

GRADE 6

CHANGES IN ADOLESCENCE & PUBERTY

In this lesson, the teacher and students will work collaboratively to set guidelines for learning about and discussing sensitive subjects. Students brainstorm changes and things that stay the same during puberty. Teacher shares with students about emotional and physical changes that occur during puberty. Students play a true or false game to practice the new learning. Students participate in a class discussion about things they are looking forward to about growing up. Homework includes a writing exercise where students respond to questions as an advice column and discuss puberty with a trusted adult.

TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

- Describe the physical, social, cognitive, emotional changes of adolescence.
- Identify medically accurate sources of information about adolescent development.
- Develop a decision-making model and evaluate outcomes.

TEACHER NOTES

Using Gender Inclusive Language

Consider discussing puberty with terms such as “can,” “may,” or “might” to avoid excluding certain students such as those who are intersex, transgender, or gender non-conforming (e.g. “People with a penis may also grow hair on their face” or “Some people with a vagina may also develop breasts”). It may be helpful to explain to students that being a boy, a girl, or in-between is mostly about how someone feels, not their body parts.

When talking about sexual feelings, it also helps to not be specific about the gender that people might be attracted to. This lets you include anyone who could be or become attracted to boys, girls, non-binary genders, or more than one of these. In order to include youth who may grow up to be asexual (someone who does not experience sexual attraction) or aromantic (someone who does not experience romantic attraction or crushes) it’s also good to use “can,” “may,” or “might” when you talk about people developing romantic and/or sexual feelings.

TEACHER NOTES: CREATING A SAFE SPACE

- Estimated Time: 5 minutes
- Activate Prior Knowledge/Engage
 1. Begin lesson by establishing ground rules conducive towards a “safer” space.
 2. Due to the sensitive nature of these topics, remind students to avoid speaking about experiences of their fellow classmates.
 3. Let students suggest rules or limits of their own for the class to be mindful of throughout the discussion.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

What are some ground rules we can agree upon to make this a safe space to talk about a sensitive topic?

TEACHER NOTES: BRAINSTORM

- Estimated Time: 10 minutes
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Mixed-Ability Partners

1. Start the lesson with a brainstorm activity. Ask the students to break into groups of two or three people. Within their group, have the students come up with a list of things that change during puberty and things that stay the same. This introductory activity can help the teacher gauge what the students already know and dispel any myths they may believe.

GROUP BRAINSTORM

Make a list of things that...

- *Change* during puberty
- *Stay the same* during puberty

TEACHER NOTES: WHAT DOES PUBERTY MEAN?

- Estimated Time: 10 minutes
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Mixed-Ability Partners

2. Ask the students, “What does puberty mean?” Write some of the responses on the board. Create a definition the class agrees on, or give them one similar to this: “Puberty is when our bodies change to adult bodies.”

WHAT DOES PUBERTY MEAN?

Puberty is when our bodies change into adult bodies.

TEACHER NOTES: WHAT DOES PUBERTY MEAN? (CONT.)

3. Explain that our bodies experience many changes during puberty, both physically and emotionally. Some of the physical changes that students may notice include:
 - Hair growth in places like our legs, armpits, genitals (pubic hair) and for some people, the face
 - More active oil glands, which can lead to oily hair and oily faces (acne)
 - More active sweat glands, which can lead to body odour
 - Growth spurts
 - Growth of the penis, testicles and breasts
 - Wider hips and shoulders
 - Nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)
 - More frequent erections (these are very common when waking up, sometimes called morning wood)
 - Vaginal discharge (clear or whitish liquid that comes out of the vagina)
 - Menstruation

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Growth spurts

Active oil glands

Hair growth

Wider shoulders

Menstruation

Wider hips

Active sweat glands

TEACHER NOTES: WHAT DOES PUBERTY MEAN? (CONT.)

4. Next describe the types of changes that can occur to our emotions, including:
 - Mood swings
 - May become interested in romantic partnerships or develop crushes
 - Might begin to have sexual feelings
 - May want more independence and privacy
5. Tell students that these changes are caused by hormonal changes in the body. Everyone has hormones called *testosterone*, *estrogen*, and *progesterone*. Most of the time, but not always, boys will begin to produce more testosterone and girls will begin to produce more estrogen during puberty. These hormonal changes are what cause the other changes we experience.

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Mood swings

Romantic interests

Sexual feelings

Want independence

Want privacy

HORMONES

- Testosterone
- Estrogen
- Progesterone

TEACHER NOTES:VIDEO- ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT – THE ART OF GROWING UP

- Estimated Time: 5 minutes
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Turn on Closed-Captioning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BJFoGK5GIY&feature=youtu.be>

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT – THE ART OF GROWING UP



TEACHER NOTES: TRUE OF FALSE GAME

- Estimated Time: 10 minutes
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Mixed-Ability Partners

6. Next, to review the information, play a short True or False game with the class (see True or False Handout).

TRUE OR FALSE

1. If all of my friends have started puberty except me, I'm way behind. **True False**
2. I will start to notice more hair grow in places like my genitals and armpits. **True False**
3. Only boys can have wet dreams. **True False**
4. It is normal to begin to have crushes or romantic feelings during puberty. **True False**
5. Puberty is caused by hormonal changes in the body.
True False
6. Everyone goes through puberty at the same speed.
True False

TEACHER NOTES: TRUE OR FALSE GAME (CONT.)

