



Developmental Stages of a Middle Grade Protagonist ages 8-13

	Description	Examples from MG Fiction
Intellectual Development	<p>Early in this stage, kids struggle to use logical reasoning unless they can see the concrete results. This shifts to a greater ability to think logically about the future, or other abstract ideas. They learn how to plan ahead. They actively engage in tasks that can be carried through to the end. They become much more articulate, and improve in language and math skills. They can also hold adult conversations.</p>	<p>“Who could I tell about Darryl Peeps? It would have to be somebody who could get Reggie Ratner’s attention, somebody with enough authority to convince him to give up his dangerous plan and to come down off his tower... Mr. Toomey? No. Mrs. Young? No. Somebody else. Anybody else!! Then it hit me: There was nobody else. Because nobody else had seen what I had seen, and nobody else was Chris Newman’s younger brother, and nobody else could deliver the news that might make Reggie Ratner reconsider his jump.” <i>Captain Nobody</i> by Dean Pitchford</p>
Social Development	<p>As this stage progresses, kids show more and more independence from their parents and family. They give more attention to friendships and teamwork. They develop a growing desire to be liked and accepted by friends. They even allow themselves to be led by their peers, with a desire to be accepted by them. They also have a stronger sense of right and wrong, and sometimes an extreme sense of fairness.</p>	<p>“Friends?!” He started laughing so hard that he began to choke on his sandwich... “What a difference a year makes!” Cavanaugh snorted, catching his breath. “Last fall you were the hero, king of Bedford. Now you’re clown prince of the geeks!” I saw red. “Listen Steve...These guys have more character in their little fingers than all you Giants will ever have in your whole bodies!...If the football team put in one-sixteenth the effort the drama club is putting into <i>Old Shep, My Pal</i>, then maybe you wouldn’t be in last place!” <i>No More Dead Dogs</i> by Gordon Korman</p>
Emotional Development	<p>Kids at this stage need achievement. If they feel they can’t measure up to standards set by others, they may develop a sense of inferiority or inadequacy. Their emotional health is developing as they watch and talk with each other. They have a greater ability to talk about thoughts and feelings, although they may need help to express their feelings in appropriate ways. They are learning to give support to others in times of stress, and they begin to see things from another child’s point of view. This is the stage where kids develop increasing empathy and loyalty.</p>	<p>“What thing led to another thing?” said Flora. “What irrevocable acts occurred?” “It’s complicated,” said William Spiver. “I don’t want to talk about it right now. But as long as we are asking each other questions of an emotionally fraught nature, why did you say that your mother wanted a lamp for a daughter?” “It’s complicated,” said Flora. “I’m certain that it is. And I empathize.” <i>Flora & Ulysses</i> by Kate DiCamillo</p>