

networks

There's More Online!

- ✓ CARTOON Differing Values
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- ✓ CHART Do's and Don'ts
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- ✓ MAP Immigration to the United States
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LESSON 3

Norms and Values

ESSENTIAL QUESTION • How does culture influence society?

Reading HELPDESK



Academic Vocabulary

- norms
- violation

Content Vocabulary

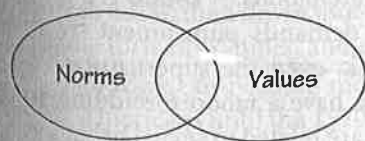
- folkways
- mores
- taboo
- law
- sanctions
- formal sanctions
- informal sanctions
- values

TAKING NOTES:

Key Ideas and Details

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

As you read about norms and values, use a graphic organizer like the one below to write two statements in each circle and in the overlapping area about how norms and values are alike and different.



IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Two essential components of culture are norms and values. Norms include folkways, mores, and laws. Sanctions are used to encourage conformity to norms. Values, the broadest cultural ideas, form the basis for norms. Norms can change over time.

Norms

GUIDING QUESTION What are the three basic types of norms?

For sociologists, norms and values are a defining component of culture. **Norms** are rules that define behavior. Norms help explain why people in a society or group behave similarly in similar circumstances. For example, a young Basarwa girl in Africa might become engaged to a man she has not met in order to strengthen clan bonds. This example reflects a cultural norm—a way of behaving in specific situations.

William Graham Sumner, an early sociologist, stated that anything can be considered appropriate when norms approve of it. Once norms are learned, members of a society use them to guide their social behavior. Norms are so ingrained that they guide behavior without our awareness. For instance, you may not think of standing in the checkout line in a store as a norm until someone attempts to step in front of you. Then it registers that waiting your turn in line is expected behavior. Cutting in line violates that norm. Norms range from minor behavior, such as applauding after a performance, to extremely important rules, such as laws against stealing.

Social norms can change over time. For example, research has shown that women in college today are much more interested in earning money than they were in the 1960s. Sociologists have identified at least three factors that cause change in social norms and culture over time: (1) *invention*, the creation of new cultural elements, including both objects and ideas; (2) *discovery*, or a better understanding of something already known; and (3) *diffusion*, the spread of cultural elements from one culture to another.

William Graham Sumner identified three basic types of norms: *folkways*, *mores*, and *laws*. These norms vary in importance in a society, and their **violation**, or the breaking of them, is tolerated to different degrees.

norm rules defining appropriate and inappropriate behavior

violation the breaking of a rule or law

folkways norms that lack moral significance

mores norms that have moral dimensions and that should be followed by members of the society

taboo a rule of behavior, the violation of which calls for strong punishment

At age 13, Jewish boys become part of their religious community in a ceremony called a bar mitzvah.

► **CRITICAL THINKING**

1. **Describing** How do this boy's clothing and actions reflect the norms of his Orthodox Jewish community?
2. **Making Connections** What norms does your community have for young teens?



Folkways

Rules that cover customary ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving but lack moral overtones are called **folkways**. For example, sleeping in a bed instead of sleeping on the floor is not a moral issue; it qualifies as a folkway. Because folkways are not considered vital to group welfare, disapproval of those who break them is not very great. Those who consistently violate folkways—say, by talking loudly in quiet places or wearing a different-colored sock on each foot—may appear odd. We may avoid these people, but we do not consider them wicked or immoral.

Other examples of folkways involve how members of a society adapt to their physical environments. It is extremely common to see people of all ages in Great Britain carrying umbrellas, or people in Sweden wearing shearling coats. You can imagine why they do this. Do you think people in the Sahara Desert carry umbrellas or wear fur coats? Of course not, but their cultures have adopted different folkways to adapt to their own environment.

Some folkways are more important than others, and the social reaction to their violation is more intense. Not offering a woman a seat on a crowded bus draws little notice today, but obnoxious drunken behavior at a party may bring a strong negative reaction from others.

Mores

The term *mores* (pronounced “MOR-ayz”) is based on the word *moral*. Morality deals with conduct related to right and wrong. **Mores** are norms of great moral significance and are vital to the well-being of a society. Conformity to mores draws strong social approval; violation brings strong disapproval. For example, Americans believe that able-bodied men should work. Able-bodied men who do not work are scorned.

