

Lesson 1: Puberty Review

Curriculum Expectations

D1.5 – Students describe the physical changes that occur at puberty, and the emotional and social impacts that may result from these changes.

[Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum](#)

How to Use

This lesson plan is a brief review of puberty and the Grade 4 Human Development & Sexual Health lessons. You may choose to do some or all of the activities, based on the needs of your students and the time available. Some of the activities build on the ones that come before them, however all can be used alone. **For a quick lesson, combine activities A, C and E.**



Educators may choose to use these [Google Slides](#) to complement this lesson plan. The slides provide visual aids and key points to enhance the teaching experience. They can be used as a flexible resource to engage students and facilitate discussions. Detailed information and student activities remain available in the lesson plan, which can be referenced as needed.

Classroom Activities & Timing

- A. Ground Rules (10 minutes)
- B. Language of Human Development and Sexual Health (15 minutes)
- C. Puberty Changes Review (20 minutes)
- D. Puberty Changes Quiz (15 minutes)
- E. Question Box (10 minutes)

Required Materials

- Quiz: Puberty Changes (available in [slideshow](#))
- Chart paper, blackboard or whiteboard (optional)

Considerations

Prior to discussing this content, we encourage you to consult your school board's expectations about notifying parents/caregivers about the topics that will be covered. School boards typically require a drafted letter to be sent in advance of the unit.



Some parents/caregivers may choose to exempt their child from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health expectations ([PPM 162: Exemption from instruction related to the Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations in The Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019](#)).

Background Information for Educators

Understanding puberty changes is essential for grasping how the body develops and functions during adolescence. This lesson reviews key puberty concepts introduced in Grade 4, reinforcing students' knowledge as they prepare to explore reproductive anatomy and physiology in greater depth.

By revisiting physical and emotional changes, this lesson ensures students have a strong foundation for understanding human development and reproduction. For more detailed information on puberty, refer to the [Grade 4 Human Development and Sexual Health lessons](#).

Inclusive language

Language is complex, evolving, and powerful. These lessons use [inclusive language](#) to accommodate all students, including those with diverse gender identities, expressions, and orientations. This includes using 'they' as a singular gender-neutral pronoun. This approach ensures the lessons are accurate and inclusive, promoting understanding and respect for all students.

In these lessons, you will notice that body parts and processes are not labelled as male or female. While it is acceptable to use the terms boy/girl/male/female when talking to or about individuals, it is important not to assume that all boys or girls have certain anatomy, and to consistently use inclusive language. Learning

to discuss anatomy without gendering people, parts or processes is a shift for many people. These lessons use language that can help you and your students make this shift, so that everyone, including people who are intersex and gender diverse, are included and feel seen.

Cultural sensitivity

People's decisions and behaviours related to one's sexuality are influenced by their cultural beliefs, values and practices. It is important to acknowledge our own personal cultural values and beliefs while respecting that others may not share the same ones.

Instructional methods

Students engage when [instructional methods](#) emphasize active and experiential learning. Just as in other curriculum areas, using role play, small groups, class discussion and videos in sexual health education can bring the curriculum to life. It also helps students explore the content and understand how it relates to their own ideas, values and experiences.

Glossary

This [glossary](#) provides simple definitions of key terms used throughout our lessons and resources, allowing educators to have a clear understanding of concepts related to health, human development, sexuality and inclusivity.

A. Ground Rules

Ensure [ground rules](#) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

B. Language of Human Development and Sexual Health

In this activity, students become more familiar with reproductive anatomy terms and feel more comfortable using them in a classroom setting.

1. Ask students to think of the scientific terms (“real words”) for body parts that are **not** related to reproduction (e.g., elbow, foot, eyes, heart, lungs, etc.). Ask them to raise their hands and share these words. Write each word on the board under the heading *Other Body Parts*.

If a student uses a slang word, welcome the contribution, and then introduce the scientific terminology (e.g., “Yes, pecker is a slang term for penis. Let’s add penis to the list.”)

2. Ask students to think of the scientific terms (“real words”) for body parts related to reproduction (e.g., penis, breast, vulva, scrotum, uterus, etc.). Acknowledge that slang words exist, but the focus for this activity is on using the correct scientific terms. Ask students to raise their hands and share their answers. Write each term on the board under the heading *Reproductive Body Parts*.
3. Discuss the following questions with the class, and provide these example responses if they are not mentioned by students:
 - How did it feel to say/hear the words on the first list (Other Body Parts)? Answers may include:
 - Comfortable, easy, familiar
 - How did it feel to say/hear the words on the second list (Reproductive Body Parts)? Answers may include:
 - Embarrassing, uncomfortable, uneasy, unfamiliar
 - Private
 - Afraid someone will laugh
 - Why do people use slang for body parts related to puberty or sexuality?
 - To hide embarrassment
 - Don’t know the scientific word
 - What are the benefits of using scientific words instead of slang?
 - Scientific words have clear, agreed-upon definitions, reducing confusion and misunderstandings.
 - Slang words can change meaning over time or across different regions.
 - For example, in North America “fanny” means “buttocks”, but in the UK and Australia, it means vagina.
 - Some slang terms can be offensive or disrespectful to others.

C. Puberty Changes Review

In this activity, students demonstrate a basic understanding of the changes experienced during puberty. This activity serves as a review of the Grade 4 Human Development and Sexual Health curriculum expectations. If students are struggling to identify puberty changes, consider using the Puberty Kit (*refer to [Grade 4: Lesson 2 – Puberty and Personal Hygiene](#)*) to support their learning.

