

HHS4U – Journey to Adulthood & Adult Development

What is Adulthood?

Adulthood is the stage of life when a person begins taking more responsibility and becomes more independent.

People define adulthood differently.

Some people think adulthood means:

- getting a job
- earning money
- finishing school
- moving out
- becoming independent
- taking care of others
- making decisions on your own

Important Idea

There is **no single definition of adulthood**.

Different cultures, families, and people may see adulthood differently.

Example 1

Jacob is 18 years old.

- He finished high school
- He has a job
- He pays for his phone bill

- He makes his own decisions

Some people may say Jacob is an adult.

Example 2

Sarah is 24 years old.

- She lives with her parents
- She attends university
- Her parents help pay some expenses

Some people may still consider Sarah an adult because adulthood is not only about moving out.

Social Factors Affecting Adulthood

Many things influence the journey to adulthood.

Driving Age

Different countries have different rules.

Example:

Canada:

- Many provinces allow driving at age 16.

Some countries:

- Driving begins later.

Driving often increases independence.

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Ali gets his driver's license at 16.

He can:

- drive himself to school
- work part-time
- visit friends

His independence increases.

Drinking Age

Laws about alcohol are different around the world.

Canada:

- Usually 18–19 years old depending on the province.

Different ages may influence when society views someone as an adult.

Education

Education often affects adulthood.

Examples:

- high school
- college
- university
- trade school

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Emma is 22.

She studies nursing at university.

Although she still studies, she manages her schedule and pays some bills.

She is developing adult responsibilities.

Employment

Jobs can change a person's responsibilities.

Examples:

- earning money
- paying bills
- supporting family members

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Kevin works after school.

He helps pay for groceries and helps his family.

This responsibility may make him feel more adult.

Career Goals

People often begin planning their future.

Examples:

- teacher
- doctor
- business owner
- artist

Career goals can influence decisions.

Living Arrangements

People live in different ways.

Examples:

- living with parents
- living alone
- living with roommates
- living with a partner

Living situations differ across cultures.

Does Adulthood Mean the Same Thing Everywhere?

No.

Cultures often have different expectations.

Example: Canada

Many people believe adulthood includes:

- independence
 - education
 - career success
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Example: Other Cultures

Some cultures may focus more on:

- marriage
 - family responsibilities
 - helping parents
 - community roles
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David lives in Canada.

He believes adulthood means:

- graduating university
- getting a career
- living independently

Ahmed lives in another country.

He believes adulthood means:

- supporting family
- getting married
- helping parents

Neither answer is wrong.

Different cultures may value different things.

The Three Disciplines and Adulthood

Anthropology

Anthropology studies:

- cultures
- traditions
- beliefs
- human behaviour

Question:

How do cultures define adulthood?

Example

Some cultures have special ceremonies when young people become adults.

Examples:

- celebrations
 - community ceremonies
 - family traditions
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Maria's culture celebrates adulthood with a special ceremony at age 18.

Anthropologists would study:

- why the ceremony exists
 - cultural meanings
 - traditions
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Sociology

Sociology studies:

- society
 - groups
 - family roles
 - social expectations
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Question

How does society influence adulthood?

Example

Society may influence:

- education expectations
 - marriage
 - work
 - family roles
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Jason's family expects him to attend university.

His parents believe education leads to success.

Sociologists would study:

- family expectations
 - social pressure
 - cultural beliefs
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Psychology

Psychology studies:

- thoughts
 - emotions
 - behaviour
 - identity
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Question

How does personal development affect adulthood?

Example

Some people become confident early.

Others need more time.

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Sophia feels nervous about moving away for university.

Psychologists may study:

- stress
 - emotions
 - coping skills
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Gender Roles and Adulthood

Gender expectations may affect adulthood.

Examples:

Traditional expectations:

- men become financial providers
- women become caregivers

Modern expectations:

- responsibilities may be shared
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Liam enjoys cooking and wants to stay home with children in the future.

Some family members support him.

Others disagree because of traditional ideas.

Questions:

- Where do gender expectations come from?
 - Can views change?
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Discussion Questions

1. What does adulthood mean to you?
2. Do you think adulthood starts at a certain age?
3. Can someone be an adult without having a job?
4. Does culture influence adulthood?
5. How do families influence our ideas?
6. Can people have different pathways into adulthood?