

Lesson 3.3: Adolescence: What Is Changing and Why It Is Normal

Unit: Unit 3, Growing Up, Getting Along (Human Development and Relationships) **Topic:** 3.1 Growing Across the Lifespan **Grade:** 6 to 8 (written at grade 7; see Differentiation for the grade 6 support and grade 8 stretch) **Days:** 1 class period of 40 minutes (day 68 of the year) **Room:** Classroom or FACS lab

Coordination line: Puberty, reproductive health, and anything about bodies changing in those ways stay in health class. This lesson covers growth spurts and sleep, the brain still building, emotions that swing, and wanting independence, all at a general level. If a student asks a puberty question, the answer is “that is a great question for health, and here is how you ask it,” not an answer in this room. *[Sal: tell the health teacher the day this lesson runs so a question that lands there gets a warm reception.]*

Standards

- NYS module line: NYS HDR 1. Human Growth and Development Across the Lifespan b) Identify the relationships among and characteristics of the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual aspects of human growth and development
- NYS module line: NYS HDR 3. Peer Influence and Stress Management d) Recognize that adolescents experience common problems
- CTE theme line: CTE HSW 5. Social-Emotional Learning c) Label, understand, and apply strategies for managing emotions; feeling and showing empathy for others; making responsible decisions; and handling challenging situations
- NYS FACS Learning Standard 2 (Intermediate), Key Idea: Students will know the basic principles of home and community safety. They can demonstrate the skills necessary to maintain their homes and workplaces in a safe and comfortable condition. They can provide a safe and nurturing environment for themselves and others.; Performance Indicator: none of the three Standard 2 indicators fits; the key idea’s “safe and nurturing environment for themselves” is what a student who knows the changes are normal can build. The state assigns only Standard 2 to HDR.
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Personal Qualities
- National FCS 3.0: 12.1.1 Examine physical, emotional, social, moral, and cognitive development.
- National FCS 3.0: 12.1.3 Examine current research on human growth and development, brain research included.

(The task asked for a 12.2.x competency on influences on development. 12.2.1, heredity and environment, is the subject of Lesson 3.4 and is cited there. 12.1.3 is cited here instead because the brain development research is the content of this lesson and the number is confirmed in the 3.0 text.)

Enduring understanding and essential question

Big idea: Adolescence changes the body, the brain, the feelings, and the wish for independence, all at once and not on the same schedule for everyone. Almost everything that feels strange about being 11 to 14 is normal, and “normal” is a wide range. **Essential question:** If your brain is not finished building, what does that mean you should do differently, and what does it mean you should stop worrying about?

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. (Low) Given the four-part chart (body, brain, feelings, independence), describe one change in each part that is typical of adolescence.
2. (Mid) Given twelve statements about adolescence, sort each as myth or fact and correct each myth in one sentence using the chart.
3. (High) Evaluate one common adolescent problem (a fictional case) and recommend one response that fits what the brain is doing at this age, with a reason.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 (general academic): typical, range, myth, fact, independence Tier 3 (FACS): adolescence, growth spurt, prefrontal cortex, risk and reward, mood swing. See the unit vocabulary list (Vocabulary 03.md) for Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Materials and setup

- Handout 03.03 - Adolescence Myth vs Fact Sort.md, one per student, plus one set of the twelve statement strips per pair (cut before class, or students cut them)
- Slides: Slides 03.03 - Adolescence What Is Changing and Why It Is Normal
- Two signs for the wall: MYTH and FACT, for the stand-and-sort
- The sleep ranges from Lesson 2.6, slide 8 (8 to 10 hours for ages 13 to 18; 9 to 12 for ages 6 to 12), on today's slide 5
- Timer visible to the class
- Setup notes: cut the strips if you want the sort to move fast. Reread the coordination line. Nothing in this lesson asks a student to say anything about their own body, feelings, or family out loud; every “you” in the slides is general.

Pre-assessment

The do now is a private true or false on three statements (teenagers need less sleep than kids; the brain is finished growing by age 12; mood swings mean something is wrong). Hands stay down; students write. The exit card from Lesson 3.2 tells you whether the milestone chart needs one more minute first.

