

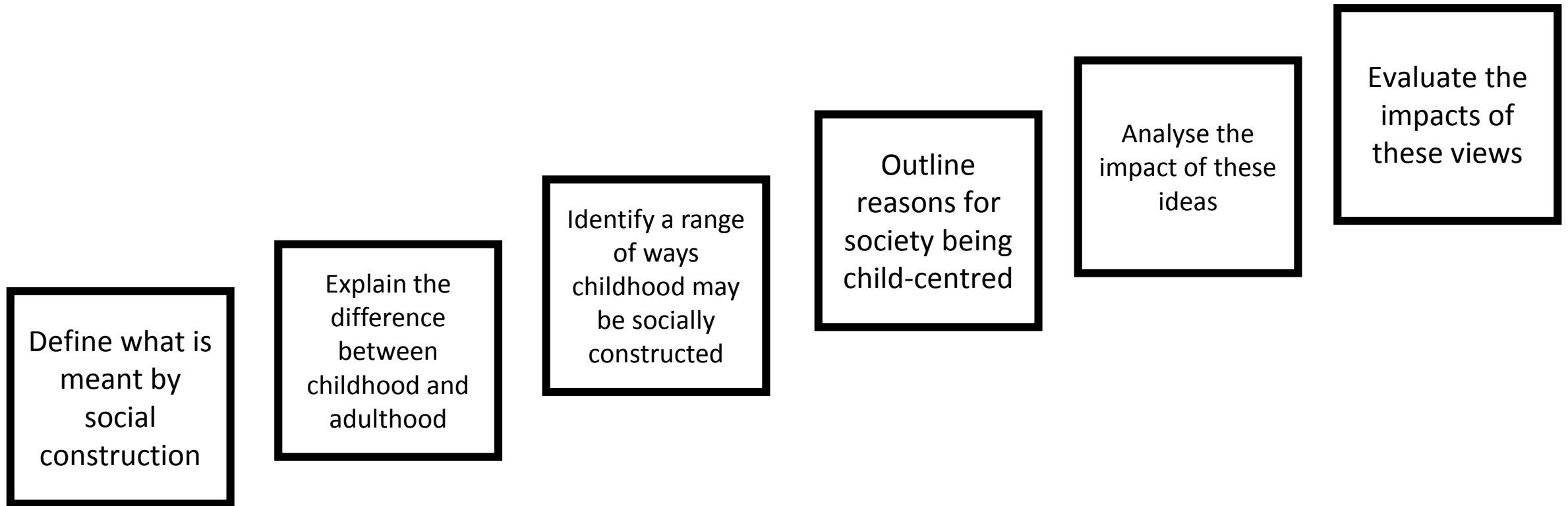
# Families and Household

Paper 2 – Social  
Construction of  
Childhood

# Key Issues

- What is the purpose of the family? What benefits does it provide for society and its members? (Functionalism/Marxism/Feminism/Postmodernism)
- Is the family equal? Are the power relationships between partners equal? Is there a march of progress towards equality?
- **Is childhood socially constructed? Does it vary from society to society? Is childhood disappearing?**
- What changes have there been to the family structure over the past 50 years? Is there such a thing as a typical family?
- How can governments influence family structures? Why would government prefer the nuclear family over others? Can the government influence gender equality?
- How has globalisation influenced the family? What demographic changes have led to changes in our society? What are the benefits and costs of greater migration and ageing populations?

# The Big Question: Evaluate the view that childhood is a social construction (20)



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# Why is childhood socially constructed ?

Define what is meant by social construction

Explain the difference between childhood and adulthood

Social Construction means ...

**Childhood ends when...**

**Adulthood begins when...**

Pilcher (1995): 'Modern Childhood is defined through Separateness'.

It is a clear, distinct life stage separate from adults i.e. in terms of status.

In what ways are children and adults 'separate'?

Wagg (1992):  
*'Childhood is socially constructed. It is in other words, what members of particular societies, at particular times & in particular places, say it is. There is no single universal childhood, experienced by all.'*

Childhood is often viewed as a 'Golden Age', an age of innocence. As such, many societies see childhood as a period of life that requires protection and 'quarantine' from adult life.

Can you think of any evidence of this?



Using research on following pages identify ways in which childhood can be socially constructed

Identify a range of ways childhood may be socially constructed

Factor	Examples
Gender	
Culture	
Era of History	
Social Class	

Outline  
reasons for  
society being  
child-centred



Explain how these ideas lead to a more child-centred society

Analyse the impact of these ideas

Changes in Law	Compulsory Education	Smaller Families	Decrease in Infant Mortality	Consumerism	Welfare State





Is childhood the same across all cultures?



Do all children have the same experiences?



In the UK 4.1 Million children live in poverty. What does this say about the claim society is child-centred?

Evaluate the impacts of these views



From your studies of education, what can we say about cultural and material differences of students?