

Lesson Plan: The Seven-Year Cycles - Mapping Your Developmental Biography

Materials Needed:

- Notebook or Journal (The "Biography Book")
- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard/digital document
- Colored markers or pens (at least 3 different colors)
- Timeline materials (ruler, string, sticky notes or index cards)
- Access to notes on the Australian Steiner curriculum framework (optional reference)

Learning Objectives (The Goal):

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. **Identify** the three major seven-year developmental cycles (Septennials) according to the Steiner framework (0-7, 7-14, 14-21).
2. **Describe** the core developmental quality (Will, Feeling, Thought) associated with the first two septennials.
3. **Analyze** how key personal biographical events align with the characteristic developmental tasks of those cycles.

Success Criteria (How you know you succeeded):

- You have accurately labeled the three Septennials on your timeline.
- You can articulate the difference between the 'Will phase' and the 'Feeling phase.'
- You complete the biographical reflection piece connecting your past experiences to the framework.

Introduction: The Mystery of the Past Self (10 Minutes)

Hook (Attention Grabber)

Educator Prompt: Imagine you could sit down and have a five-minute conversation with yourself when you were seven years old. What was important to that person? What problems did they worry about? How different are they from the 14-year-old version of you sitting here today?

(Allow 2 minutes for silent reflection or quick note-taking.)

Context Setting: The Architect of Self

In many approaches to human development, especially the Steiner approach, life is viewed not just as a continuous line, but as a series of distinct phases, or 'chapters.' As someone turning 14, you are standing directly on the threshold of the most important transition: the move from childhood feeling into conscious, independent thought. To master the stage you are entering, we first need to look back and understand the building blocks that got you here.

Stating Objectives

Today, we will map out these key developmental cycles, explore their unique qualities, and use this map to understand your own story so far.

Body: Mapping the Septennials (The 7-Year Chapters)

Part 1: I DO - Modeling the Framework (15 Minutes)

Topic: The Three Great Cycles

The Steiner approach views development in cycles of approximately seven years, called Septennials. Each cycle is dominated by a major human faculty:

1. Cycle 1: The Epoch of Will (Ages 0-7)

- **Core Task:** Physical incarnation and mastery of the body (walking, talking, thinking).
- **Key Quality:** Imitation. The child learns through deeply absorbing and mimicking the surrounding environment. Their consciousness is dreamy and deeply connected to the external world.
- **Transition Marker:** Loss of baby teeth; readiness for formal schooling.

2. Cycle 2: The Epoch of Feeling (Ages 7-14)

- **Core Task:** Development of the feeling life (the heart) and inner memory.
- **Key Quality:** Imagination and Authority. The child needs rhythm, beauty, and moral guidelines presented through stories, myth, and biography. The connection is rooted in love and respect for the teacher/parental figures.
- **Transition Marker:** Puberty, the capacity for abstract thought, and the birth of critical judgment.

3. Cycle 3: The Epoch of Thought (Ages 14-21)

- **Core Task:** Awakening of the intellect and the development of the moral compass.
- **Key Quality:** Judgment and Truth. The young person begins to question the world and actively seeks to find their own truth and place in society.

Part 2: WE DO - Creating the Biographical Timeline (30 Minutes)

Activity: My Developmental Timeline

Instructions: Use your large paper or digital canvas to create a physical timeline spanning from your birth (Age 0) to Age 14 (now). Divide the timeline clearly into the two completed Septennials (0-7 and 7-14).

1. **Labeling (Ages 0-7):** Label this section "The Will & Imitation Phase." Use one color marker (e.g., Red).
2. **Labeling (Ages 7-14):** Label this section "The Feeling & Imagination Phase." Use a second color marker (e.g., Blue).
3. **Mapping Personal Milestones:** On the timeline, mark at least three significant memories or events for each phase. Think about how those events reflect the core quality of that phase.
 - *Example (0-7):* Learning to ride a bike (mastery of body/will).
 - *Example (7-14):* Developing a strong passion for a specific sport or hobby, or having a complex fight with a best friend (development of inner feeling life).

Formative Assessment Check: Educator checks H's placement of milestones and asks: "Do the events you marked in the 0-7 cycle reflect the development of physical ability or imitation more than complex reasoning?" (Ensuring understanding of the core quality).

Part 3: YOU DO - Biographical Reflection (25 Minutes)

Activity: The Letter to the Self (Connecting Past and Present)

Now that you have mapped out your development, you will integrate this understanding into a written piece. This exercise aligns with the biographical work central to the 14-year-old curriculum.

Task: Write a letter to your 7-year-old self from the perspective of your 14-year-old self.

Specific Prompts to Address in the Letter:

- Acknowledge the core focus of their life (Will/Imitation). What lessons did they learn by simply doing and being?
- Describe the transition that happened around age 7 (losing teeth, starting to think about things abstractly).
- Explain what is important now (at age 14) – the development of judgment, critical thinking, and finding personal truths. How are these different from the world of feeling and imagination they just left behind?
- Offer guidance or comfort regarding the big changes that are coming (the movement into the 3rd Septennium: the struggle for independence and the desire for truth).

Differentiation:

- **Scaffolding:** If writing a letter feels difficult, H can instead create a visual collage or mood board representing the three phases, using symbols to represent Will, Feeling, and Thought.
- **Extension:** Research and incorporate specific artistic or academic subjects emphasized in the Steiner curriculum during the 14-21 phase (e.g., Analytical Geometry, study of world revolutions, Chemistry/Physics based on observation) and explain why these subjects are fitting for the newly awakened intellect.

Conclusion: What Lies Ahead (10 Minutes)

Recap and Synthesis

Educator Prompt: Let's review. If a little child only needs to learn through imitation and physical doing, and a middle-aged child needs their imagination nurtured, what do you think is the single biggest need of a 14-year-old entering the third cycle?

(Expected answer: Truth, authenticity, independent thought, finding their own judgment.)

Summative Assessment & Reflection

Share one key insight you gained about yourself or your past development by applying the seven-year framework. Did anything surprising align perfectly with the Steiner model?

The Takeaway: Understanding these cycles helps you realize that your internal struggles and interests

at 14 are not random; they are necessary developmental steps. You have moved from a life primarily governed by Will, through a phase governed by Feeling, and now you are tasked with governing your life through conscious Thought.