Do now and hook (Time: 4 min)

On the board: “True or false, in your notebook, nobody shares: (1) Teenagers need less sleep than younger kids. (2) Your brain is finished growing by age 12. (3) Mood swings mean something is wrong with you.”

Debrief: “All three are false, and by the end of today you will be able to explain why in one sentence each.” Then the hook, slide 2: a picture described in words, a construction site with the top floors still open framing. “This is a brain at 13. The bottom floors work. The top floor, the part that plans ahead and hits the brakes, is still being built. That is not an insult. It is a schedule.”

Procedure

Step	Teacher will	Students will	Time
1. Direct instruction: four things that change	Slides 3 to 7, one per part. Body: growth spurts, arms and legs first, clumsy for a while, hungrier, and the sleep clock shifts later (the body wants to fall asleep later and wake later; school does not move, so sleep gets squeezed; tie back to Lesson 2.6’s sleep window). Brain: the prefrontal cortex, the planning and braking part, keeps building into the mid 20s; the part that feels reward and excitement is running at full speed now; so risks feel bigger and better than they will later, and friends nearby make that stronger. Feelings: bigger, faster, and they swing; that is chemistry, not	Fill the four-part chart on the handout, Part 1, with one change per part in their own words.	8 min

	character. Independence: wanting to decide for yourself, wanting privacy, and still needing family; both at once is normal.		
2. Learning activity: myth vs fact sort	Pairs get the twelve strips. Sort into MYTH and FACT columns on the handout. For each myth, write the one-sentence correction using the chart. Circulate. At the reset cue, call six strips one at a time; pairs stand under the MYTH or FACT sign for each.	Sort twelve strips. Write six corrections. Stand and sort for the six called strips; argue the close ones (for example, “risk taking is always bad”).	10 min
3. Debrief: “normal” is a range	Slide 9. Reveal the key. Then the range slide: two people the same age, described in words, one a head taller, one not yet; one asleep at 9, one at midnight; one who cries at a movie, one who does not. All four normal. The rule: “Same age is not the same stage. The range is wide. Late is not wrong.” Add what is not normal and needs an adult: sadness that does not lift for weeks, not sleeping for days, hurting yourself or someone	Correct any wrong sorts. Copy the “range” rule and the “tell an adult” list onto Part 2.	8 min

	else, or a friend who says any of those. Name the school's people (counselor, nurse, any teacher).		
4. Independence and family: the case	Slide 11, a fictional case: a 13-year-old wants to go to a friend's house on a school night, the parent says no, the door slams, both feel bad. Ask: what is the brain doing, what is the parent doing, what would work better? Students write one response that fits the brain at this age (for example, ask again when calm, offer a plan, name the feeling) and one reason.	Write the recommendation and reason on Part 3. Pairs compare. Two pairs share by choice.	6 min

Questions to ask

Monitor understanding:

- Which part of the brain is still under construction, and what does it do?
- Why do teenagers get sleepy later at night? Is that a choice?
- Name one thing that is a myth about adolescence and the fact that replaces it.

Deepen learning:

- If risks feel bigger and better right now, what is one place that is useful (trying out for a team, talking to someone new) and one place it is dangerous?
- Why do you think wanting independence and needing family both show up at the same time? What would a parent need to know about that?
- Two students the same age can be in different places on every one of these four parts. What does that mean about comparing yourself to anyone?

Check for understanding

The stand-and-sort in Step 2: for the six called strips, count how many pairs stand on the right side. Five of six right for most pairs is “got it.” If more than a third of the room stands wrong on the sleep strip or the brain strip, reteach that slide for one minute before Step 3.

Closure (Time: 4 min)

Exit card on the bottom of the handout: 3 things that change in adolescence, one per part (body, brain, feelings, or independence), 2 myths you can now correct, 1 question you have for the health teacher (optional; leave blank if none; these go to the health teacher with no names). Two students read a “2” aloud. Sort into “got it” and “needs more” for the Lesson 3.4 review game.

