interaction between boys and girls.

## Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

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- **Automobile**—Young adults had more freedom of movement without their parents.
- **Telephone**—Young adults could more easily talk to members of the opposite sex.
- **Equality of Women**—More women entered the workforce and took on active community roles, which increased the interaction between single adult men and women.

# Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

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## Question

What functions does dating fulfill?

## Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

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- Serves as a form of **entertainment**
- Is a means of **socialization** that teaches people about the opposite sex and social situations
- Helps teach role behaviors and define **self-concepts**
- Fills **psychological needs** such as companionship
- Helps individuals attain **status**, as people are judged in part by whom they date
- Aids in **spouse selection**

# Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

## Social Problems of Contemporary Teenagers

- *Teenage Sexual Behavior*
- *Teenage Drug Use*
- *Teenage Suicide*

# Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

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## Question

What are the causes and consequences of social problems facing contemporary teenagers?

# Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

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## Increased Sexual Activity

- **Causes**—societal loosening of norms concerning sexuality; birth control; increased exposure to sexual references and discussion in popular culture; low income level; single-parent families; lowered religious participation
- **Consequences**—teenage pregnancy; emotional stress; exposure to STDs such as syphilis and AIDS

# Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

## Drug Use

- **Causes**—dropping out of school; having friends who use drugs; social and academic adjustment problems; hostile family setting; feelings of rejection
- **Consequences**—drug addiction; drug-related violence; criminal record; illness; death

## Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

### Suicide

- **Causes**—depression, confusion, self-doubt; alcohol or drug use; triggering event such as a personal loss, family crisis, or perceived failure; social isolation, living in an underpopulated area; hostile family environment; cluster effect from publicized suicides; low social integration with weakened behavioral norms
- **Consequences**—death; possible cluster effects leading to other teenage suicides

# Chapter Wrap-Up **Understanding Main Ideas**

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1. Describe the factors that led to the development of the concept of adolescence in the United States.
2. Identify and describe the five major features of adolescence.
3. How did the practice of dating develop in the United States?
4. What functions does the dating process perform today?
5. What major social problems face American teenagers today?