Various practices of the culture can create differences within group behavior, however. Some of these differences depend upon gender, age, or social class. In religiously conservative societies, for example, women are often required to have their heads or even their bodies fully covered in public, while men do not face such restrictions. Women might also not be allowed to talk to males who are not family members unless a male family member is present. Even in the United States, there are rules for acceptable dress. It is acceptable for adolescent boys to play basketball shirtless. Could an adolescent girl do the same?

Although following folkways is generally a matter of personal choice, conformity to mores is a social requirement. Still, some mores are more vital to a society than others. Failure to stand at attention while the national anthem is being played is not as serious a violation of American mores as using loud profanity during a religious service.

The most serious mores are taboos. A **taboo** is a norm so strong that its violation demands punishment by the group (or, some people think, even the supernatural). In India, followers of Hinduism have a taboo forbidding the killing of cows. Other taboos are related to sexual behaviors. Although definitions of incest vary from society to society, the incest taboo (forbidding sexual contact with close relatives) is generally regarded as the only taboo that is present in all societies. The “mother-in-law” taboo existing in some societies prohibits or severely restricts social contact between a husband and his wife’s mother.

Do's and Don'ts

Knowing the norms and customs of other nations may prevent embarrassing moments as you travel the world.

Country	Custom
Brazil	When accepting an invitation to a Brazilian home, arrive at least a half hour late if you are coming to dinner and around an hour late if you are attending a party. Be sure to bring flowers as a hostess gift, but avoid purple flowers. They are used for funerals.
Bulgaria	Give only an odd number of gifts to a newborn baby. If dining in a Bulgarian home, take only a small portion of food for your first serving—guests show their appreciation for their host's hospitality by eating several servings. An empty glass will always be filled, so if you are done with your beverage, leave a mouthful of it in your glass.
Ghana	A Ghanaian handshake involves clapping right hands as in the United States, but then the people greeting each other twist their middle fingers and click them together. If you are not familiar with this greeting, it's best to stick to a traditional, straightforward handshake!
India	If your Indian hosts invite you to dinner, arrive on time. Etiquette demands that you remove your shoes before you enter the home. Do not accept items of food or a beverage the first time your host asks. Food and drink will be offered several times, and refusing the first time is simply good manners.
Japan	Remove your shoes when entering a Japanese home, and put on the slippers provided for guests. Make sure your shoes point away from the doorway through which you will enter. When using chopsticks, take care never to use them to point. Do not rest the chopsticks on your plate, but lay them on the rest provided by your plate when you are not using them. Never, ever cross them!
New Zealand	The Maori—the indigenous peoples of New Zealand—have an elaborate protocol for greeting guests from outside their group. It is called a Powhiri, and it involves welcoming speech making that can last up to several hours. The Powhiri is followed by a meal. After the meal, it is considered good manners to thank those who have cooked and served the meal. This may result in a request to sing. Singing a song that represents your home country is a way to show gratitude and respect.
Norway	If you are bringing flowers as a hostess gift to a Norwegian home, have the flowers sent the morning of the meal so that they can be put on display before guests arrive. Always arrange for an odd number of flowers, and never send lilies, carnations, or any white flowers, as those are reserved for funerals.
Saudi Arabia	Saudis rarely entertain those from outside their culture in their homes unless they know them very well. As a visitor to a Saudi home, you should greet the older members of the host family first. Meals are often eaten with the fingers, but use only your right hand, as Saudis believe the left hand is unclean. Sample everything that is offered, but do not be surprised if the most valued food items—such as a sheep's head—are reserved just for you!

Source: Kwintessential, *Country Profiles: Global Guide to Culture, Customs and Etiquette*

Laws

The third type of norm is law. **Laws** are norms that are formally defined and enforced by officials. Folkways and mores emerge slowly and are often unconsciously created, while laws are consciously created and enforced.

Mores are an important source for laws. At one time, the norm against murder was not written down. But as civilization advanced, the norm against murder became formally defined and enforced by public officials.

Folkways can become mores or laws. Smoking was acceptable behavior to most Americans until the 1970s. Today, many states have laws against smoking in public places. Not all mores become laws. For example, it is not against the law to cheat on an exam, although you may be suspended or punished by the teacher. Furthermore, not all laws began as mores. Fines for overtime parking and laws against littering have never been mores.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining What is the relationship of laws to mores?

CHART

DO'S AND DON'TS

Norms differ throughout the world.

