

Name:
Teenagers Unit Packet

Date:
Mrs. Seemayer



Unit Objectives

Know

-Students will know the components of a paragraph.

Understand

-Students will understand the complexity of the term “teenager.”

-Students will understand how to write a summary.

-Students will understand teenage physical and mental development.

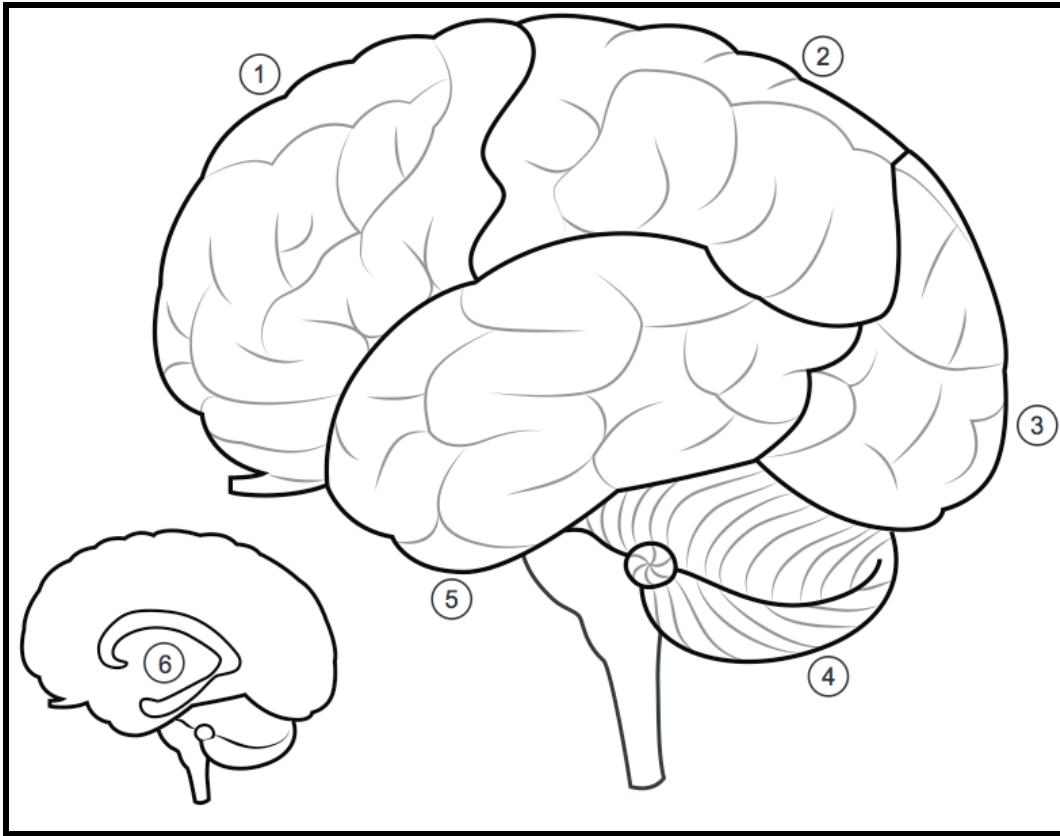
Do

-Students will be able to create an argument for or against the existence of “teenagers.”

-Students will be able to write a summary.

-Students will be able to annotate a text.

The Brain



“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:2

| | Name | Function |
|---|------|----------|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

Multiple Intelligences Brain Activity

1. Go to DestinyEnglish.weebly.com
2. Hover over “9th Grade English”
3. Click on “Teenage Brain Unit”
4. Click the button labeled “Multiple Intelligences Brain Activity”
5. Decide which multiple intelligence is your strongest and click the corresponding button.
6. Follow the instructions on the webpage and do the learning activity, then the showing activity.
7. If this is not finished in class, it must be completed for homework.

While reading this text make sure to **mark** and **annotate**.

