

L031: Historical childhood – Learner workbook

Evaluate historical accounts of childhood, including Ariès, and explain why evidence and class matter.

Core knowledge

- 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.

Studies and evidence

- 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.

Perspective comparison

- March of progress: Childhood has become more protected, valued and education-centred.
- Conflict view: Historical change may replace one form of control with another and vary by class.
- Methodological lens: Images, diaries and laws reveal different things and cannot be read as neutral truth.

Route task

Route	Your work
Access	Access: sort sources by what they can and cannot show. Response:
Core	Core: explain Ariès and one criticism accurately. Response:
Stretch	Stretch: judge whether historical evidence supports a universal claim about childhood. Response:

Exam practice

Analyse two problems with using historical evidence to study childhood. [10 marks]

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

WWW / EBI reflection

WWW: _____

EBI: _____