

L030: Childhood as a social construction – Learner workbook

Explain childhood as a social construction and compare expectations across time and social contexts.

Core knowledge

- 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.

Studies and evidence

- 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.

Perspective comparison

- Functionalist: Childhood socialisation prepares children for adult roles and social order.
- Feminist: Childhood can reproduce gender expectations and unequal domestic preparation.
- Personal life: Children are active family members whose relationships and meanings matter.

Route task

Route	Your work
Access	Access: match examples to social construction, biological age or legal rule. Response: _____ _____ _____
Core	Core: explain how one expectation becomes treated as normal. Response: _____ _____ _____
Stretch	Stretch: compare two contexts and evaluate whether difference proves construction. Response: _____ _____ _____

Exam practice

Outline and explain two ways childhood may be socially constructed. [10 marks]

Plan your answer: claim → evidence → mechanism → evaluation → judgement.

WWW / EBI reflection

WWW: _____

EBI: _____