- highlight/underline the topic sentence
- highlight/underline key points and key words or phrases
- annotate each paragraph in the margin

Are Teenage Brains Really Different from Adult Brains?

by Molly Edmonds



Electric Youth: These people understood what it was like to be a teenager in the 1980s. From left to right, the Fresh Prince Will Smith, Debbie Gibson and DJ Jazzy Jeff.
Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic/Getty Images

In 1988, hip-hop artists DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince sent out a message of solidarity and support to all teenagers who felt misunderstood. Over a hypnotic and funky beat, Will Smith reminded us that sometimes, parents just don't understand. The message, according to the duo, was universal to teens all over the land, and indeed, it might be hard for teenagers not to glimpse a little bit of themselves in the tragic tales the Fresh Prince told. Who, for example, hasn't felt the frustration of asking a parent for an awesome pair of shoes, only to end up with a low-class knockoff? And most kids have at least toyed with the idea of "borrowing" the family Porsche to impress the opposite sex. ...

Until recently, DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince could have also opined that scientists just don't understand either. Scientists have traditionally thought that a person's brain growth was complete and the structure was more or less fixed by the age of 3. Sure, connections between neurons were rewired as children went off to school and acquired information, but scientists believed the blueprint for the brain was set.

However, with the use of magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, scientists have been able to look inside the brain, and it seems that changing voices, body hair and awkwardness around the opposite sex are not the only big changes occurring in the teenage years. The brain appears to undergo a growth spurt of its own, and this changing brain may in part explain why teenagers turn into a walking army of emotional loose cannons. On the next page, we'll take a look at just what's going on in the mysterious brain of a teenager.

Teenage Brain Development

In adults, various parts of the brain work together to evaluate choices, make decisions and act accordingly in each situation. The teenage brain doesn't appear to work like this. For comparison's sake, think of the teenage brain as an entertainment center that hasn't been fully hooked up. There are loose wires, so that the speaker system isn't working with the DVD player, which in turn hasn't been formatted to work with the television yet. And to top it all off, the remote control hasn't even arrived!

The brain's remote control is the **prefrontal cortex**, a section of the brain that weighs outcomes, forms judgments and controls impulses and emotions. This section of the brain also helps people understand one another. If you were to walk into a sports bar full of Lakers fans wearing a Celtics jersey, your prefrontal cortex would immediately begin firing in warning; those teams are bitter enemies, and it might serve you to change your behavior (and your clothes). The prefrontal cortex communicates with the other sections of the brain through connections called **synapses**. These are like the wires of the entertainment system.

What scientists have found is that teenagers experience a wealth of growth in synapses during adolescence. But if you've ever hooked up an entertainment center, you know that more wires means more problems. You tend to keep the components you use the most, while getting rid of something superfluous, like an out-of-date laserdisc player. The brain works the same way, because it starts pruning away the synapses that it doesn't need in order to make the remaining ones much more efficient in communicating. In teenagers, it seems that this process starts in the back of the brain and moves forward, so that the prefrontal cortex, that vital center of control, is the last to be trimmed. As the connections are trimmed down, an insulating substance called **myelin** coats the synapses to protect them.

As such, the prefrontal cortex is a little immature in teenagers as compared to adults; it may not fully develop until your mid-20s [source: Kotulak]. And if you don't have a remote control to call the shots in the brain, using the other brain structures can become more difficult. Imaging studies have shown that most of the mental energy that teenagers use in making decisions is located in the back of the brain, whereas adults do most of their processing in the frontal lobe [source: Wallis]. When teenagers do use the frontal lobe, it seems they overdo it, calling upon much more of the brain to get the job done than adults would [source: Powell]. And because adults have already refined those communicating synapses, they can make decisions more quickly.

Adult brains are also better wired to notice errors in decision-making. While adults performed tasks that required the quick response of pushing buttons, their brains sent out a signal when a hasty mistake was made. Before 80 milliseconds had passed, adult brains had noticed the blunder, but teenage brains didn't notice any slip-up [source: Monastersky].

An area of the teenager's brain that is fairly well-developed early on, though, is the **nucleus accumbens**, or the area of the brain that seeks pleasure and reward. In imaging studies that compared brain activity when the subject received a small, medium or large reward, teenagers exhibited exaggerated responses to medium and large rewards compared to children and adults [source: Powell]. When presented with a small reward, the teenagers' brains hardly fired at all in comparison to adults and children.

So what does it mean to have an undeveloped prefrontal cortex in conjunction with a strong desire for reward? As it happens, this combination could explain a lot of stereotypical teenage behavior.

