

# High School Developmental Project Grades 9-12

Developmental stages for ages 15-18

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# Overview: 15 year olds

“There's a good chance, however, that your 15-year-old will think she's ready to take on the world now. And she may insist she already knows everything.” – Amy Morin, Very Well Family



## Strengths

- Thinking about the bigger picture their future
- Appreciate siblings more than parents
- Thinking about living separate from parents
- Often have a few close friends
- Hone reasoning and problem solving skills
- Introspective exploring self in relation to ideas, ideals, and opinions of others

## Challenges

- Know-it-all attitude
- Don't talk to adults as much
- Embarrassed by family contact
- Rebellious
- May start dating
- May begin driving, but not all are socially/emotionally mature enough for responsibility

- Projects that focus on big picture topics relevant to their lives
- Educational video games that hone reasoning skills
- Blogging or other writing projects allowing students to express themselves

# Developmental Overview: 15 year olds

Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Language & Literacy Development	Self Concept & Identity Development	Peer Relations, Social, & Moral Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant changes to appearance with onset of puberty</li><li>• Boys voices drop and begin growing facial hair</li><li>• Girls often have reached their full height, while boys continue to grow</li><li>• Boys especially can exhibit awkward movement getting used to growing bodies.</li><li>• Boys develop muscles quickly during this age</li><li>• Sometime less energy (due to growth spurts) which may be interpreted as laziness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reasoning and problem solving skills much better</li><li>• Argumentative, debate</li><li>• Understand more abstract concepts</li><li>• Big picture thinking</li><li>• Begin thinking about their future</li><li>• Identify career aspirations</li><li>• Can explain reasons for choices and understand right/wrong</li><li>• Detail oriented, at times a perfectionist</li><li>• More defined work habits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prefer to communicate via text or other social media</li><li>• Talk/text to friends all night</li><li>• Uses exaggerated language to express scorn</li><li>• Reading and social experiences important for vocabulary development</li><li>• Communicate in adult-like manner and can carry on conversations</li><li>• More involved stories and vocabulary development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insecurity about changing appearance</li><li>• Begin imagining their future (college, career, life)</li><li>• Independence from parents</li><li>• More aware of and stressed about grades, relationships, and other teenage issues</li><li>• Sometimes confused about own competence and potential.</li><li>• Is sensitive about limitations</li><li>• Have specific hobbies they enjoy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More interested in peers than adults</li><li>• First relationship and sexual encounters</li><li>• Respect for rules when linked to privileges</li><li>• Craves guidance from outside the home</li><li>• Some appear content to be alone, whereas most like being with friends</li></ul>

# Overview: 16 year olds

“Sixteen year olds can bring joy and frustration to parents.” –  
Amy Morin, *Very Well Family*



## Strengths

- Independence from family
- Many friends
- Excel in one or two activities
- Real accomplishments (e.g. driver's license, honor roll, championship team, lead in a play, first job)

## Challenges

- Academic struggles
- Risky behavior
- Rudeness
- Uncertainty
- Overwhelmed by adulthood

- Real-life projects
- Problem-based learning
- Collaboration with others
- Community/Schoolwide projects
- Career-oriented learning ([CFNC.org](https://www.cfnc.org), [ASVABprogram.com/](https://www.asvabprogram.com/))
- Need free time to explore interests and free time to relax without expectations
- While they often push adults (especially parents) away, they need guidance and support

# Developmental Overview: 16 year olds

Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Language & Literacy Development	Self Concept & Identity Development	Peer Relations, Social, & Moral Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant difference between boys and girls</li><li>• Girls development slows</li><li>• Boys development just starting</li><li>• Boys: increased height, muscular development, facial hair</li><li>• Need more sleep, often staying up and waking up later</li><li>• Larger appetites corresponding with growth</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considering how whole world functions</li><li>• How their life fits into larger picture</li><li>• Future goals</li><li>• Understand concrete and abstract thoughts</li><li>• Give rationale behind thoughts &amp; decisions</li><li>• Time often overscheduled with academics, sports, and extracurriculars</li><li>• Often like to unwind with TV, reading, or video games</li><li>• Defined work habits</li><li>• Depression</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate like adults</li><li>• Understand punctuation and grammar rules</li><li>• Write and read complex sentences</li><li>• Uses different language in different contexts (home, peers, class)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concerned with appearance (especially girls)</li><li>• Begin making adult decisions</li><li>• Periods of sadness</li><li>• Distancing from parents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Friendships and first relationships</li><li>• Strong sexual desires</li><li>• Awareness of sexual orientation</li><li>• Less time with families</li><li>• Changes language and behaviors between home and school</li><li>• Begin making adult decisions</li><li>• Risky behavior</li><li>• Peer pressure</li><li>• Go against parent wishes</li><li>• Coaches play a significant role in emotional development</li></ul>

# Overview: 17 year olds

While many 17-year-olds are looking forward to a bright future beyond high school, others are terrified about entering the adult world. - Amy Morin, Very Well Family



## Strengths

- Becoming more independent
- Can often communicate more clearly
- Beginning to take on more responsibilities

## Challenges

- May struggle as peer relationships change over time
- May struggle to understand double negatives
- May struggle to understand long complex questions

- Assignments must be scaffolded to ensure that the student understands long complex questions
- Collaborative assignments should help students continue to learn how to work in groups and work towards a common goal

