

# SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

## Quick Lesson

GRADE  
**7-9**

### LEARNER OUTCOME<sup>1</sup> W-7.3:

Examine the human reproductive process and recognize misunderstandings associated with sexual development.



#### MATERIALS:

1. **CARDS: Puberty Changes**
2. **HANDOUT: Easiest/Hardest Things About Growing up**



#### INTRODUCTION:

This lesson plan provides teachers with a quick and easy approach to puberty for junior high. It may be used as a review for students who investigated puberty at the elementary level or as a starting point for students who have not yet covered the topic. Teachers may want to supplement this lesson with some of the more comprehensive lesson plans available on the website.

Puberty is a time of change and growth that brings about physical, emotional and social changes. By addressing myths and anxieties about adolescence, teachers can encourage students to accept this time of change as normal and healthy. In this lesson students identify the different changes they will experience and learn that rates of change are individual to each person. Puberty has its challenges; but is also a time to celebrate new experiences and emotions.



#### APPROACHES/STRATEGIES:

##### A. GROUND RULES (5-10 min)

Ensure ground rules are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.



Keep in mind that students living with physical, developmental or other differing abilities are also going through physical, emotional and social changes at this time. They may have very different interpretations or concerns with regards to what is happening to their body. For example, a student in a wheelchair may need extra consideration during the time she is menstruating. Please visit the differing abilities lesson plans on this website to access a set of lessons to meet the needs of students of differing abilities.

## B. PUBERTY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (5-10 min)

*These discussion questions will help students identify puberty as a time of change and development.*

1. What do we mean when we use the term puberty?
  - Changing from a child to a teenager is called “PUBERTY”. A teenager is sometimes called an “ADOLESCENT”.
  - Puberty happens to everyone.
  - You will begin to notice body changes, thought changes and relationship changes as you go through puberty.
2. Do boys and girls go through puberty at the same age?
  - The changes that you experience in puberty can happen to different people at different times, and can begin as early as 8 and continue until 18.
  - Girls usually experience puberty earlier than boys.
  - Every person has a body clock that is right for him/her. You can’t decide when you want to go through puberty and you can’t stop it from happening. Everyone is different.

## C. REVIEWING PUBERTY CHANGES (20 min)

*Students review puberty changes and identify misunderstandings associated with sexual development.*

1. Write the following headings on the board or at the top of two pieces of newsprint:
  - Physical (body) changes
  - Social (relationship) and Emotional (feelings) change
2. Using the **puberty changes cards**, give one card per student until all are distributed.
3. Have students with cards (using sticky tape or sticky tack) place them in the appropriate category of puberty change.
4. Review the placements with the class and make corrections if needed.
5. Ask the class to brainstorm any changes that are not included on these lists. Add them to the bottom.



A very informative Booklet called **Growing Up Ok!** by Alberta Health about puberty changes can be accessed at:  
<http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/growing-up-ok.pdf>

6. Ask the class to brainstorm some misunderstandings people may make about puberty changes. Using a different coloured pen or a piece of chalk, write these up on the board under the appropriate category. **Ensure these comments are visibly identifiable as misunderstandings or myths. Some myths that may be raised include:**

- Boys get erections because they are always thinking about sex.
- All teens argue with their parents during adolescence.
- Teens get pimples and zits because they do not wash often enough.
- All girls are emotional and tearful before their periods.

7. Debrief this activity using the following questions:

- **Where or from whom do we learn about puberty change?**
  - Friends
  - Family
  - School
  - Media
- **Where do misunderstandings about puberty change come from?**
  - Misinformed peers, siblings etc.
  - Misinformed media
- **Who can we ask for correct information if we have questions or concerns about puberty change?**
  - Ensure students list reliable sources such as parents, teachers, doctors or nurses, or another supportive adult.



Girls usually begin puberty changes between the ages of 8 and 16. For boys this age range is 12-18. The changes are generally complete by the age of 18 for girls and 20 for boys.