Teen Brain Functions and Behavior

Hormones bear the brunt for much of what goes wrong in adolescence. Teenagers can seem like emotional time bombs, apt to explode at any minute into tears or rage. They engage in rebellious and risky behaviors, and it seems like they're always in trouble. But what these imaging studies show is that the brain may be behind much of this behavior.

First, let's consider the prefrontal cortex, particularly how it can aid people in understanding each other. We began this article with a song called "Parents Just Don't Understand," but as it turns out, teenagers don't understand well, either. While the Fresh Prince feels that his mother doesn't understand that the other kids will mock him for wearing outdated styles, he doesn't seem to fully listen when his mother explains her reasoning that school is not about showing off designer duds. Part of communicating with teenagers may require the insight that they're not necessarily hearing what you say.

But it's the combination of that prefrontal cortex and a heightened need for reward that drives some of the most frustrating teenage behavior. For most adults, climbing hotel balconies or skateboarding off roofs of houses sound like awful ideas. Their prefrontal cortex curbs any impulse to do so, because the possible negative outcomes outweigh any potential thrill. But teenagers may try these things because they're seeking a buzz to satisfy that reward center, while their prefrontal cortex can't register all the risks these actions entail.

This behavior is evident on a much smaller scale as well; when a teenager goes to the mall to watch a movie but comes back with an iPod, then the prefrontal cortex didn't curb the impulse buy. If a teenager spends an hour on the Internet instead of focusing on homework, it's because the teenage brain doesn't register delayed gratification. Even though the teenager can vaguely register that there will be parental punishment later on, the appeal of fun now is too strong. ...

But the teenage years don't have to be all doom and gloom -- plasticity can also help teens pick up new skills. The teen years may be the time when potential poets start scribbling furiously in notebooks and future hoops heroes start really hitting their shots. Before the brain is fully molded is a great time to take up the guitar or learn a new language. Not that teenagers will listen if you tell them this. But just knowing that the teenage brain needs more time and experience to develop may help both parent and child survive adolescence. After all, the Fresh Prince seems to be doing pretty well these days.

Kids in America

Not everyone believes the teenage brain is different. One psychologist claims that this argument is extremely American-focused, and other cultures don't associate adolescence with a period of extreme angst [source: Sabbagh]. This suggests that teenage torment is a social influence. In other cultures, though, teenagers spend more time with adults, so they may have more opportunities to learn how to make thoughtful decisions.

<http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/teenage-brain1.htm/printable>

Writing a summary:

Claim- What is the main idea of the article?

Evidence- What lines/details from the article point to that main idea?

Prove It- How do those lines/details prove that this was the main idea of the article?

Evidence- What lines/details from the article point to that main idea?

Prove It- How do those lines/details prove that this was the main idea of the article?

Conclusion- Explain why the main idea of **the** article is important.

Task: Summarize the article, "Are Teenage Brains Really Different from Adult Brains?"

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Myth of the Teenager

By Dr. Michael Platt

"We have two teenagers," I sometimes hear parents say. "Oh, I'm so sorry," I sometimes reply. Although I say it with a smile, the truth is sad.

While the growing-up process is inevitable, natural, and God-given, the process of children turning into Teenagers is not. The Teenager was invented, fashioned, permitted -- let loose you might say -- by the generation of our parents and grandparents. Discovering that may help us to raise our children differently.

The Teenager is a Modern Invention

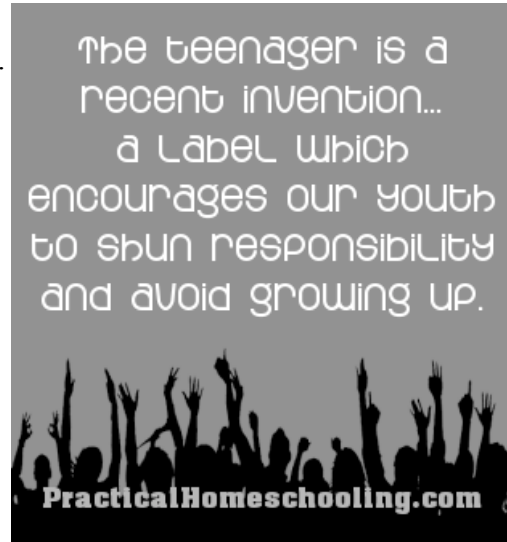
There were no "teenagers" before World War II. Ask those still living who raised their children before then. Or spend a rainy Saturday in the basement of your library, comparing old Life magazines from before the War and after.