CRITICAL THINKING

- Assessing** What norm do you find most unusual? Why?
- Making Connections** About what norms would you inform a foreign guest to your community?

law a norm that is formally defined and enforced by officials

Enforcing the Rules

GUIDING QUESTION *What are formal and informal sanctions?*

sanctions rewards and punishments used to encourage people to follow norms

People do not automatically conform to norms. Norms must be learned and accepted. Groups teach norms, in part, through the use of *sanctions*. **Sanctions** are rewards and punishments used to encourage conformity to norms. They can be formal or informal.

formal sanctions sanctions imposed by persons given special authority

Formal Sanctions

Formal sanctions are sanctions that may be applied only by officially designated persons, such as judges and teachers. Formal sanctions can take the form of positive as well as negative rewards. A soldier earns a Congressional Medal of Honor as a positive sanction for heroism. Teachers reward outstanding students with As. Of course, formal sanctions can also take the form of punishments.

Formal punishments range widely in their severity. From the Middle Ages to the Protestant Reformation, for example, it was an unpardonable sin for lenders to charge interest on money. This practice was called *usury* and was condemned in the Bible. Usury was punishable on the third offense by public humiliation and social and economic ruin.

informal sanctions rewards or punishments that can be applied by most members of a group

Informal Sanctions

Informal sanctions are sanctions that can be applied by most members of a group. They, too, can be positive or negative. Informal sanctions include thanking someone for pushing a car out of a snowbank (positive) or staring at someone who is talking loudly during a movie (negative). Sanctions are not used randomly or without reason. Specific sanctions are associated with specific norms. A high school student who violates his parents' curfew is not supposed to be locked in a closet, for example.

After we reach a certain age, most of us conform without the threat of sanctions. We may conform to norms because we believe that the behavior expected of us is appropriate, because we wish to avoid guilt feelings, or because we fear social disapproval. In other words, we sanction ourselves mentally.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying Cause and Effect How might an informal sanction become a formal sanction?

CARTOON >

ODD MAN OUT

One of these men is violating the norms of the group.

► CRITICAL THINKING

- 1. Drawing Conclusions** What sanction is being applied to the man in the middle? Why?
- 2. Classifying** Is the sanction formal or informal?



“Dirk, we need to have a talk.”

Applying Sociology

SOCIOLOGY AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

According to the American Sociological Association (ASA), 21st-century careers are especially well suited to students with degrees in sociology. The ASA cites these skills needed to obtain and succeed at 21st-century careers: creativity and innovation, critical thinking, analytic problem solving, communication, collaboration, multicultural and global understandings, strong math and science skills, and excellent written expression.

Many sociology majors find employment in the U.S. criminal justice system, where these and other skills are vital. Jobs filled by sociology majors (some require advanced degrees) include:

- probation/parole officer
- attorney
- juvenile probation officer
- corrections counselor
- victim services specialist
- private security/background investigation
- mediation specialist
- FBI analyst

► CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Evaluating** Choose the job you feel you would be most effective performing. What skills and characteristics do you have that would help you in this job?
2. **Analyzing** Select a job in the criminal justice system that you might qualify for with a sociology degree and explain why sociology is a good preparation.



Values—The Basis for Norms

GUIDING QUESTION *What are values, and why are they important?*

Norms and sanctions are relatively specific. Values are much more general. **Values** are broad ideas about what most people in a society consider to be desirable. Values are so general that they do not dictate precise ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving. Thus, different societies or different groups within the same society can have quite different norms based on the same value. Consider the historical example of the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders said their people were free because the leaders claimed to provide full employment, medical care, and education. Americans have different norms based on the value of freedom. These norms include the right to free speech and assembly, the right to engage in private enterprise, and the right to a representative government.

Values have a tremendous influence on human social behavior because they form the basis for norms. A society that values democracy will have norms ensuring personal freedom. A society that values human welfare will have norms providing for its most unfortunate members.

Values are so general that they are involved in most aspects of daily life. In America, for example, the influence of the value of freedom goes beyond political life. The value of freedom affects how family relationships are conducted, how people are treated within the legal system, how organizations are run, and how people worship. Values also influence our economic decisions. For example, most Americans place a high value on material comfort. Therefore, they make economic decisions that are likely to ensure material comfort, such as going to college, choosing a career that pays well, and working hard.

✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

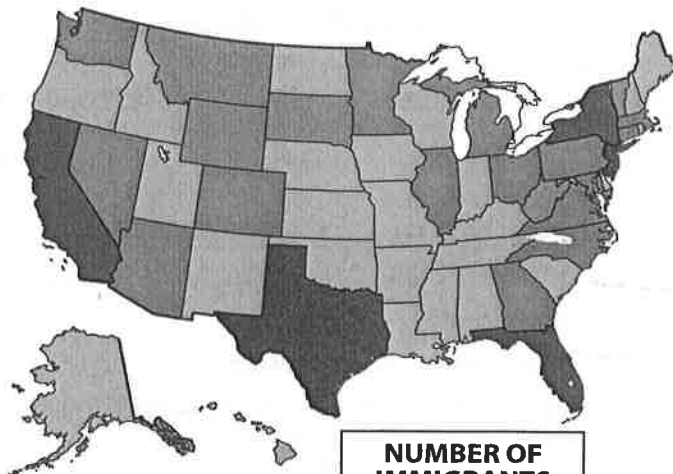
Evaluating Why do identical values not result in identical norms?

values broad ideas about what is good or desirable shared by people in a society

A Diverse America

IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

From the earliest days of the United States, immigrants from around the world have brought their cultures to American shores. A century ago, the majority of immigrants arrived from Europe, particularly from Italy and Russia. Today, the majority of immigrants are from Mexico, China, and India. This map shows the number of people who have obtained legal permanent residence status in each state.



Geography Connection

- 1. The World in Spatial Terms** What generalization can you make about the states that have received the highest number of immigrants?
- 2. Human Systems** This map shows how many immigrants each state has received. What other kinds of information would make this map even more useful to sociologists?

NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS (2010)



SOURCE: Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Services: 2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics

Basic Values in the United States

GUIDING QUESTION *What values shape the lives of Americans?*

No single set of values is likely to hold across a country as diverse as the United States. Despite this problem, sociologist Robin Williams identified important—sometimes competing—values that have traditionally guided the daily lives of most people in the United States. A partial list includes:

- **Achievement and success.** People emphasize achievement, especially in the world of work. Success is supposed to be based on effort and competition and is viewed as a reward for performance. Wealth is viewed as a symbol of success and personal worth.
- **Activity and work.** People tend to prefer action over inaction in almost every case. For most Americans, continuous and regular work is a goal in itself. Promotion should be for merit rather than favoritism. Finally, all citizens should have the opportunity to perform at their best.
- **Efficiency and practicality.** People pride themselves on getting things done by the most rational means. We search for better and faster ways of doing things, praise good workmanship, and judge performance by the results. We love to rely on science and technology and have also learned to adapt to and influence our natural environment for our benefit.
- **Equality.** From the beginning of our history, we have declared a belief in equality for all citizens. As minority groups and women achieved citizenship, our concept of equality grew. We tend to treat one another as equals, defend everyone's legal rights, and favor equal opportunity—if not equal results—for everyone.

- **Democracy.** People emphasize that all citizens are entitled to equal rights and equal opportunity under the law. In a democracy, the people elect their government officials. Power is not in the hands of an elite few.
- **Group superiority.** Despite concern for equality of opportunity, people in the United States tend to place a greater value on people of their own race, ethnic group, social class, or religious group.

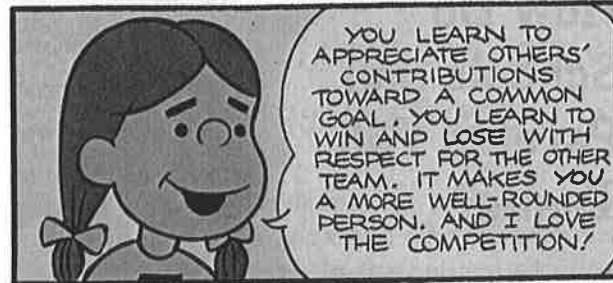
These values are clearly interrelated. Achievement and success affect and are affected by efficiency and practicality, for example. But we can also see conflicts among some values. For instance, people in the United States value group superiority while at the same time stressing equality and democracy.

Williams identified these major values more than forty years ago—about the time many of your parents were children. Although these values have remained remarkably stable over the years, some have changed. Today there is less emphasis on group superiority in America than in the past. This can be seen in the decline of openly racist attitudes and behaviors. In reality, however, it is usually norms and behavior rather than underlying values that change radically. It is probably because of the passage of civil rights laws that many Americans are now less likely to make overt racist statements. Racism, based on a belief in the superiority of one racial or ethnic group over another, however, remains part of the fabric of American culture.

