

LESSON 3: WHAT ARE PERIODS?

Overview: Pupils explore periods using the My Period cards and create posters to explain their learning

Great For: Covering the basics of menstruation

Resources Needed:	Pack of My Period Cards; Flipchart paper and pens
Prep Time Needed:	10 mins
Works best in:	Classroom
Number of participants:	Full Class
Time Needed:	50 mins
Set Up:	Prepare a set of cards for each group (see page 3)

Age 9+

Learning Outcomes:

Pupils understand the changes of puberty for male and female bodies, that some people get periods and that this is normal; Pupils know and can describe how to prepare for and manage periods.

Who is this for: *This is a good activity for students who already have a good grounding in the physical and emotional changes that come with puberty. It follows on well from Lesson 2: Puberty – Physical and Emotional Changes or your existing puberty lessons. You might want to consider also giving a lesson on male puberty in detail after this. This lesson works well as an introduction to periods for P6/Y5. However, it will also work for P7/Y6 if you haven't covered periods yet.*

DON'T WORRY IF
YOUR PANTS GET
RUINED

tip...

Stains don't
show up so much
on black and
red underwear.

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Introduction Explain the lesson objectives - that we will be learning all about periods which are a normal part of growing up for anyone with a female body
5 minutes

Establish ground rules (see *Teachers' Guide*)

Explain that even though not everyone in a female body feels female, and not everyone in a male body feels male, anyone born with a female body will go through particular puberty changes including starting periods

Starter Activity Ask for the class to discuss what they already know about periods in pairs.
10 minutes Once they have discussed for a couple of minutes ask for some examples

Show this video clip explaining the menstrual cycle:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXrQ_FhZmos

NB: Although this video states the menstrual cycle lasts 28 days, it's important to remind the class that everyone is different, the cycle can last between 25 and 35 days, and it is completely normal for someone to have a longer or more irregular cycle for at least two years after starting their periods

Answer any questions that pupils have about the video. The aim of this lesson is not that pupils understand the biology of reproduction in detail, but that they have a basic understanding of what is going on. They will return to the biology of the menstrual cycle in later years.

Main Activity Divide the class into groups (usual table size of 5 or 6 is fine). Explain that each group will be learning about a particular aspect of having periods and will be reporting back to the class at the end.
25 minutes

Hand out a set of cards to each group (see list below) and flipchart/large paper and pens

Ask each group to look at the cards and the information they have, and come up with a poster for the rest of the class on this aspect of having periods. They can use pictures and words, it can be in any way they choose. Give them c.20 minutes to do this, visiting each table to help/advise as needed.



SCARED OF
LEAKS?

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Plenary
10 minutes

Ask each group to present their poster to the class.

Remind the class that everyone experiences periods differently, and everyone starts in their own time. Just like the rest of puberty, everyone's body has its own unique timing. Some people will start periods while in primary school, and for others they'll be in secondary.

Ask the class if they think it's ok to tease someone for having their period. Remind the class that having a period does not mean you are ill or dirty, it's a natural part of growing up for anyone with a female body. Periods are part of the menstrual cycle that makes it possible for someone to have a baby so they are very special.

Finally, share a question box and explain that this box will be in the room and that pupils can put questions in to be answered anonymously. Ensure you answer questions in subsequent lessons. Reassure pupils that they can speak to any member of staff about puberty if they have any questions. If you provide period products at school, make sure pupils know where to get them.

If there is time, ask if anyone has any ideas of ways to support each other throughout puberty (you could give examples like not teasing, being kind/gentle etc).

Suggested Card Selections:

Group 1: Cards 1. What is a period?, 6. Cycle length, 19. Flow of Blood

Group 2: Cards 17. Colour of blood, 18. Quantity of blood, 20. Control of blood

Group 3: Cards 24. Product Overview, 25. Disposable Pads, 26. Tampons, 30. Disposing of products

Group 4: Cards 14. PMS, 33. Look after yourself, 34. Hygiene

Group 5: Cards 31. Leaks, 42. Taboo, 44. Secrecy

