

Piaget's Theory in Key Terms 1

Knowing and Using the Buzz Words

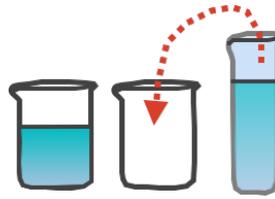
1 Which Piagetian concept is depicted in each scenario below? See the top of page 2 if your mind is a blank.



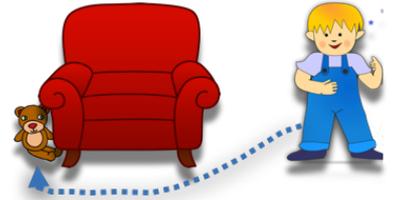
The stage in which a baby learns through integrating sensory input and physical actions is called the



The baby knows it exists, even though it can't be seen, heard or touched. This achievement is called



The child cannot rewind a process mentally, thus displaying thinking that is



The toddler can plan a series of movements directed towards attaining a certain specific end. This is called

2 Match each term with its definition below:

Term

- (a) conservation
- (b) centration
- (c) egocentrism
- (d) object permanence
- (e) irreversibility
- (f) symbolic thought
- (g) schema
- (h) cognitive

Definition

- Ability to use mental images or words to represent external reality
- Inability to rewind a process mentally
- Focusing on one aspect of a task or problem to the exclusion of other relevant aspects of the task or problem
- A mental construction or concept that allows one to interpret, classify and refine one's understanding of the world, both in concrete and abstract terms
- Understanding that physical quantities remain the same in spite of changes in their shape or appearance
- Understanding that the things one cannot directly perceive still exist
- Refers to mental, problem-solving or thinking abilities
- Inability to take the psychological or physical perspective of another person

3 Match each term below with the appropriate description of a child's behaviour.

Term

- (a) conservation of volume
- (b) failure to conserve number
- (c) egocentrism
- (d) irreversibility

Child's Behaviour

- A child looks at two rows with 6 coins each and agrees that they are equal. When one line is spread out, the child believes that the spread out line has more coins in it.
- A child agrees that two balls of play dough are equal. When one of them is rolled out into a snake shape, he is unable to imagine that the snake shape, if returned to its original ball form, would look the same as before.
- A child watches liquid being poured from a wide, low beaker into a tall, thin beaker. "The two beakers have the same amount of water," she says. "You've just changed how they look; the quantity is the same."
- A child watches his mother put the biscuits in a different cupboard and yet expects his sister to know where the biscuits will be when she later enters the room.

Key Terms

preoperational stage | object permanence | sensorimotor stage | conservation (of volume, etc.) | goal-directed behaviour | centration | irreversibility (or irreversible thinking) | egocentrism (or egocentric thinking)

4 For each scenario pictured below, describe the Piagetian stage the child is demonstrating and use the appropriate terms from the list above in clearly written sentences in order to describe the cognitive abilities or limitations of the child.

Begin by selecting which terms above are needed to describe each scenario. Write **(a)**, **(b)** and /or **(c)** beside each word or phrase.

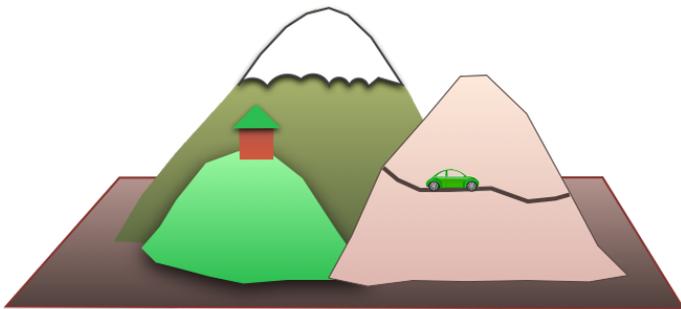
(a) The child thinks the tall beaker contains more liquid than the squat beaker.



Picture credit:

<https://piagetintheclassroom.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/image007.gif>

(b) The child is shown this scene and asked whether the doll on the opposite side of the table from her can see the little car and the house. The child replies, "Yes."



The child sits on this side of the table.

(c) The toddler is playing with the teddy. When the teddy is hidden under the blanket, he walks across the room and pulls the blanket off the teddy.



Picture credit: Teddy from sweetclipart.com

Piaget's Theory in Key Terms 1 ANSWERS

Knowing and Using the Buzz Words

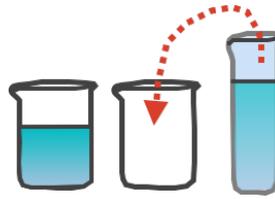
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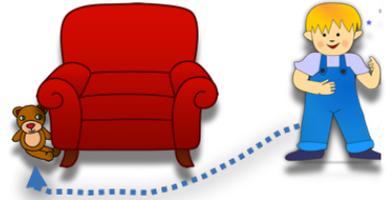
The stage in which a baby learns through integrating sensory input and physical actions is called the **sensorimotor stage**.



