

# 14.1 Developmental theories and milestones: evidence and transfer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: 8 marks

KEY WORDS object permanence • theory of mind

## Objective

Order the major stage theories and their defining tasks; Match cognitive milestones to Piaget’s stages; Distinguish attachment patterns and theory-of-mind evidence. Original practice and authored marking guidance.

### 1 Key knowledge and worked examples

**object permanence** : Knowing that objects continue to exist when out of sight, gained in the sensorimotor stage. **theory of mind** : Understanding that others hold beliefs, including beliefs that are false.

Assimilation uses an existing scheme; accommodation changes the scheme when it does not fit. Conservation tasks examine whether a transformation changes a quantity, not merely whether children use an adult word. In a supported-learning account, distinguish a prompt that organizes a child’s reasoning from a prompt that supplies the answer. Attachment observations concern relationship-specific behaviour under a protocol, not an adult personality diagnosis.

Piaget's proposed sequence: examples

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Sensorimotor</b><br>Roughly birth to 2 years<br>Action and perception<br>Object permanence | <b>2 Preoperational</b><br>Roughly 2 to 7 years<br>Symbols and pretend play<br>Focus on one feature |
| <b>3 Concrete operations</b><br>Roughly 7 to 11/12 years<br>Conservation<br>Reversibility       | <b>4 Formal operations</b><br>From about 11/12 years<br>Hypotheses<br>Controlled comparisons        |

Approximate ages; one task does not establish a complete profile.

**Worked case.** A child calls every four-legged animal a dog, then creates a separate category for cats after contrasting examples. Explain the two processes.

Using the existing dog category for a cat illustrates assimilation. Revising categories to distinguish cats illustrates accommodation. The example concerns changing classification, not proof of a particular stage or the child’s general intelligence. Ask for the child’s reasoning and test new examples.

## 2 Practice

**2.1** A participant solves the pendulum problem by holding factor X constant while varying factor Y, then reversing. According to Piaget, this is: [1]

A. sensorimotor B. preoperational C. concrete operational D. formal operational E. conventional

**2.2** In the strange situation, an infant who clings to the caregiver yet is not comforted at reunion shows which pattern? [1]

A. secure B. avoidant C. resistant (ambivalent) D. disorganised E. detached

**2.3** Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

## 3 Exam-style questions

**3.1** A child predicts that a taller narrow cup has more water after a transfer. Design a question that tests reasoning rather than giving away the answer. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]