# Developmental Overview: 17 year olds

Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Language & Literacy Development	Self Concept & Identity Development	Peer Relations, Social, & Moral Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Have reached their full height</li><li>● Have completed puberty</li><li>● Boys may continue to develop muscles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Can communicate like an adult</li><li>● Likely uses slang</li><li>● Improved ability to cope with new problems and different situations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Can communicate like an adult</li><li>● Likely uses slang</li><li>● May struggle to understand double negatives</li><li>● May struggle with long complex questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Show more independence from parents</li><li>● Have a deeper capacity for developing more intimate relationships</li><li>● Take fewer risks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Search for intimacy</li><li>● Want adult leadership roles</li><li>● Able to make and keep commitments</li></ul>

# Overview: 18 year olds



By age 18, many teens are feeling a combination of excitement and fear about the future. Amy Morin, *Very Well Family*.

## Strengths

- Can take more ownership for their schedule and plans
- Are able to set long-term goals

## Challenges

- Some students may experience mental health issues
- Some students may experience substance abuse issues

- Lesson plans should align with content standards and help students make connections to the world around them
- Teachers should continue to help students practice their writing skills
- Group assignments should be designed to encourage collaboration and positive dialogue



# Developmental Overview: 18 year olds

Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Language & Literacy Development	Self Concept & Identity Development	Peer Relations, Social, & Moral Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth has tapered or ended completely</li><li>• Less preoccupation with body changes</li><li>• Have reached sexual maturity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Makes future plans</li><li>• Sets long-term goals</li><li>• Able to make their own schedule and plans</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May use slang and social media acronyms</li><li>• Students who read a lot at this age will be able to recognize and understand more vocabulary words</li><li>• Can communicate like other adults</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More comfortable seeking adult advice</li><li>• Accepts adult responsibilities</li><li>• Able to manage emotions in a socially acceptable manner</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Able to evaluate their own opinions instead of going along with the crowd</li><li>• Intimate relationships are important</li><li>• Accepts adult responsibilities</li></ul>



# Cognitive Development Examples



<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/signs-symptoms/developmental-milestones/developmental-milestones-for-typical-high-schoolers>

# Language and Literacy Development Examples

**Young Children**

- Read books and nursery rhymes aloud together
- Talk daily about home and community life
- Sing, draw, and tell stories

**Older Children**

- Play word games
- Discuss word meanings
- Point out interesting or unfamiliar words
- Ask questions before, during, and after reading

**Adolescents**

- Talk about learning and connect to school
- Offer a literacy rich environment
- Model reading and writing

**Supporting Your Child's Literacy Development at Home**

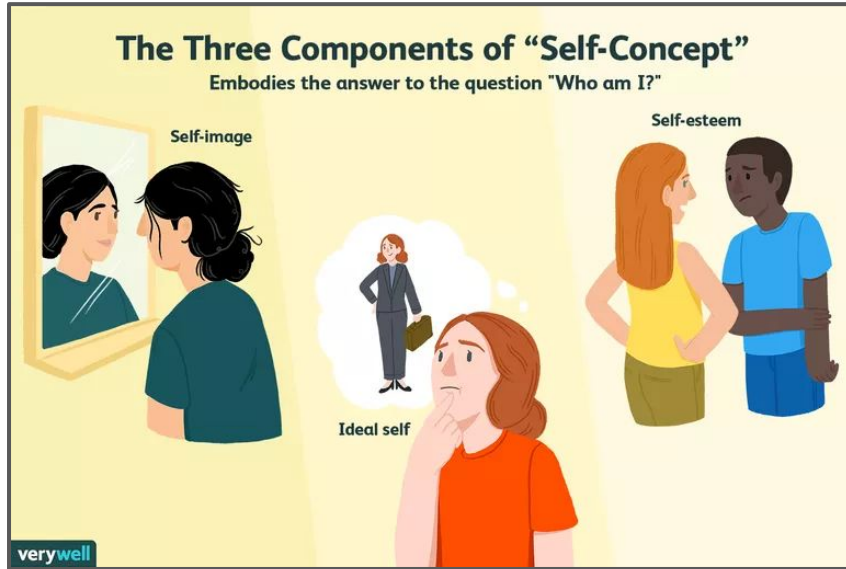
Take part in literacy experiences at home. Taking part can develop your child's reading ability, comprehension, and language skills. It could also improve your child's interest in reading, attitude towards reading, and focus.

The infographic features a dark grey vertical bar on the left containing text for three age groups: Young Children, Older Children, and Adolescents. To the right, a light tan background contains the title 'Supporting Your Child's Literacy Development at Home' and a text box with a quote. Below the text box is an illustration of a woman and a child reading a book together. At the bottom, there is a dark blue footer with the National Center on Improving Literacy logo and funding information.

The research reported here is funded by awards to the National Center on Improving Literacy from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with the Office of Special Education Programs (Award #5283D160003). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of OESE, OSEP or the U.S. Department of Education. © National Center on Improving Literacy  
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<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/supporting-your-childs-literacy-development-home>

# Self Concept and Identity Examples



<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-concept-2795865>



<https://images.app.goo.gl/6hXBeBD2VSsVqDWf9>

# Peer Relations, Social, and Moral Development Examples



[https://www.risas.org/poc/view\\_doc.php?type=doc&id=41168&cn=1310](https://www.risas.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=41168&cn=1310)

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