The norms related to hard work and activity have also changed in recent years. Many Americans now work as hard at their leisure activities as they do at their jobs. Although Williams's analysis of major American values remains basically sound today, some sociologists believe that his list is incomplete. They would add, for example, optimism, honesty, and friendliness to the list of major values in the United States.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Applying Name an important American value and explain how it affects life in our society.



CARTOON

DIFFERING VALUES

These children have very different ideas about the value of athletic competition.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Contrasting** How does the boy's view of the value of competition differ from the girl's view?
2. **Identifying Perspectives** Which child's view is closest to your own? Why?

LESSON 3 REVIEW



Reviewing Vocabulary

1. **Identifying** Identify an example of a formal sanction and an informal sanction and tell how they are alike and different.

Using Your Notes

2. **Comparing and Contrasting** Use your notes to write several sentences comparing and contrasting norms and values.

Answering the Guiding Questions

3. **Identifying** What are the three basic types of norms?

4. **Explaining** What are formal and informal sanctions?
5. **Discussing** What are values, and why are they important?
6. **Applying** What values shape the lives of Americans?

Writing Activity

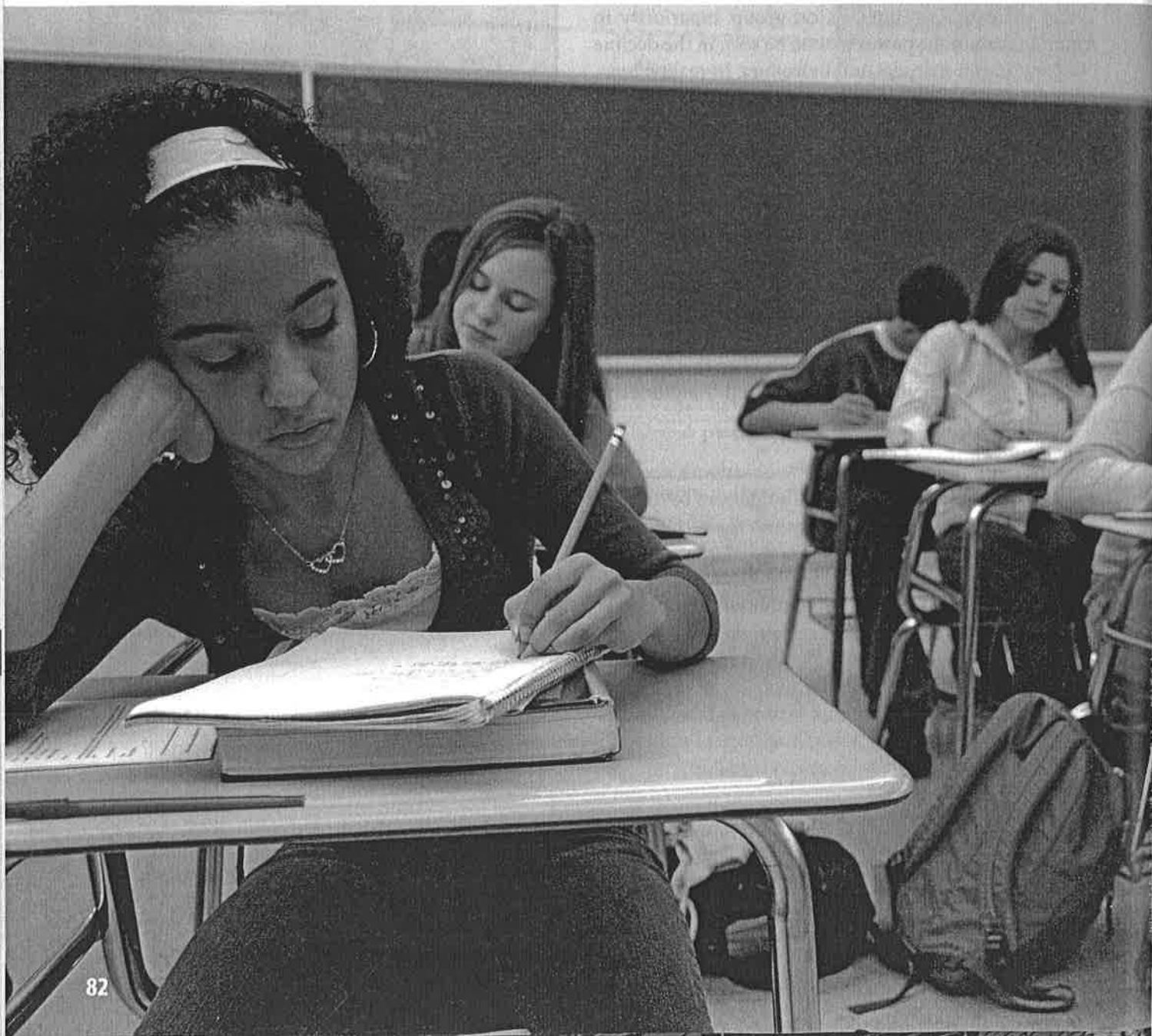
7. **Argument** Take a position on the following statement and support it with reasons: The most important values never change.

