- Describe some of the basic issues in developmental psychology
- Distinguish between 3 main types of research design used by developmental psychologists
- Describe how physical development occurs across lifespan & its impact on psychological functioning
- Describe how perceptual and cognitive development occurs in infancy, childhood and adolescence
- Describe some of the cognitive changes associated with ageing.
- LO 1: Explain how psychological research, theories and principles contribute to an understanding of human development, learning, memory, personality, motivation, and social behaviour
- LO 2: Apply concepts from human development, to understand and predict behaviour.

Nature & Nurture:

Nature – genetically programmed/biological maturation.   Nurture – learning & experience

Evidence, the wild boy of Aveyron was raised by wolves, he eventually learned to respond to instruction and show affection, but he never learned to talk. This proves that early experience is vital in shaping some aspects of psychological functioning, e.g. this is why language acquisition is harder as adults.

Critical periods- initially discovered in the field of embryology where it was found that toxic substances affect foetus development only at specific points. Another example of critical periods discovered by Lorenz (1935) where goslings copy the first moving object they see. Imprinting is the tendency of young animals of certain species to follow an animal to which they were exposed during a sensitive period. In humans, it is debated whether a child raised without love could later develop the ability to love. During certain periods the human nervous system is more sensitive to forming new synapses between neurons. E.g. infants are born with abundant neural connections, but those that are not activated are lost gradually.

Impact of abuse/deprivation: young girl named Genie had no exposure to language until age 13. Genie learned some aspects of language but never reached normal syntactic levels (Fromkin). Some psychologists argue that early deprivation is not as critical because Genie did improve dramatically. Children from overcrowded orphanages showed IQ improvement once adapted to an environment that provided individually care, but the longer they were in orphanages, the greater their cognitive impairments remained 4-6yrs later in life. A conclusion of critical periods could be that humans have 'sensitive periods' – times that are more important to development than others.

Developmental psychology: studies the way humans develop and change over time.

It is still debated in this field, whether development occurs in stages (discrete steps everyone progresses in same sequence), or continuous change (steady, gradual change). For example, a child who can now think abstractly may be seen as reaching a new stage, or this abstract thinking could be a gradual refinement of skills practices overtime.

Week 1 – Developmental Psychology Definition:

"science of human development seeks to understand how and why people everywhere, change and remain the same over time"

Three independent domains all likely affect each other

- Physical (neural), Cognitive (intellectual), Social (emotional)

Developmental Issues: Nature/nurture – biological/environmental

　　　　　　　　　　　Stability/change – degree to which early traits persist in later life

　　　　　　　　　　　Continuity/Discontinuity – gradual change or distinct stages

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development:

Adaption: continuous process of **using the environment to learn and adjust.** Involves taking in, processing, organising and using new info to adjust to changes.

Assimilation: process of taking new info and **fitting it into existing ideas**. Through assimilation we make sense of new info, e.g. child sees grape, calls it ball

Accommodation: refers to **process of changing existing mental ideas** in order to **fit new information**. Restructuring the way info is organised, so new info is included. E.g. child now realises the difference between the grape and a ball.

*4 SEQUENTIAL STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT*

Sensorimotor 0-2yrs	Learn through senses (mouthing, touching) No object permanence until 8 months
Pre-operational 2-7yrs	Difficultly seeing other perspectives – egocentric Not able to think logically. Pretend play.
Concrete Operational 7-11yrs	Ability to organise information – classify Understand conservation (weight, mass)
Formal Operational 12yrs+	Abstract thinking, can hypothesise Develop ideas about own beliefs, values and morality

Criticisms:
▪ Underestimated young minds
▪ Failed to distinguish between competence and performance
▪ Gave insufficient attention to social influence on results

Donaldson (1978) Policeman Task:
90% of children 3-5yrs could see another person's perspective when hiding doll from policeman. Donaldson argued this was because kids were familiar with concept of hiding, and that Piaget's tasks didn't make sense to them.
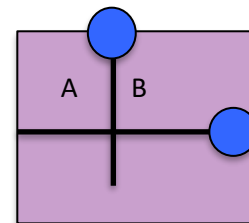
Siegal (1991) Language:
Young children are likely to assume their answer is wrong if the experimenter repeats the question or asks a question where the answer seems obvious. E.g. child believes correct answer, however changes answer to please experimenter. As many of Piaget's tasks involve verbal responses, lack of verbal skills resulted in lack of competence for that task.

Contributions:
▪ Children construct understanding on world through interacting with it
▪ Transformed value of education
▪ Kids are no longer viewed as blank slates

Cross Sectional Research Design: participants of various ages are compared at one time to determine age-related differences.

Longitudinal Research Design: the same participants are studied at various ages over time to determine age-related change.

Sequential Design: examine different age groups at multiple time points to reduce the cohort affect. E.g. start with a group of 3yr old's, then 3 years later study a new group of 3yr old's with the old group of now 6yr old's.

Goals of psychology – describe (what/where/when it happens), explain (why it happens), predict (what will happen next) and change (individuals/groups/societies) behaviour.