Types of Age

Chronological Age

This refers to the amount of time in years that someone has been alive. This is used for mainly legal purposes.

Biological Age

This is linked to chronological age, as people for instance experience grey hair later in life. However, it varies a lot when this happens, as some people can be very old and get grey hair while others can be very youing.

Social Age

This is interested in the way that age is seen in society, for instance a 70-year-old is not expected to play with children's toys.

Childhood

In the Past

The definition of a child has varied over time. For example, in the Middle Ages, children were considered "miniature adults" from the age of 7 and were expected to work.
In the 19th century, child labour was the norm among the working class.

In Other Cultures

Many societies consider childhood ending after a specific **rite of passage** rather than an age. This may be an elaborate ritual in some parts of the world.

Adults

Life Expectancy

There are more adults and older people than there used to be. This may be because of:
- Better healthcare
- Better access to healthcare
- Better general health knowledge

In the future, it is expected that there will be many more older people.

Ageism

In Britain, getting old is often seen as being a negative thing, or something to be avoided.

Adolescence

Teenagers

This is a recent development, only becoming recognized as a distinct subculture until the 1950s or so.
This may be due to:
- **Affluence**. With a multitude of jobs and a lot of disposable income, the youth could spend their wages on leisure.
- **New Industries**. New things developed to encourage the youth to spend money, such as pop music, rock and roll and discos.
- **Education**. Compulsory education meant that more young people spent more time with people their own age.

Youth Culture

The development of youth culture into subcultures such as **Mods**, **Rockers**, **Skinheads** and **Punks** led to a generation gap developing.