

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF Ten-Year-Olds

*Ten-year-olds are generally happy and relaxed, enjoying themselves and their peers, parents, even siblings. Proud of all they have accomplished, they like to share their knowledge with others. Tens usually do well with group projects because they tend to be calm and naturally cooperative.*

### S O C I A L

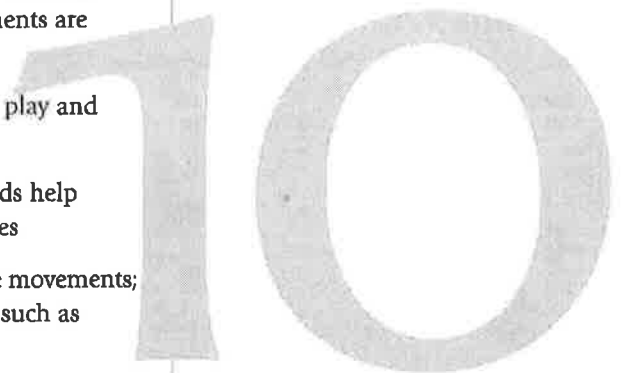
- Good age for clubs, team sports, and whole-class activities
- Eager to reach out to others, such as through community service or tutoring younger children
- Boys and girls work well together
- Quick to anger and quick to forgive
- Competitive but also cooperative
- Listen well but also enjoy talking and explaining
- Enjoy adult recognition

### P H Y S I C A L

- Muscles for jumping, running, and other big movements are developing quickly
- Need lots of outdoor play and physical challenges
- Snacks and rest periods help rapidly growing bodies
- Better at small muscle movements; enjoy precision tasks such as tracing and copying
- Ready to start using tools such as compasses, rulers, and templates

### C O G N I T I V E

- Very good at memorizing facts
- Enjoy collecting, organizing, and classifying
- Like rules and logic; open to learning about scientific principles, governmental structures, and meeting formats
- Can concentrate on reading and thinking for long periods
- Hardworking; take pride in schoolwork
- Enjoy choral reading, poetry, plays, and singing
- Open to learning mediation or problem-solving skills



## CHARACTERISTICS OF ELEVEN-YEAR-OLDS

### Moving Toward Independence

- Enjoy arguing and debating
- Appreciate humor
- Imitate adult language
- Developing new abilities in deductive reasoning, making this a good age for scientific study, mathematical problem-solving, invention, and debate, but hands-on learning is still critical
- Learn well in collaborative groups
- Self-absorbed and interested in imagining themselves in adult roles; this makes history, biography, and current events exciting
- Like “adult” academic tasks such as researching, interviewing, footnoting, and creating a bibliography
- Enjoy board games, intellectual puzzles, brain teasers, and even tests
- Usually challenged rather than defeated by reasonably hard work; need help with time-management and homework skills
- May show interest in and facility for languages, music, or mechanics; need time to explore these areas
- Interested in learning about older and very young people

### Typical Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Behaviors

- Would rather learn new skills than review or improve previous work
- Need lots of time to talk with peers; heavy users of social media
- Impulsive—often talk before thinking
- Often behave best when away from home
- Have trouble making decisions
- Need adult empathy, humor, and sensitivity to help them cope with their rapidly changing minds and bodies
- Desire to test limits and rules is an important developmental milestone, not a personal attack on the teacher
- Class meetings, peer mediation, and cross-age tutoring can be highly effective in resolving issues
- Love the challenge of competition; prefer team sports and getting better at playing as a team
- Teachers can help with inclusion/exclusion issues by changing learning groups to adjust the social mix
- “Saving face” is important; not necessary for the teacher to “win” arguments; giving children private, physical space to think things over helps resolve problems peacefully
- Teacher empathy, a light attitude, and a sense of humor help elevens take themselves less seriously

### Ethics and Self-Direction

- Becoming more adept at abstract thinking—for example, can understand ideas such as “justice”
- With improving reasoning skills, can establish and modify rules and develop hypotheses
- Increasingly able to see the world from various perspectives
- Moody, self-absorbed, and sensitive
- Like to challenge rules, argue, and test limits; may be cruel; sometimes physically aggressive
- Worry more about who’s “in” and who’s “out” than when they were younger

### Managing Physical Changes

- Restless and very energetic
- Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep
- Girls may experience an early adolescent growth spurt and sexual maturation; some boys begin rapidly growing taller
- Motor skills (such as throwing, catching, and kicking) improve rapidly; like to measure their individual best
- “Quiet time” in school day gives needed physical rest, as well as a break from academics and intense social-emotional dynamics



Responsive Classroom®

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TWELVE-YEAR-OLDS

### Moving Toward Independence

- Understand and enjoy double meanings, word play, and more sophisticated jokes
- Enjoy conversation with adults and peers
- Value slang
- Will initiate their own activities without adult prompting
- Leadership qualities abound; need many opportunities for activities such as cross-age tutoring, jobs at school, community service, hosting visitors, and providing child care during parent meetings
- Need access to significant adults, other than teachers and parents, who will listen to them and help them think about serious issues such as drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, and family problems
- Want to make money from jobs at home or in their neighborhood

### Typical Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Behaviors

- Adult personality begins to emerge
- Capable of self-awareness, insight, and empathy; more reasonable and tolerant than at eleven
- Enthusiastic and uninhibited; appear to feel secure
- Care more about peer opinions than those of teachers and parents
- Increasingly able to plan, organize thoughts and work, and set short-term goals, and appreciate the need to do so
- Understand the idea of training and regular exercise to improve physical ability
- More able to think abstractly
- May begin to excel at a subject (such as science) or a skill (such as drawing)
- Can help peers significantly with schoolwork; will make good use of time allowed for peer conferencing, partner projects, etc.
- More able to handle lengthy homework assignments due over longer periods, though these can be problematic if they extend over weekends
- Better integrate their learning when schools use collaborative, cross-disciplinary teaching models

### Ethics and Self-Direction

- Able to see both sides of an argument
- Very interested in civics, history, current events, politics, social justice, and environmental issues, as well as pop culture, the latest cool clothes, etc.
- Find current events, civics, and history highly motivating when tied to issues clearly relevant to their lives
- Appreciate teachers who listen and respond to their suggestions for changes in routines, when realistic
- Both playful and serious—love to play class games but can have a serious discussion a moment later

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### Managing Physical Changes

- Very energetic; need lots of sleep, exercise, and food (including in-school snacks)
- Boys and girls both have growth spurts

