

age¹
/eidʒ/

S1 W1

noun

1 | how old HOW OLD[uncountable and countable] AGE the number of years someone has lived or something has existed → **old**:

Francis is the same age as me.

Experts disagree over the age of the drawings.

*Dad retired **at the age of** 56.*

at age 5/18 etc

In Britain, schooling starts at age 5.

4/15 etc years of age (= 4, 15 etc years old)

She was just over 16 years of age.

at my/your etc age (= when you are as old as me etc)

At my age, it's quite difficult getting up the stairs.

over/under the age of 5/18 etc

people over the age of 65

for his/her etc age (= compared with other people of the same age)

She's tall for her age, isn't she?

In everyday English, people usually use the expression **how old ...?** rather than using the noun **age**:

What age is your brother?

→ **How old** is your brother?

They asked me my age.

→ They asked me **how old** I was.

2 | legal age LEGAL AGE[uncountable] the age when you are legally old enough to do something:

What's the minimum age for getting a driver's license?

*You're not allowed to buy alcohol. You're **under age** (= too young by law) .*

The normal retirement age is 65.

3 | period of life PERIOD OF LIFE[uncountable and countable] PERIOD OF TIME one of the particular periods of someone's life:

When you get to old age, everything seems to take longer.

The early teens are often a difficult age.

4 | being old BEING OLD[uncountable] OLD-FASHIONED OLD/NOT NEW the state of being old → **youth:**

with age

High blood pressure increases with age.

*Some of the furniture was **showing signs of age**.*

5 | period of history PERIOD OF HISTORY[countable usually singular] PERIOD OF TIME a particular period of history

SYN era

We are living in the age of technology.

Molecular biology is pushing medicine into a new age.

→ **in this day and age** AT DAY (6)

6 | ages [plural] (*also an age*) LONG TIME (*especially BrE*) (informal) a long time:

*Simon! I haven't seen you **for ages**.*

*That recipe **takes ages**.*

it's ages since/before/until etc something

It's ages since we've played that game.

7 | come of age
a)

to reach the age when you are legally considered to be a responsible adult

b) IMPORTANT

if something comes of age, it reaches a stage of development at which people accept it as being important, valuable etc:

During this period the movies really came of age as an art form.

→ NEW AGE¹,

NEW AGE²

COLLOCATIONS – Meanings 1, 2 & 3

ADJECTIVES/NOUN + age

old age (= the time when you are old) *the problems of old age*

middle age (= between about 40 and 60) *He was in late middle age.*

a great/ advanced age (= a very old age) *My aunt died at a great age. |*

Kirby is not alone in wanting to run his own business at an advanced age.

a difficult/ awkward age (= used mainly about the time when people are teenagers) *13 – 16 is often a difficult age.*

retirement age *The risk of experiencing poverty is much greater for those over retirement age.*

school age *Children should start doing homework as they approach high school age.*

school-leaving age (**BrE**) *The government is proposing to raise the minimum school-leaving age.*

the legal age *In the US, the legal age for drinking alcohol is 21.*

the minimum age *16 years is the minimum age to drive a car.*

the voting age *plans to bring down the voting age from 18 to 16*

the marrying age *She was 28 – long past the usual marrying age.*

phrases

from an early/ young age *She'd been playing the piano from a very early age.*

at an early/ young age *Kids can start learning a second language at a young age.*

somebody (of) your own age *He needs to find people his own age.*

of childbearing age (= at the age when a woman can have children) *It is against the law to refuse to employ a woman of childbearing age because she may become pregnant.*

of working age *55 percent of the people are of working age.*

the age of consent (= when you are legally allowed to marry or have sex) *At 15, the girl was under the age of consent.*

age + NOUN

an age group/ bracket/ range *Men in the 50–65 age group are most at risk from heart disease. |*

The school takes in children from the seven to eleven age range.

an age limit *There's no upper age limit for drivers.*

age discrimination *laws against age discrimination in the workplace*

verbs

get to/ reach/ live to a particular age *One in three children die before they reach the age of 5. |*

The number of people living to to the age of 80 has doubled in the last fifty years.

lower/ raise the age (= at which something can be done) *The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18.*

look/ feel your age (= look or feel as old as you really are) *The singer is 46, but she doesn't look her age at all. |*

I keep getting aches in my legs and I'm starting to feel my age.

act your age (= behave in the way that a person of your age should behave) *It's time he started acting his age.*

ask/ say your age (= ask or say how old you are) *It's rude to ask a woman her age.*

COLLOCATIONS – Meaning 5

the Ice Age (= one of the long periods of time, thousands of years ago, when ice covered many northern countries)

the Stone Age (= the very early time in human history, when only stone was used for making tools, weapons etc)

the Bronze Age (= the period of time, between about 6,000 and 4,000 years ago, when bronze was used for making tools, weapons etc)

the Iron Age (= the period of time, about 3,000 years ago, when iron was first used for making tools, weapons etc)

the Middle Ages (= the period in European history between about 1100 and 1500 AD)

the Dark Ages (= the period in European history from 476 AD to about 1000 AD)

the Elizabethan age (= the period 1558–1603 when Elizabeth I was queen of England)

the Victorian age (= the period 1837–1901 when Victoria was Queen of England)

the industrial age (= the time during the late 18th and early 19th centuries when goods or substances such as coal and steel were first produced in large quantities using machines)

the modern age (= from the 20th century until the present) *the technical and scientific achievements that ushered in the modern age*

the space age (= since vehicles were able to travel in space)

the nuclear age (= since nuclear energy was used for weapons or energy)

the computer age (= since computers became widely used) *the modern computer age*

the information age (= since the Internet has become widely used) *Business has had to evolve in the information age.*

a golden age (= a time of great happiness or success) *a television show from the golden age of British comedy*

a new age (= a time when things are better than they were in the past) *Supporters see the coming season as the dawning of a new age for the club.*

Word origin

Date: 1200–1300

Language: Old French

Origin: *age*, from Vulgar Latin *aetaticum*, from Latin *aetas*, from *aevum* 'lifetime, age'

age²

verb

(*present participle* **aging** or **ageing**)

- 1** [intransitive and transitive] OLD/NOT NEW to start looking older or to make someone or something look older:

He was worried to see how much she'd aged.

The experience had aged him in advance of his years.

- 2** [intransitive] OLD/NOT NEW to become older:

The buildings are ageing, and some are unsafe.

- 3** [intransitive and transitive] IMPROVE to improve and develop in taste over a period of time, or to allow food or alcohol to do this

SYN mature

Cheddar cheese ages well.

The whisky is aged for at least ten years.