


Puberty - What is it?

An Introductory Lesson to Successful Body Talk

Overview

Setting your classroom up for success when talking about bodies is tricky. Here are some tips and frameworks to get that conversation started and to act as a grounding activity to get everyone on track for productive and respectful conversations.

 **Suggested grade level** Grade 4/5 with adaptation suggestion for grade 6/7.

Big Ideas

- Developing healthy relationships helps us feel connected, supported, and valued. (Physical and Health Education Grades 4-5)
- Understanding ourselves and the various aspects of health helps us develop a balanced lifestyle. (Physical and Health Education Grades 4-5)
- Personal choices and social and emotional factors influence our health and well-being. (Physical and Health Education Grades 4-5)

Key Concepts

- Puberty is a time in our lives where lots of different changes will happen, but they will happen differently for everyone.
- Puberty and changing bodies can be a contributing factor to how children are feeling about their bodies.
- An all-bodies approach is person-centered. It maintains that every body deserves love and respect. This human rights-based framework aims to create a safe and inclusive environment that supports physical and mental health.
- Learning about puberty from a young age will empower kids with this information as they navigate new and exciting times in their development.

Curricular Connections

Core Competencies

- **Communication** - Communicating, Collaborating
- **Thinking** - Creative Thinking, Critical and Reflective Thinking
- **Personal and Social** - Personal Awareness and Responsibility, Positive Personal and Cultural Identity, Social Awareness and Responsibility

First Peoples Principles of Learning

- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Social Emotional Learning

- Self-awareness
- Self-management

Curriculum Learning Standards

- Physical and Health Education Curricular Competencies
 - Describe and apply strategies that promote a safe and caring environment (Grades 4-5)
 - Explore and describe strategies for managing physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty (Grades 4-5)
- Physical and Health Education Content
 - Physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty (Grades 4-6)



Lesson Outline

Guidelines for creating an environment that is inclusive and trauma-informed to talk about this topic: It is helpful to approach this with a neutral tone to normalize the topic. Additional guidelines can be found.

[Guidelines PDF](#)

🕒 Time

30 Minutes

📋 Materials

1. Activity Sheet: Puberty - What is it?
2. Pencil

Opening

Sample script to start the lesson - consider including these points/script to frame the discussion:

- Demystify the word. Let kids know that "We are going to be discussing: Puberty" (you'll get audible groans), so it's best to approach it first by saying what it is NOT. Puberty is not scary, it is not ugly or smelly, it isn't contagious, it's actually Science!
- Puberty is a very long and slow process that happens from about grade 2 or 3 (You can't even notice or feel it - it actually starts in your bones and brain).
- And it is so long and so slow that it is going to go all the way to high school, and for some people even past high school. So, you're all in puberty right now!
- Most of the time we don't even know that it is happening. It's that slow. **It's the process of your kid body and brain becoming an adult body and brain.** And it happens to ALL bodies, and the tricky part is, it happens to all bodies at a different time and a different rate for everyone.
- We all grow up, and don't worry, growing up is awesome! And it's okay to feel unsure about it too. It's important that we understand what some of these changes are so we can care for our bodies as they grow.

Activity

- Hand out the Activity Sheet: Puberty - What is it?
- Have students (individually) circle ALL of the changes that they think happen to ALL bodies as they go through puberty.
- Give them 5-10 minutes to do so, and then regroup for discussion.

Discussion

- Discussion points: What do you notice about these changes? Are there more that all bodies DO or more that all bodies DON'T have in common with one another? Were there any that stood out for you? Go through the trickier ones together and get some opinions. Do all bodies get cranky? Forget their homework? Yell at their parents? You can of course tweak these for your audience.

Closure

- What do students notice about changing bodies? Why would students in the same grade have different opinions on this? The idea is to get them to realize that we have more in common than we do apart. We're all in the same boat!
- Invite students to complete one of the exit slips found on beingmebeingus.ca

Additional Information

Learning extensions

- Watch this [Every Body Curious Video](#) to supplement the lesson or to kick off the next lesson
- "We're all in the same boat activity"
 - Divide students up into groups of 4, (preferably students who don't usually work together) Give each student a large chart paper and some big felt pens.
 - Have students draw a large canoe/boat in the middle of the paper with 4 sails or paddles coming off of it.
 - Have them write in the boat 4 things that ALL of them have in common (e.g. We all like playing soccer).
 - In each sail/paddle, they write one thing that is unique to them (e.g. I live with my auntie).
 - Regroup and discuss: what was easier to find – what you do or what you don't have in common? What did we learn from one another? What types of questions did we need to ask each other?

Adaptations for grades 6/7

- Try out the activity in the learning extension section or select a different video, such as something from [Amaze.org](#).

Resources

- Pair this with the [Beyond Images "Confront Comparisons"](#) exercise/resources
- Resources by [Saleema Noon](#), and [Meg Hickling](#)
- Being Me, Being Us: Creating a school community where every body belongs

Visit website at beingmebeingus.ca

Further discussion

- Now that the class has been introduced to bodies, we can talk about other aspects of puberty: Changing emotions, friendship conflicts, reproductive parts and their appropriate science names, and more.
- Option to call in an expert (such as inviting [Saleema Noon](#), [The Whole Shebang](#), [Sex Educator Alysha](#) - More than the Talk, or [Options](#) to do a follow-up session).
- Consider coordinating with another teacher at your school. Sometimes it lands differently when students are mixed with another class, with a different teacher, or even just in a different space.
- Consider setting up an anonymous question box so that you can gauge where the students are at, and let it guide your next lesson. If you are new to this, do not answer those questions without further research/information.



Connect to Support

If you or a student is looking for emotional support or more resources on this topic, visit [NEDIC.ca](https://nedic.ca). It connects you to a confidential telephone helpline or live chat.

Contributing author from the [Saleema Noon Educator Team](#).
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Puberty - What is it? An Introductory Lesson to Successful Body Talk Activity Sheet

Name

Date

Circle ALL of the changes you think will happen to ALL bodies as they go through puberty.

All Bodies...

Have voice changes

Get periods

Get body odour

Grow hair

Grow taller

Experience wet dreams

Grow a bigger chest

Grow a bigger penis

Feel big emotions

Have mood swings

Grow facial hair

Gain weight

Get acne (pimples/zits)

Sleep in until 1pm

Have erections

Feel hungrier

Need more sleep

Get bigger feet

Have babies

Forget their homework

Use tampons