Instead of Teenagers, there were Youths. Youths were young people who wanted to become adults. However confused, wayward, or silly they acted, however many mistakes they made, they looked to the future. They knew that adult life was different than a child's life. They planned to grow up, leave childhood behind, and become adults. They were aware that life is more than youth.

The Teenager has no such horizon. Beyond the "Teeny" world there is no adult life, no past with heroes, no future with goals.

Naming the Teenager

A new word was needed to describe these never-grown-up Peter Pans. Previously human beings between childhood and adulthood were called kids, boys and girls, young people, adolescents, and youths. These young human beings were addressed as "Young man" and "Young woman." Looking at them, their parents thought, "My growing son," and "My growing daughter," and they addressed them as "Daughter" and "Son." Sometimes others addressed them as "Master" and "Miss." Even the words "gentleman" and "lady" were sometimes heard. To name a kind or aspect of youth, lass and lad, stripling and maiden, whipper snapper and squirt, sport and shaver, minor and juvenile were employed, and the



latter, juvenile, did not yet invariably go with delinquent. Words such as upstart, brat, tough, [and] rogue, ... described deviations from the general good of "youth," not its characteristic features. The word "teenager" did not exist. Compare the entries in Webster's Second (1934) and Third (1961) editions; only after the war does the adjective "teen-age" become the noun, "teenager."

When parents today say "We have two teenagers," the reason why I can reply "I'm so sorry" is that they say this with a sigh. Indeed, there is a world of difference between having youths in your home and teenagers. Consider Tolstoy's *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, and *Youth*. Author Tolstoy is honest to a fault; youth Tolstoy was a bag of vices, poses, and miseries. However, youth Tolstoy was never a Teenager, for in the midst of his confusion, he was always striving to become a man. The world of grown-ups was there around and above him, not shut out.

Youths associated with other youths, sometimes dressed alike, talked alike, but never separated entirely from their teachers and parents. When you saw youths with their parents, they were not pretending to be unrelated to the family. After all, they wanted one day to become like their parents, or like their grandparents, or like their teachers.

Youths chose presidents, inventors, scientists, explorers, warriors, saints, teachers, and parents for their heroes. In American history they looked to the likes of Washington and Jefferson, Boone and Crockett, Lincoln, Lee, and Grant, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, and Clara Barton. In literature they looked to the likes of the Virginian, Robinson Crusoe, Hamlet, Odysseus, and Leather-stocking. The cowboy and the saint filled their imagination. Above these they looked to Abraham, Moses, Paul and Christ.

The Teenager has no such heroes; he may be miserable, he may not like himself, but his heroes are no more happy or worthy than himself. The highest desire of a Teenager is to become a more perfect Teenager, a Rock or movie star, certainly not a man or a woman.

What a Youth Wants and a Teenager Does Not

A youth wants to be trusted, given responsibility, and the opportunity to deserve esteem. Youths make more mistakes than adults. Usually their mistakes lead to lighter consequences, but they suffer more from them than adults; they like their mistakes less; they feel more shame. Shame is the other side of the respect they have for the virtues they see in adults.

Being immature, youths will always be tempted by pleasures, by flattery, and by illusions, but with an adult world around them, they will be able to make comparisons and judgments. Candy is candy, candy is sweet, candy can be given to you, but nothing in the world can substitute for knowing how to ride your bike. No one can give that to you. No one can do that for you.

Youths tend, then, to know the difference between the things that are really your own -- the virtues -- and the things that come from others, such as wealth, or come easy, such as the pleasures. Good youths like good tests. They want to enjoy adult pleasures after they

have earned them by performing adult duties. Thus during World War II many of them served their country, as young husbands on the front and as young wives at home, before they could enjoy the mature "blessings of liberty." Like many others, Audie Murphy was a hero before he could vote.

What a Teenager most fears is a child of his own. His second greatest fear is death. And his third greatest fear is solitude. The thoughts "I can beget a child," or "I can bear a child," "I will die," and "I am alone," have often been the beginning of wisdom. The Teenager flees them. The Teenager cannot stand to be alone. For such a human being the natural mode of association is the gang. And how does one picture a gang of Teenagers, if not in a car speeding down the road, listening to rock music, and on drugs? Or at the rock concert in a gang of gangs? ...