It is very important that you emphasize to students that everyone is different and there is no correct time for these changes to happen, their bodies will know when the changes should take place.

Students who notice signs of puberty earlier or later than their peers may feel embarrassed and uncomfortable with their changing bodies. Explain that teasing and bullying can occur and be sure to watch for signs of this with your students.

**D. HOW I FEEL ABOUT PUBERTY (15-20 min)**

*Students discuss the challenging aspects of puberty and celebrate the best and most exciting aspects.*

**Easiest/Hardest Things About Growing Up** handout.

1. Students can work in pairs or small groups for this activity. Give each pair or group the above handout and ask them to record the best/easiest things about going through puberty at the top of the page and the hardest/most difficult things on the bottom. Remind students to think about physical, social and emotional aspects.
2. Collect the papers and read them at random to the group. You may wish to record the comments on newsprint. Students will find that there are lots of repeats from each group which emphasizes that everyone is having similar worries, feelings and anxieties.
3. Conclude this activity with the following discussion questions:
  - What would make going through the process of puberty easier?
  - Are there any differences in what is easy or challenging for girls/boys?
  - What seems to be the most pleasant/hardest thing about growing up?
4. Summarize the lesson by making the following points:
  - **It's OK to feel terrific one moment and down in the dumps the next.**
  - **You will want more independence but expect some disagreements over boundaries with parents/ significant others.**
  - **You will feel different about how you look – remember that right now your body is a work in progress and enjoy the changes as you experiment with clothes, hair and make-up**
  - **It is normal to feel worried about whether people like you or not and sometimes you may feel left out. Talk it over with your friends or family.**
  - **You may start to have sexual feelings and as you grow older these feelings may become stronger.**
  - **COMMUNICATE with family and friends. Your friends may be feeling the same way and it helps to share experiences and ways of coping.**



**QUESTION BOX (10 min)**

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



## SELF REFLECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

---



## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

### Knowledge:

- Recall the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty?
- Identify misunderstandings associated with sexual development?
- Identify sources of good information and support to cope with puberty?

### Skills:

- Demonstrate appropriate listening and speaking skills during class discussion?

### Attitudes:

- Recognize and accept that change is a part of puberty?
  - Anticipate the changes that will occur during puberty?
  - Recognize challenges and positive aspects of puberty?
- 

<sup>1</sup>Alberta Education. (2002). *Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9*. Retrieved from <http://www.education.alberta.ca/media/352993/pos.pdf>

**Grow taller**

---

**Skin gets oily**

---

**Acne (pimples)**

---

**Voice changes**

---

**Hair grows on face**

---

**Hair gets oily**

---

**Hair grows in underarms**

---

**Hair grows on genitals (pubic hair)**

---

**Sweat glands develop**

---

**Breasts develop**

---

**Hips get bigger**

---

**Shoulders get wider**

---



**Start producing sperm**

---

**Penis grows bigger**

---

**Testicles get bigger**

---

**Body starts producing sex hormones**

---

## **Wet dreams**

---

**Erections happen out of the blue  
(penis gets hard)**

---

**Sperm can be released through the  
penis (Ejaculation)**

---

**Start releasing eggs (Ovulation)**

---

**Periods (Menstruation)**

---

**Mood swings**

---

**Start having sexual thoughts**

---

**Start having sexual feelings**

---

**Start producing vaginal discharge**

---

**Can become interested in having a  
boyfriend or girlfriend**

---

**Friendship becomes more important**

---

**Sometimes feel lonely and confused**

---

**Stronger feelings of wanting to be liked and to “fit in”**

---

**Want more independence**

---

**Thinking about the future**

---

**Concerned about looks**

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## EASIEST/HARDEST THINGS ABOUT GROWING UP

**Easiest/Best:** With your group, list all of the best and/ or easiest things about growing up and going through puberty changes.

**Hardest/ Most Difficult:** List all of the hardest and most difficult things about growing up and going through puberty changes.