

Gender: analysing examples

You are learning about...	You are learning how to...
Psychological explanations of gender development	Analyse and apply psychological concepts and theories to unfamiliar examples.

Use the theory indicated to analyse the examples. Try to include as many relevant concepts and technical terms as you can.

1. *Social learning theory*

Ben, who is five years old, is watching his older brother Mark playing with his friends. They are playing football. Mark scores a goal and all his friends rush up to congratulate him. Later, his father takes him to the park to play. Ben wants to play football and makes his dad stand in goal.

2. *Psychodynamic theory*

Maria is three years old. She has recently been a bit difficult and has a tendency to act disobediently. This appears especially to be the case when her mother asks her to do things. Sometimes Maria has a real tantrum when this happens. When her mother gets cross with her behaviour she often runs off to find her father and tells him that 'mummy hates me!'

3. *Cognitive theory*

Tina, seven, and her little sister Tara, four, are being taken to the hairdressers to have their hair cut. Tina wants to get her hair cut in the same style as a singer she likes, who has short hair. She shows Tara a picture of the style. Tara says, 'Tina, you'll be a boy!'

4. *Biological theory*

Millie has recently given birth to a baby. At the time of birth it was noted that the baby had atypical (ambiguous) genital development. Millie has asked a doctor whether the baby will need surgery. The doctor replies that surgery at such a young age might have serious consequences for the child's later development and that it would be better to adopt a 'wait and see' approach, possibly considering surgery when it is clear how the child's gender identity has developed.

Get your analyses checked and then have a go at these more challenging exercises...

- For each of the above examples, choose a different explanation of gender development and write an alternative analysis.
- Choose one of the scenarios you have analysed and write some comparisons between the two explanations you have used. You could base your comparisons on the major theoretical debates in psychology, such as nature and nurture, the use of ideographic and nomothetic approaches. You could also consider how the different approaches might investigate the scenario.
- Write a comparative evaluation of the two analyses/explanations. Explain which is the better explanation and why. You could justify your conclusion by considering how plausible the explanation is and the amount and type of supporting evidence for each.