

L030: Childhood as a social construction – Teacher guide

Teacher-facing notes, misconceptions, assessment and model guidance.

Lesson intent

- Explain childhood as a social construction and compare expectations across time and social contexts.
- The lesson explicitly reteaches the relevant sociological lens before asking learners to apply it.

Sociological substance

- Childhood is not only a biological age category; it is also a social status shaped by norms, law and institutions.
- Learners distinguish chronological age from socially constructed expectations, rights and restrictions.
- Wagg and Pilcher help show that childhood varies across place and period rather than being universal.
- Wagg: Childhood differs across societies and periods; it is not a single natural experience.
- Pilcher: Modern childhood in Western societies is often seen as a separate, protected life stage.
- Benedict: Cross-cultural comparison can reveal different expectations about obedience, work and responsibility.

Misconceptions

- Do not accept a pattern as proof of a cause.
- Do not allow a named sociologist to substitute for mechanism.
- Prompt learners to consider whose childhood is represented in the evidence.

Assessment guidance

- Outline and explain two ways childhood may be socially constructed. [10 marks]
- Look for accurate concept use, precise application, developed mechanism and qualified judgement.