

SECTION 3: Teaching and learning activities



YEARS 5 AND 6

Activity 1: What exactly is a period anyway?

LEARNING INTENTIONS: After completing the activities students will:

- Understand the nature of the menstrual cycle
- Understand what happens when you have a period
- Clarify any misconceptions or misunderstandings they had about menstruation

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Australian/ Victorian Curriculum	NSW Curriculum
<p>Achievement standard elements Students investigate developmental changes and transitions</p>	<p>Stage 3 Outcomes PD3-1 Identifies and applies strengths and strategies to manage life changes and transitions PD3-2 Investigates information, community resources and strategies to demonstrate resilience and seek help for themselves and others</p>
Australian/ Victorian Curriculum	NSW Curriculum
<p>Content descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate resources and strategies to manage changes and transitions associated with puberty (ACPPS052/VCHPEP106) 	<p>Content Examine change and investigate resources and strategies to manage transition and challenges, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that individuals experience change associated with puberty at different times, different intensity and with different responses eg. menstruation

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Introducing the concept



Introduce the activity by explaining that over the next few lessons we are going to be exploring how boys and girls change as they get older and move from childhood into adolescence.

Ask students if they know the word we use to describe the changes that happen as we move from children to adolescence - explain that the word is puberty if it is not volunteered by the class.

Break the class into small groups of 4-5 students and distribute a small stack of post-it notes or a whiteboard marker to each group. Explain that they are going to participate in a group relay challenge where each group has to work together to identify as many different physical changes that happen as we go through puberty. Groups need to list changes one at a time on a post-it note that they run and stick on the board or take in turns writing their responses on the board with a marker.

Example changes include:

Growing taller, getting heavier, breasts getting larger, hips widening, shoulders widening, hair under the arms, pubic hair, sweating more, starting periods, pimples/spots/acne, feeling emotional, attracted to other people, hair on legs and chest, voice changes.

Once all groups have exhausted their ideas, as a class work through each of the changes listed and classify them on a Venn Diagram as experienced by only boys, only girls or by both boys and girls.

Explain that these changes are all a normal part of growing up and everyone goes through them at their own rate.

Expanding the concept



Show the Talk Revolution video:
What exactly is a period anyway? (PER010506)



Show the Talk Revolution animation:
What exactly is a period? (PER020506)



Show the Talk Revolution video:
When should you expect it and what should you do when it finally arrives?
(PER030506)

After watching, discuss or invite students to record::

- ➊ What new information did you notice in the video and animation?
- ➋ Was there anything interesting or surprising?
- ➌ What did it make you wonder? Explain to the class that the next few lessons we are going to learn all about periods (or menstruation which is the scientific name) and the menstrual cycle.



It is important that both boys and girls learn about this as it is something that we are more than likely all going to have some experience with - either because you are a woman and will more than likely experience periods or because you may be a partner, father, brother, uncle or friend of a woman who experiences periods. It is really important that you support a friend or family member, particularly when they first get their period as it can be scary and cause anxiety.

Ask the class to share ways that they could help support a friend or family member when they get their period?

Explain that so far we have used two different names - menstruation and periods to describe what happens to a woman each month.

- ➊ Ask the class does anyone have other names that they use or have heard to describe a period?
- ➋ Brainstorm as a class the different terms (including slang terms) for periods or menstruation.

Reinforcing the concept



Explain to the class that we are now going to play the 'Everyone is Different' Game.

- ➊ Ask the class or group to arrange themselves in order of height. Make the point that there is a large range of heights within the group but that these are all normal or healthy.
- ➋ Now ask the class to move in to groups based on the colour of their eyes or hair. Make the point that there are a range of different eye colours and hair colours and that is also perfectly normal.
- ➌ Lastly, ask students to arrange themselves in a line based on the size of their shoes. Once again make the point that there is a large range of different shoe and feet sizes but these are all normal and healthy.

Explain that this is the same with puberty and menstruation. The physical changes that are associated with puberty will happen at different times for everyone and that is perfectly normal and healthy. As part of puberty, girls will start their period at different ages and have different cycles. This is also very normal.