The baby knows it exists, even though it can't be seen, heard or touched. This achievement is called **object permanence**.



The child cannot rewind a process mentally, thus displaying thinking that is **irreversible**.



The toddler can plan a series of movements directed towards attaining a certain specific end. This is called **goal-directed behaviour**.

2 Match each term with its definition below:

Term

- (a) conservation
- (b) centration
- (c) egocentrism
- (d) object permanence
- (e) irreversibility
- (f) symbolic thought
- (g) schema
- (h) cognitive

Definition

- Ability to use mental images or words to represent external reality **(f)**
- Inability to rewind a process mentally **(e)**
- Focusing on one aspect of a task or problem to the exclusion of other relevant aspects of the task or problem **(b)**
- A mental construction or concept that allows one to interpret, classify and refine one's understanding of the world, both in concrete and abstract terms **(g)**
- Understanding that physical quantities remain the same in spite of changes in their shape or appearance **(a)**
- Understanding that the things one cannot directly perceive still exist **(d)**
- Refers to mental, problem-solving or thinking abilities **(h)**
- Inability to take the psychological or physical perspective of another person **(c)**

3 Match each term below with the appropriate description of a child's behaviour.

Term

- (a) conservation of volume
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Child's Behaviour

- A child looks at two rows with 6 coins each and agrees that they are equal. When one line is spread out, the child believes that the spread out line has more coins in it. **(b)**
- A child agrees that two balls of play dough are equal. When one of them is rolled out into a snake shape, he is unable to imagine that the snake shape, if returned to its original ball form, would look the same as before. **(d)**
- A child watches liquid being poured from a wide, low beaker into a tall, thin beaker. "The two beakers have the same amount of water," she says. "You've just changed how they look; the quantity is the same." **(a)**
- A child watches his mother put the biscuits in a different cupboard and yet expects his sister to know where the biscuits will be when she later enters the room. **(c)**

Key Terms Answers continued

preoperational stage (a, c) | object permanence (c) | sensorimotor stage (c) | conservation (of volume, etc.) (a) | goal-directed behaviour (c) | centration (a) | irreversibility (or irreversible thinking) (a) | egocentrism (or egocentric thinking) (b)

4 For each scenario pictured below, describe the Piagetian stage the child is demonstrating and use the appropriate terms from the list above in clearly written sentences in order to describe the cognitive abilities or limitations of the child.

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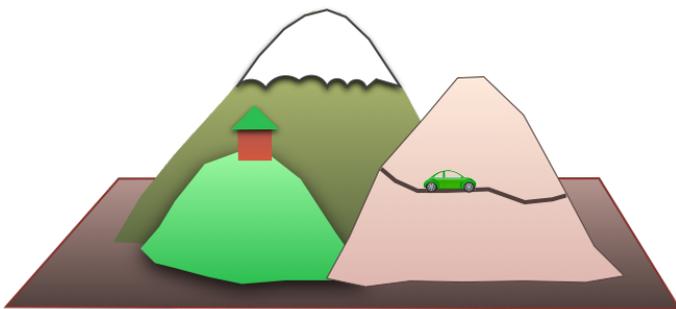
(a) The child thinks the tall beaker contains more liquid than the squat beaker.



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This child is in the preoperational stage. She is not yet able to conserve volume, since she believes that there is more liquid in the tall beaker. The child displays irreversible thinking because she cannot visualise what would happen if she poured the liquid back into the squat glass. Centration is also evident, since she focuses on the increased height of the water in the beaker but overlooks its reduced width.

(b) The child is shown this scene and asked whether the doll on the opposite side of the table from her can see the little car and the house. The child replies, “Yes.”



The child sits on this side of the table.

The child is presumably in the preoperational stage, because she displays egocentric thinking. She cannot visualise the point of view of a doll sitting on the opposite side of the table and therefore assumes that the doll can see exactly what she can see.

(c) The toddler is playing with the teddy. When the teddy is hidden under the blanket, he walks across the room and pulls the blanket off the teddy.



Picture credit: Teddy from sweetclipart.com

The toddler is close to the end of the sensorimotor stage (at least), since he has developed the concept of object permanence. He knows that the teddy still exists, even if he cannot see it. He is also able to plan a series of movements to find the teddy, which is known as goal-directed behaviour.