7. Remind the students that puberty is something that almost everyone experiences, so they are not alone. Also remind that students that everyone is different, so everyone will experience puberty differently. Because of these changes, students need to take extra care with bathing and keeping themselves clean.
8. Discuss some strategies that can help the students cope with the changes they experience during puberty. Ask them what they do if they have bruises or muscle aches and connect these to growing pains and menstrual cramps. Offer examples like asking for painkillers, lying down, stretches, and exercise. Ask the students to describe activities they do to calm down or feel happier. Offer examples such as writing in a journal, taking a walk, drawing, talking with a trusted friend or parent, etc...

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!!!

HOW TO COPE

TEACHER NOTES: CONCLUSION

- Estimated Time: 5 minutes
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Mixed-Ability Partners

To end the lesson, ask the students to brainstorm things they are looking forward to about growing up (e.g. driving a car, having more freedom, staying up later, dating, etc.). Have the students write their responses on the board. Remind the students that experiencing puberty is one of the first steps towards becoming an adult.

**WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU ARE
LOOKING FORWARD TO ABOUT
GROWING UP?**

Write – Pair – Share

TEACHER NOTES:ADVICE COLUMN

- Estimated Time: Sponge
- ELL & SpEd Strategy: Mixed-Ability Partners

1) Have the students pretend that they are an advice columnist and “give advice” to those with questions about puberty (see Advice Column Handout). Ask the students to write short paragraph responses that provide accurate information.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Advice Column

Pretend you are an advice columnist for a newspaper. Use the information you learned in class to give answers to the following questions about puberty.

“After I play soccer, I notice that I have serious body odour! This never happened to me when I was younger. Why am I suddenly smelly, and what can I do to get rid of the smell?”

**Sincerely,
Smelly Sam”**

Answer:

“I’m so embarrassed to even leave the house these days. Lately, I have been getting pimples all over my face. Yuck! What causes these nasty bumps, and how can I get rid of them?”

**Sincerely,
Bumpy Becca”**

Answer:

TEACHER NOTES: ASK AN ADULT

- Estimated Time: Homework

2) Ask the students to select an adult they know and trust, such as a parent, grandparent or family friend, and have them interview that person about their experiences with puberty (see Ask an Adult! Handout).

NAME _____

DATE _____

Ask an Adult!

Choose an adult you know and trust (for example: a parent, grandparent or family friend) and ask them the following questions about their own experience with puberty.

1. How was your experience with puberty and growing up?

2. What are some things you think I should know about puberty and growing up?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Module 2. Is Adolescent Development: The Art of Growing up- YouTube*, MindMattersAustralia- YouTube, 26 Mar. 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BJFoGK5GIY&feature=youtu.be>. (Accessed October 8, 2019)
- “SGBI-E4: Introducing and Understanding Puberty.” *Sexuality Education Toolkit*, ACCM, 2018, <https://sexedtoolkit.com/lesson-plans/sexual-growth-and-body-image/sgbi-e4-introducing-and-understanding-puberty/>. (Accessed September 11, 2019)

TRUE OR FALSE

1. If all of my friends have started puberty except me, I'm way behind. **True False**

2. I will start to notice more hair grow in places like my genitals and armpits. **True False**

3. Only boys can have wet dreams. **True False**

4. It is normal to begin to have crushes or romantic feelings during puberty. **True False**

5. Puberty is caused by hormonal changes in the body.
True False

6. Everyone goes through puberty at the same speed.
True False

TRUE OR FALSE (ANSWER KEY)

1. If all of my friends have started puberty except me, I'm way behind. (False) Everyone's bodies are different! Different people start puberty at different times, and it's okay to start later.
2. I will start to notice more hair grow in places like my genitals and armpits. (True) Most people experience hair growth in these places during puberty.
3. Only boys can have wet dreams. (False) People of all genders can have sexual feelings or sensations while dreaming.
4. It is normal to begin to have crushes or romantic feelings during puberty. (True) Many people start to develop romantic feelings during puberty, and that is okay!
5. Puberty is caused by hormonal changes in the body. (True) The brain releases hormones during puberty that cause the changes people go through during puberty.
6. Everyone experiences puberty at the same rate. (False) Everyone's body is different, so people will go through changes at a different rate, and some people may not experience them at all.

NAME _____

DATE _____

Advice Column

Pretend you are an advice columnist for a newspaper. Use the information you learned in class to give answers to the following questions about puberty.

“After I play soccer, I notice that I have serious body odour! This never happened to me when I was younger. Why am I suddenly smelly, and what can I do to get rid of the smell?”

