

L031: Historical childhood – Teacher guide

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

Lesson intent

- Evaluate historical accounts of childhood, including Ariès, and explain why evidence and class matter.
- The lesson explicitly reteaches the relevant sociological lens before asking learners to apply it.

Sociological substance

- Historical childhood is debated because sources are partial and often reveal elite adult viewpoints.
- Ariès argued that childhood as a distinct stage was weak in medieval Europe; critics question the evidence and interpretation.
- Learners separate evidence, interpretation and generalisation before judging change.
- Ariès: Used historical representations to argue that childhood was not clearly separated from adulthood in medieval society.
- Pollock: Criticised the idea that parents lacked affection, using diaries and letters to show continuity of care.
- Shorter: Linked modern childhood to growing parental affection and family privacy, but may overstate a simple progress story.

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

- Analyse two problems with using historical evidence to study childhood. [10 marks]
- Look for accurate concept use, precise application, developed mechanism and qualified judgement.