According to the article, how has “the fundamental nature of American childhood” changed in the last generation? What factors have led the shift from “outdoor” to “indoor” childhoods? How do children’s bodies reflect the change? How have their brains been affected by this social and cultural transformation?

How were boundaries for kids once measured? How are they defined now? Why do many parents fear the outdoors? In your opinion, are their concerns justified? Why or why not? How has children’s play changed in the past few decades?

What effect have new technologies, television, video games and the media had on modern lifestyles — including how people raise families and the experiences children have growing up? Is one way of growing up “better” than the other? Explain, citing specific examples to support your point of view.
Britons give Blair mixed reviews, 8A

STANDARD: Language arts: Developing research skills
DISCUSSION: How does Briton Janet Lewis feel about Tony Blair’s performance as prime minister? How could the recent bombings in London affect Blair’s standing? What political battles has he won recently? Why do citizens tend to rally around their leaders during times of crisis? Do you think Britons or Americans have a more favorable opinion of the war in Iraq? Why is this?

ACTIVITY: When running a story about a public figure, USA TODAY will sometimes list pertinent facts about the person in a “bio box.” Through research, find out the following information about Tony Blair: age, current position, affiliation, profession, education, philosophy, career zenith and career nadir. Then, on a computer, create a professional-looking bio box about him. Use a quote from Blair as the title of the graphic.

Detroit’s hybrid false start, 1-2B

STANDARD: Marketing: Consumers and their behavior
DISCUSSION: Why are American automakers having a difficult time marketing their hybrid vehicles? What miscalculations did auto executives make in the planning and selling of hybrids? What “tricky problems” do hybrids represent to car manufacturers? Why do you think hybrids have been more popular with autobuyers than expected? Why are hybrids both good for business and an automaker’s image?

ACTIVITY: Like many people in business, auto engineers and other executives must anticipate what products consumers will want and buy. This means they have to develop products that are both appealing and affordable. (If hybrid vehicles cost $50,000, for example, it’s doubtful they would be as popular with autobuyers.) Develop an idea for a new feature that would impact an auto’s fuel efficiency or significantly improve it in another way. Explain why consumers would be motivated to buy a vehicle with this new innovation.
This Day In History

July 12

- In 100 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was born.

- In 1543, England’s King Henry VIII married his sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr.

- In 1690, Protestant forces led by William of Orange defeated the Roman Catholic army of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland.

- In 1817, naturalist-author Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Mass.

- In 1984, Democratic presidential candidate Walter F. Mondale announced he'd chosen U.S. Rep. Geraldine A. Ferraro of New York to be his running-mate; Ferraro was the first woman to run for vice president on a major-party ticket.

- In 2004, President Bush defended the Iraq war during a visit to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, saying the invasion had made America safer.


Walden is Henry David Thoreau's account of the two years he spent living alone in the woods of Massachusetts. In a section that questions people's acceptance of “the common mode of living,” Thoreau muses, “It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof.” What does Thoreau mean by “prejudices”? What is the common way of life nowadays? Do you accept it without question? Could you choose to live differently? If so, how?
Community & Family  EXTRA CREDIT!

Young viewers are tuning in to adult ‘toons, Life, 3D

What audience does the animated show The Family Guy target? Why are so many young children watching the program? Should they be?

David Goodman, executive producer of The Family Guy, says, “Watching television is a choice, not a right.” What point is he trying to make? In your opinion, is it a parent’s or a TV producer’s job to make sure that kids watch age-appropriate programs?

Nicktoons’ Keith Dawkins says that “Kids are definitely more sophisticated these days.” Do you agree? If so, does this mean that young people are better prepared to handle TV intended for adults? Ask your parents for their opinions.

USA TODAY Snapshots®

Why having asthma is hard

About 7 million children (9.2%) in the USA have asthma. What families with children ages 10-15 say is the worst thing:

Parents say:
- Inability to breathe
- Restrictions on activities
- Inability to play sports

Kids say:
- Restrictions on activities
- Inability to play sports
- Inability to run

APPLICATIONS: cause & effect, knowledge

What are the physical effects of asthma? What kind of emotional toll do you think asthma takes on young sufferers?

More than 20 million Americans have asthma, a condition characterized by a temporary narrowing of the passages that transport air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. In short, asthma can make it very difficult to breathe.

Although asthma is a genetic disease (a condition passed from parents to children through genes), many factors can trigger its onset, including pollutants, dust and allergens. Other irritants such as cigarette smoke, perfume and sprays can exacerbate asthma as well. Factors such as weather and exercise also influence the condition’s severity.

Through research, identify 10-20 specific asthma triggers. To what degree are environmental pollutants and other toxins responsible for the rise in the number of cases of asthma today? Why should we be concerned about the quality of the air we breathe?

*Source: The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Get an Acrobat PDF version of “Experience USA Today” at our Web site: http://education.usatoday.com — click on “Daily Lesson Plan.”

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Quick Quiz

1. What is the most popular television show with children? (News, 1-2A)
   a.) American Idol  b.) Blue’s Clues  c.) Sesame Street  d.) Survivor  e.) The Simpsons

2. Which of the following is not the name of a hybrid vehicle? (Money, 1-2B)
   a.) Ford Escape  b.) Honda Civic  c.) Mercury Mariner  d.) Nissan Altima  e.) Toyota Prius

3. Where is baseball’s All-Star game taking place? (Life, 7D)
   a.) Boston  b.) Chicago  c.) Detroit  d.) Houston  e.) San Francisco

4. Which city has won the honor of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympics? (News, 8A)
   a.) London  b.) Moscow  c.) New York City  d.) Paris  e.) Madrid

5. The ______________ monitors television programs for violations of obscenity guidelines. (Life, 3D)
   a.) Federal Trade Commission  b.) Department of Justice  c.) Government Accountability Office  d.) Federal Communications Commission  e.) Administration for Children and Families

Answers: 1.) a  2.) d  3.) c  4.) a  5.) d