Differentiation and supports

- ELL: the four parts have picture cues (a ruler, a brain, a face, a house key); the strips are short sentences and are read aloud before the sort; word bank on the handout for brain, sleep, feeling, myth, fact, and normal in Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish; sentence starter for corrections: “This is a myth because ____.”
- IEP and 504 (general): a student may sort eight strips instead of twelve; corrections may be spoken to the teacher; the case in Step 4 has a three-choice response bank to circle; extra time on Part 3 as the next do now; a student who does not want to stand in Step 2 holds up an M or F card at the seat.
- Grade 6 support: eight strips; Part 1 chart uses a word bank; the case response is chosen from the bank.
- Grade 8 stretch: Part 4 on the handout: write a four-sentence note to a parent or guardian explaining what the prefrontal cortex is doing at 13 and one thing that helps (kept by the student; never turned in unless they choose).
- UDL checkpoint used: multiple means of engagement (private do now, stand-and-sort as movement, sharing only by choice) and multiple means of representation (construction-site image, four-part chart, statement strips).
- No-kitchen or no-machine alternative: not needed.

Assessment

Objective	Standards met	Learning task	Assessment (formative or summative; tool)
1. Describe one change in each of four parts	HDR 1. b); National FCS 12.1.1	Part 1 chart, Step 1	Formative; chart checked for four entries; summative on the Lifespan Stages Quiz, items 9 and 10
2. Sort twelve statements and	HDR 3. d); National FCS 12.1.3; CDOS 3a	Myth vs fact sort, Step 2	Formative; stand-and-sort count,

correct the myths	Personal Qualities		handout key; summative on the quiz, item 10
3. Evaluate a case and recommend a response	HDR 3. d); HSW 5. c); Std 2 KI	Part 3 case, Step 4	Formative; scored complete, partial, or missing for daily work; the response pattern returns in Lesson 3.6 (refusal) and Lesson 3.10 (I-messages)

Homework

None. Optional: notice one time this week when a feeling arrived fast and left fast. Write what you did while it was there. Private; nobody collects it.

Connections

Inside the building: the health teacher gets the exit card questions (no names) and a copy of the four-part chart so the two courses use the same words; health owns puberty and reproductive health. The school counselor is named on slide 9 as one of the “tell an adult” people. *[Sal: confirm the counselor’s name and where the office is before you teach this.]*

Sources

- NYS Middle Level CTE FACS Content Module 02, Human Development and Relationships (nycotecenter.org, June 2018), lines 1. b) and 3. d). Copy in 02 Standards/NYS Module PDFs/.
- NYS Middle Level CTE Theme Module, Health, Safety, and Wellness, line 5. c). Same folder.
- NYS Learning Standards for Health, Physical Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences (1996), Standard 2, Intermediate, FACS strand. Wording per 02 Standards/STANDARDS SOURCES - web research.md, section 2.
- National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education 3.0 (LEAD FCS Education, 2018), competencies 12.1.1 and 12.1.3.
- The brain content (prefrontal cortex maturing into the mid 20s, reward sensitivity higher in adolescence, later sleep timing) is the general account given in the National Institute of Mental Health’s “The Teen Brain: 7 Things to Know” fact sheet (nimh.nih.gov) and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine sleep ranges as published by the CDC. *[Sal: confirm both pages before teaching; the sleep numbers are the same ones you used in Lesson 2.6.]*
- Sal’s own materials: the infant brain development concept map (FNES 782) supplies the “connections get built, used ones stay, and the wrapping that speeds signals finishes last, in the front” framing, rewritten at grade 7.

Teacher notes

- Say “about” and “most” every time you give an age. Say “normal is a range” at least three times. One student in the room is on the early end and one is on the late end of every change, and both are listening for whether they are okay.
- If the period runs short, cut Step 4 to a whole-class answer with no writing. Never cut the “what is not normal and needs an adult” list in Step 3.
- Common mistake: a student hears “brain not finished” as “I cannot be blamed.” Answer it in the room: the brakes are still being installed, which is why you practice using them now, not why you skip them.
- Keep the myth strips. Two of them appear on the quiz.
- *[Sal: if a student discloses something in the exit card’s “1” line that needs follow-up, the school’s reporting process applies; know it before you teach this lesson.]*