**Sincerely,
Smelly Sam”**

Answer:

“I’m so embarrassed to even leave the house these days. Lately, I have been getting pimples all over my face. Yuck! What causes these nasty bumps, and how can I get rid of them?”

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Bumpy Becca”**

Answer:

NAME _____

DATE _____

Ask an Adult!

Choose an adult you know and trust (for example: a parent, grandparent or family friend) and ask them the following questions about their own experience with puberty.

1. How was your experience with puberty and growing up?

2. What are some things you think I should know about puberty and growing up?

Elementary 4: Sexual Growth and Body Image

Lesson 1: Introducing and Understanding Puberty

Aim/Rationale

Students will learn about the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty as well as healthy strategies to cope with these changes.

Competencies

Learning Content in Sexuality Education

- 1) *Learn how the main changes associated with puberty are part of the process of growing up*
- 2) *Share your feelings about growing up*

Broad Areas of Learning

- 1) *Health and well-being*
- 2) *Citizenship and community life*

Purpose

Learning about one's body and appreciating that body is an essential developmental task for children and adolescents. Puberty is a natural stage of development characterized by physical, emotional and social changes that can start young people on a path that can include romantic and sexual attractions, romantic relationships, sex, and having children.

Children at this age level are likely to begin experiencing the physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty and require accurate information that will help them understand the transformations their bodies are experiencing.

Relevant to:

- Promoting egalitarian relationships
- Promoting a healthy body image

Lesson

Materials

1. Worksheets
 - True or False Handout
 - Advice Column Handout
 - Ask an Adult! Handout

Essential Questions

- What is puberty? What does it mean to, “go through puberty?”
- What kinds of changes will my body undergo?
- What are some healthy responses to feelings I may have during puberty?

Using Gender Inclusive Language

Consider discussing puberty with terms such as “can,” “may,” or “might” to avoid excluding certain students such as those who are intersex, transgender, or gender non-conforming (e.g. “People with a penis may also grow hair on their face” or “Some people with a vagina may also develop breasts”). It may be helpful to explain to students that being a boy, a girl, or in-between is mostly about how someone feels, not their body parts.

When talking about sexual feelings, it also helps to not be specific about the gender that people might be attracted to. This lets you include anyone who could be or become attracted to boys, girls, non-binary genders, or more than one of these. In order to include youth who may grow up to be asexual (someone who does not experience sexual attraction) or aromantic (someone who does not experience romantic attraction or crushes) it’s also good to use “can,” “may,” or “might” when you talk about people developing romantic and/or sexual feelings.

Terms

- Puberty
- Hormones (testosterone, estrogen and progesterone)

Development/Teaching Methods [30 min]

1. Start the lesson with a brainstorm activity. Ask the students to break into groups of two or three people. Within their group, have the students come up with a list of things that change during puberty and things that stay the same. This introductory activity can help the teacher gauge what the students already know and dispel any myths they may believe.

2. Ask the students, “What does puberty mean?” Write some of the responses on the board. Create a definition the class agrees on, or give them one similar to this: “Puberty is when our bodies change to adult bodies.”
3. Explain that our bodies experience many changes during puberty, both physically and emotionally. Some of the physical changes that students may notice include:
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4. Next describe the types of changes that can occur to our emotions, including:
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5. Tell students that these changes are caused by hormonal changes in the body. Everyone has hormones called *testosterone*, *estrogen*, and *progesterone*. Most of the time, but not always, boys will begin to produce more testosterone and girls will begin to produce more estrogen during puberty. These hormonal changes are what cause the other changes we experience.
6. Next, to review the information, play a short True or False game with the class (see True or False Handout).
7. Remind the students that puberty is something that almost everyone experiences, so they are not alone. Also remind that students that everyone is different, so everyone will experience puberty differently. Because of these changes, students need to take extra care with bathing and keeping themselves clean.
8. Discuss some strategies that can help the students cope with the changes they experience during puberty. Ask them what they do if they have bruises or muscle aches and connect these to growing pains and menstrual cramps. Offer examples like asking for painkillers, lying down, stretches, and exercise. Ask the students to describe activities they do to calm down or feel happier. Offer examples such as writing in a journal, taking a walk, drawing, talking with a trusted friend or parent, etc...

Culmination [5 min]

To end the lesson, ask the students to brainstorm things they are looking forward to about growing up (e.g. driving a car, having more freedom, staying up later, dating, etc.). Have the students write their responses on the board. Remind the students that experiencing puberty is one of the first steps towards becoming an adult.

Performance Objectives

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

- Identify and describe the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.
- Identify strategies to help manage these changes.

Assessment Ideas

- 1) Have the students pretend that they are an advice columnist and “give advice” to those with questions about puberty (see Advice Column Handout). Ask the students to write short paragraph responses that provide accurate information.
- 2) Ask the students to select an adult they know and trust, such as a parent, grandparent or family friend, and have them interview that person about their experiences with puberty (see Ask an Adult! Handout).



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