

Jean Piaget

August 9, 1896
September 16, 1980



Background

- Born in Neuchatel, Switzerland.
- Family greatly influenced his career.
- Very interested in nature, philosophy, psychology, biology, epistemology.
- Epistemology- theory of knowledge, concerned with how knowledge is produced.
- Published his first paper at age 10.
- Published papers throughout high school on mollusks.
- Attended University of Neuchatel, he graduated at age 22 with a PhD in Natural Science.

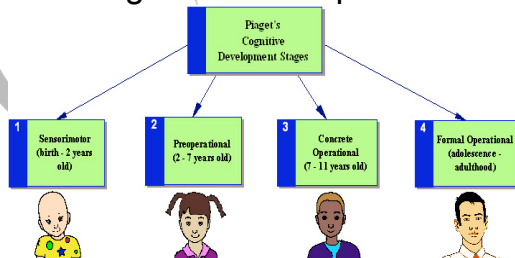
Background, Cont.

- In 1919 began working at a boys' institution in Paris founded by Alfred Binet and directed by De Simon.
- At this institution he taught and also administered IQ tests. He realized that young children consistently gave the wrong answers to certain questions.
- This lead him to believe that children's logic and ways of thinking were completely different from that of adults.
- In 1923 he married Valentine Chatenay and they had three children.

Key Concepts

- Organization- the mind is organized in complex and integrated ways. The simplest level is the schema.
Schema- categories of knowledge that help us to interpret and understand the world. As experiences happen, this new information is used to modify, add to, or change previously existing schemas.
- Adaptation- for individuals to survive in an environment they must adapt to physical and mental stimuli.
Assimilation- Process of incorporating info. into our previously existing schemas.
Accommodation- Involves changing or altering our existing schemas in light of new info. or experiences.

Stages of Development



Stages of Development

- **Sensorimotor Stage-** birth to 18 mths/2 yrs of age. Knowledge is limited in this stage, because it is based on physical interactions and experiences. Infant differentiates self from objects and begins to act intentionally: e.g. pulls a string to set mobile in motion or shakes a rattle to make a noise. Achieves object permanence; realizes that things continue to exist even when no longer present to the senses. Egocentric.
- **Preoperational Stage-** 18/24months - 7 years. During this stage children begin to use language; memory and imagination also develop. Children engage in make believe and can understand and express relationships between the past and the future. They classify objects by a single feature: e.g. groups together all the red blocks regardless of shape or all the square blocks regardless of color. Intelligence is egocentric and intuitive, not logical.

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Stages of Development

- **Concrete operational stage-** 7-11 years of age. Intellectual development in this stage is demonstrated through the use of logical and systematic manipulation of symbols, which are related to concrete objects. Thinking becomes less egocentric with increased awareness of external events, and involves concrete references. Achieve conservation of numbers, mass, and weight. Classify objects according to several features and can order them in series along a single dimension such as size.
- **Formal operational stage-** adolescence to adulthood. Use of symbols related to abstract concepts. Ability to think about multiple variables in systematic ways, can formulate hypotheses, and think about abstract relationships and concepts. Becomes concerned with the hypothetical, the future, and ideological problems.

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Accomplishments

- **President:**
Swiss Commission
UNESCO
Swiss Society of Psychology
French Language Association of Scientific Psychology
International Union of Scientific Psychology
- **Co-Director:** Department of Education, UNESCO.
- **Member:** Executive Council, UNESCO and 20 Academic Societies.
- **Co-Editor:** *Archives de Psychologie* and 7 other journals.
- **Honorary Doctorates:** Harvard (1936) Manchester (1959) Cambridge (1962) Bristol (1970) CNAAP (1975) and 26 other Universities
- <http://www.piaget.org/aboutPiaget.html>

Sample of Important Publications

- 1924, *Judgment and reasoning in the child*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1928.
- 1936, *Origins of intelligence in the child*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953.
- 1957, *Construction of reality in the child*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954.
- 1941, *Child's conception of number* (with Alina Szeminska), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952.
- 1967, *Biology and knowledge*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971.
- 1975, *Equilibration of cognitive structures*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- 1977, *Sociological studies*, London: Routledge, 1995.
- 1977, *Studies in reflecting abstraction*. Hove: Psychology Press, 2000.