1. Write the following questions on separate pages of chart paper and post them on the walls around the room.
 - What is puberty?
 - How can people stay healthy during puberty?
 - What are some examples of social changes during puberty?
 - What are some examples of emotional changes during puberty?
 - What are some examples of physical changes during puberty?
2. Have students walk around the room writing ideas under each title. If they are struggling, encourage them to think about what they learned in the [Grade 4 Human Development and Sexual Health lessons](#).
3. Discuss each question and answers together. Consider adding the following information if it was not already shared:

What is puberty?

- Puberty is the period when the body starts to change as people grow up to be adults.
- It prepares the body to be capable of reproduction.
- Puberty usually starts between the ages of 8 and 16.
- Everyone experiences puberty differently and progresses at their own pace.

How can people stay healthy during puberty?

- Healthy habits during puberty are similar to those at any other stage in life (e.g., regular physical activity, adequate sleep, nutritious foods, and stress management).

Social changes

- Friendships become more important
- Interest in dating increases
- Wanting more independence
- Taking on more responsibility at home or school
- Looking for new experiences
- Thinking about your identity

Emotional changes

- Mood swings
- Sometimes feeling lonely and confused
- Stronger feelings of wanting to be liked
- Stronger feelings of wanting to fit in
- Concerned about appearance (looks)
- Feeling attracted to someone (crush)

Physical changes

- Acne (pimples)
- Breasts develop*
- Erections (penis gets hard)
- Ejaculation (sperm released from penis)
- Grow taller
- Hair gets oily
- Hair grows in armpits
- Hair grows on face
- Hips get wider
- Menstruation (periods) begins
- Nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)
- Ovulation (eggs released from ovaries)
- Penis grows bigger
- Pubic hair grows on genitals
- Shoulders get wider
- Skin gets oily
- Start making sex hormones
- Start producing sperm
- Sweat glands develop
- Testicles grow bigger
- Vaginal discharge
- Voice changes

** Most people experience some breast changes during puberty because of the production of sex hormones. Many of these changes are temporary such as hard breast buds and tenderness. For individuals assigned female at birth, breast growth is typically permanent. For individuals assigned male at birth, it is typically temporary.*

You may wish to remind students that not all of the changes listed will happen to everyone. Some changes, such as menstruation, depend on anatomy (for example, only people with a uterus will menstruate). Not all social and emotional changes are experienced by everyone either. For instance, some people may never become concerned about their appearance, experience mood swings, or develop an interest in dating.

D. Puberty Changes Quiz

This quiz reviews the physical, social, and emotional changes experienced during puberty. It can serve as a fun introduction to the unit, a way to assess the students' learning from the previous year, or even an energizer between other activities.

1. Open the Puberty Changes Quiz in the [slideshow](#).
2. As a class, answer the quiz questions and discuss the answers together.
3. The answer key is available at the end of the lesson for review.

E. Question Box

Have students submit questions to the [question box](#) and address them next class.

Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

Answer Key: Puberty Changes Quiz

Correct answers are in bold text.

1. A physical change of puberty is:
 - a) Caring more about your appearance
 - b) Growing taller**
 - c) Wanting to fit in
 - d) Growing hair in new places**

Caring more about your appearance, and wanting to fit in, are emotional changes of puberty, not physical changes. All four are changes that can happen to anyone during puberty.

2. An emotional change of puberty is:
 - a) Caring more about your appearance**
 - b) Growing taller
 - c) Wanting to fit in**
 - d) Growing hair in new places

Growing taller, and growing hair in new places, are physical changes of puberty, not emotional ones. All four are changes that can happen to anyone during puberty.

3. What can you do about body odour?
 - a) Use deodorant or antiperspirant**
 - b) Shower or bathe every day**
 - c) Wear the same clothes all week
 - d) Nothing, just get used to the new body odour

Washing clothes regularly and bathing more frequently are important habits to learn to manage body odour.

4. Every boy has wet dreams every night during puberty.
 - a) True
 - b) False**

Some people have frequent wet dreams, others do not. Wet dreams are usually defined as when semen is ejaculated from the penis when the person is sleeping. People assigned female at birth may also release some fluid from the genitals during sleep.

5. Feelings of attraction or interest in others only start after puberty is done.
- a) True
 - b) False**

Feelings of attraction or interest in others can begin during puberty.

6. If you get acne during puberty, it might help to:
- a) Yell at your pimples and hope that they leave
 - b) Gently wash your face every day**
 - c) Use soap, lotion or cream made to fight acne**
 - d) Pop your pimples

Gently washing your face once or twice a day with a mild soap can help. It's a good idea to check with a parent or caregiver before using any new products. Popping pimples can make acne worse and cause scarring.

7. Getting your period means:
- a) That you must only eat fruits and vegetables for 5 days
 - b) You are one step closer to growing up**
 - c) It's time to have a baby
 - d) It's a normal and natural part of growing up**

Getting a period is a normal part of growing up. Special diets like eating only fruits and vegetables are not necessary, and starting a period does not signal readiness for having a baby. It is important to recognize that menstruation is a natural process and not something to feel embarrassed about.

8. Feeling lonely and confused sometimes is common during puberty.
- a) True**
 - b) False

While physical changes are noticeable, emotional changes can be more stressful for many people. It's important to seek support during this time.

9. Who grows shorter during puberty?
- a) Everyone
 - b) No one**
 - c) Teachers

Everyone grows taller during puberty, even if they start later than their friends.

10. Who becomes more interested in dating during puberty?
- a) Everyone
 - b) No one
 - c) **Some people**

Not everyone becomes interested in dating during puberty. For some, this interest starts before or after puberty, and for others, it may never happen. It's normal for people to be interested in dating others of any gender. Some people know their sexual orientation at this age, while others do not.