

The Three-Mountain Task is an exercise developed by Jean Piaget to test mind development in children. The test determines the level of egocentrism in a child. Egocentrism means that a child only sees the way he/she sees and thinks everyone else has the same perspective as they do. It is helpful to understand this so that we avoid the assumption that a child is selfish when really in hindsight, they have not yet developed the ability to see another person's perspective.

The Three-Mountain Task is a three-dimensional mountain model. The child sits on side of a table while an adult sits on the other. The child is asked what does the adult on the other side see? On the table several choices of pictures showing different positions of these mountains are given. If the child chooses the picture that shows his perspective, we know that he/she thinks the adult sees this too and they have not yet developed the skill. Put that same child a few years later through the same test and most likely they will choose the picture that diagrams the adult's perspective.