Never does one see a smile on the faces of those enjoying these pleasures. The Teenager is the most free and the least happy of beings. Thoreau said most people lead lives of "quiet desperation." The desperation of the Teenager is not quiet. With the Rolling Stones, they shout, "I can't get no satisfaction." A being less acquainted with joy there has never been. A being more dangerous, it is hard to imagine. "Paint it black."

So far as I know, there have never been such youths on earth before. The Teenager is a novelty not only in the history of twentieth century America, but in the history of the human race. ...

I'm a Teenager, You're a Teenager

We are now into the third generation of Teenagers. This means most people have had considerable experience of things that made the Teenager. In truth, many parents today are not much different from Teenagers. To disapprove of the Teenager, then, they would have to disapprove of much in their past and much that still exists in their lives.

The truth is that modern parents are often mixed beings; our experiences have not always been good, our deeds virtuous, our hearts true, our minds clear. Parents who want to do better than this by their children have to face up to and repudiate their own past and present Teenage sins. I doubt that anyone is really o.k. who is still justifying their past and present Teenage behavior. Such people cannot think clearly, live well, or help others. When they form a group large enough to determine the social policies and mores of a nation, that entire nation takes on the characteristics of a Teenager. The Prodigal Daughter is a portrait of America at the present time, free but not brave enough to be virtuous, discontented but not enough to free herself from bondage.

All the Excuses

The most potent impediment to modern parents acknowledging their negligence is the doctrine of choice. "Yes, we see rock music is bad; we don't like it ourselves. Yes, we see TV is shallow. Yes, we see that loose money is not good for our children. They have so much more than we had. Yes, they are not better off for it. But what can you do? The kids have to have some responsibility. You have to give them some choice." Thus runs the pro-choice excuse for negligence.

Its plausibility derives from two sources. In our political life, it is often good to tolerate deeds we would not commit and listen to opinions we do not hold. Of course, there are limits to this tolerance. Still, in a republic many points of view deserve toleration and consent is one principle of good government..

However, what is right for a federal republic is not right for a family. A family run on "democratic lines" with all members, children as well as adults, considered equal would be unnatural, for it would deny the difference between adults and children. Such a family cannot educate its younger members. "One child, one vote," is a formula for the end of the family. Parents who encourage their children to call them by their first names should not be surprised when they do not respect, seldom will obey, and do not often learn from them. To forgo the high titles Mother and Father is not benevolent; it is negligent; and it does not win friends; it loses children. Not to be able to call someone "Mother" and "Father" is to be an orphan.

The second plausible excuse for negligence is that it is good for young persons to take responsibility for their deeds. An example often supplied is how desirable it is to have an allowance, to own your own bike, to save up for it, and be responsible for its upkeep. Well and good, provided the chores contributed to family life are greater than the allowance. When older children keep all the money they make at a summer or after-school job, something has gone wrong. What could be more irresponsible than to get your room, board, laundry, and education fees from your working parents, and have all your paycheck for discretionary purchases? ...

Growing Up

Fortunately, third generation Teenagers are not the only parents in America now. Having experienced the emptiness of the material advantages their negligent parents gave them, many parents have resolved to give their children something truly good, an education in the virtues.

Nothing should make us more happy about our children today and more confident about our future public life than the number of parents who have chosen to educate their own children at home. In order to teach you must know and in order to know you must learn. Thus both generations grow up at once. Parents leave their own Teenage behind and become true adults. Children never have to become Teenagers at all.

The benefits last unto the third generation and beyond. A generation of parents whose good children could declare, "You set us on the good path you first trod" would constitute a mighty nation, might reconstitute this once almost chosen one, and would surely please God.

<http://www.home-school.com/Articles/myth-of-the-teenager.php>

Writing a summary:

Claim- What is the main idea of the article?

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Conclusion- Explain why the main idea of the article is important.

Task: Summarize the article, "Myth of the Teenager."

Essay

Task: Write a 5 paragraph essay addressing the topic of the teenager. Use evidence from the two articles, as well as any of the supplemental materials to answer the question:

Is there such thing as a “teenager”?

| Yes | | No | |
|----------|------|----------|------|
| Evidence | Text | Evidence | Text |
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