Survey Research



How Do Schools and Parents Fail Teens?

Adolescence is often marked by drama and difficulty. In a study from the early 1990s, Jacquelynne Eccles set out to determine if there is something about this developmental period that puts adolescents at risk for difficulty. Eccles used survey research to track the experiences of American teenagers attending Midwestern junior high schools over a two-year period. She discovered that some adolescent troubles are more than hormonal—they are cultural as well.



PRIMARY SOURCE

Jacquelynne Eccles studied 1,500 early adolescents moving from sixth-grade elementary schools to seventh-grade junior high schools. The junior high schools were located in twelve school districts in middle-class Michigan communities. Students filled out questionnaires at school for two consecutive years—in the sixth and seventh grades. This procedure permitted Eccles to document changes the teenagers experienced after the first year of their transition.

The findings were not encouraging. The relationships between students and teachers tended to worsen over the year. At the very time when the young adolescents especially needed supportive relationships outside their homes, personal and positive relationships with teachers were strained by cultural and organizational changes in junior high school. Eccles described the situation this way:

“We believe that there are developmentally inappropriate changes in a cluster of classroom organizational, instructional, and climate variables, including task structure, task complexity, grouping practices, evaluation techniques, motivational strategies, locus of responsibility for learning, and quality of teacher-student and student-student relationships. We suggest that these changes contribute to the negative change in students’ motivation and achievement-related beliefs assumed to coincide with the transition into junior high school.”

These changes come just when young adolescents are most insecure about their status relative to their peers. As a result, student motivation and self-confidence declined. Eccles concluded that junior high school culture denies adolescents the emotionally supportive environment they need for proper social development.

Eccles’s news was no better on the home front. Changes in the family paralleled those of the school system. Parental control over teenagers went up during the year, often to excessive levels. At the same time, school motivation and self-esteem of the junior high students went down. Eccles noted:

“Adolescents’ relationships with their parents also undergo a stressful period during early and middle adolescence. This stress is often focused on issues of control and autonomy within the family, which are renegotiated during this developmental period. By necessity, children’s relationships with their parents are asymmetrical in terms of power and authority; but as children mature, they need to take more and

“We believe that there are developmentally inappropriate changes in a cluster of classroom organizational, instructional, and climate variables . . . that contribute to the negative change in students’ motivation and achievement.”

more responsibility for themselves until they eventually leave their natal home and take full responsibility for their own lives. In the optimal situation, parents will reinforce and stimulate this process of growing autonomy, self-determination, and independence. However, it is likely that the renegotiation processes . . . will not be smooth.”

As a check on these general findings, Eccles compared students in more supportive schools and families with those in less supportive ones. In both the school and the family settings, she found more positive results in supportive environments. Students who were able to participate in school and family decision making showed higher levels of academic motivation and self-esteem than their peers with less opportunity to participate.

The solution to this problem, Eccles concludes, lies in a change in the norms and values of the schools and families. Schools and families need to develop balanced cultural expectations of young adolescents based on their developmental needs. Neither cracking down on them nor giving up control strikes the proper balance. The task is for the family and school to provide “an environment that changes in the right way and at the right pace.”

—from Jacquelynne S. Eccles,
“Development During Adolescence,” 1993

Working With the Research

- 1. Identifying Central Issues** According to Eccles, what in the school environment affects motivation?
- 2. Identifying Cause and Effect** According to Eccles, why are adolescent-parent relationships stressful?
- 3. Making Generalizations** What steps do you think might improve the transition to junior high school?