

JEAN PIAGET

THEORY & STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

"...knowledge cannot be conceived as predetermined either in the internal structures of the subject--they are due to an effective and continuous construction; or in the pre-existing characteristics of objects, since they are only known through the mediation of these structures and the latter enrich them by incorporating them..." (Piaget, 1972 p. 14).

ABOUT

Piaget was born in Neuchâtel (Switzerland) on August 9, 1896, and died in Geneva on September 16, 1980. He was brilliant as a young child and developed an interest in epistemology and psychoanalysis early in his career. In 1923, he married Valentine Châtenay, and the couple had three children. Piaget studied his own children's intellectual, cognitive, and language development which played an important role in his research on cognitive development..

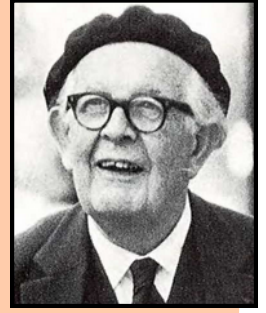


Fig. 1 www.wikipedia.org



PIAGET'S ONE MAIN GOAL WHEN HE RESEARCHED GENETIC EPISTEMOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY WAS TO UNCOVER HOW HUMANS GREW IN KNOWLEDGE FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD.

4 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT*

**Sensorimotor
(Birth - 18-24 months)**

**Preoperational
(2 - 7 years old)**

**Concrete Operational
(7 - 11 years old)**

**Formal Operational
(11-15 years old)**

PIAGET'S THEORY

"Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children move through four different stages of intellectual development which reflect the increasing sophistication of children's thought" (McLeod, 2024)

Contemporary psychologists will attest that Piaget's contributions revolutionized the field and that his ideas are very complex and are often simplified for our general understanding.

*Piaget did not equate an exact age with a stage, but many descriptions of his writings point to four specific stages associated with a certain age. There can be subcategories within each stage.

WHAT IS COGNITION?

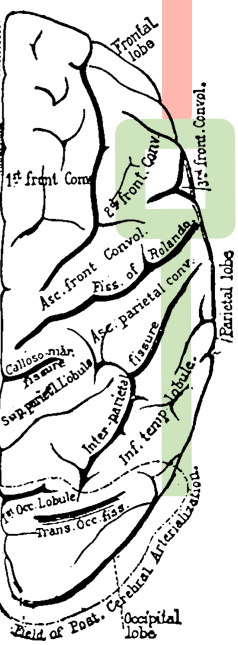
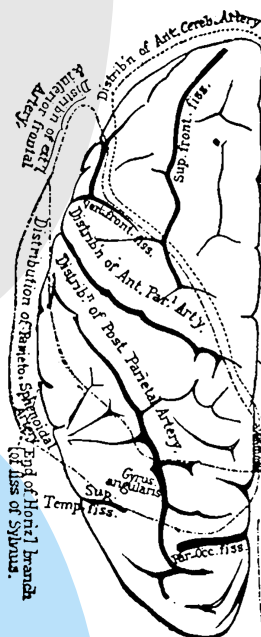
"The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses." Cognitive development is affected by the relationship between our environmental effects and inborn abilities. Piaget spent much of his life studying the relationship between cognition and human development.

Cognition has two "complementary aspects, which Piaget called assimilation and accommodation." (Flavell, 2022, p. 5). Assimilation has to do with the application of known knowledge whereas accommodation means shifting or adapting known knowledge to make room for new information, often triggered by external events or objects.



THOUGHTS ON PIAGET

Some consider Piaget a Constructivist. Constructivism focuses on knowledge built through personal experiences whereas cognitivism looks at knowledge gained through internal processes. Most psychologists label Piaget as a Cognitivist. There are some challenges to Piaget's theories (even Piaget would later question his ideas)! Fundamentally, it is no longer thought that the changes that occur throughout childhood are "stagelike and dramatic," as Piaget thought, but instead can be unpredictable and less methodical. (Flavell, 2022 p. 8.) Nonetheless, many of his theories are currently being put into practice, including through curriculum development. According to Piaget, teachers should aid children in navigating each stage of development by challenging their known schemas using concrete materials and creating opportunities for discovery.



PIAGET SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE STUDYING "HOW CHILDREN FORM THEIR KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES IN THE WORLD." (PETERSON, 2017).

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