

*Start here: the beginning of a complete guide consisting of introductory notes, a large Powerpoint presentation and two video clips...*

## The Reproductive System - Puberty

To **reproduce** means to have babies or young offspring. All living things do it: people, plants, parasites, polar bears and lots of things not beginning with 'p'. They have to do this because no living thing itself lives forever.

1. **This is not sex education.** This is about body changes during puberty and how they affect boys and girls who are beginning to grow towards adulthood.
2. But the Reproductive System is the one that eventually allows adult humans to have baby humans. The Reproductive System has that one job in the body.
3. The first stage of that job is to change the size, shape and organs of the body so it will be ready for creating babies several years later. This stage of life is called **puberty**.
4. All natural changes in your body are caused by **hormones**. These sound mysterious and what they do is extremely complicated. However, they are basically just chemicals made and stored in **glands** around the body that are released around the body when the body and brain believe it is the right time to do so. They don't ask you whether you are ready for it!
5. When the hormones connected with puberty are released, **a huge set of changes** begins to happen absolutely all over the body, inside and out. The Powerpoint presentation describes these quite well.
6. This is a strange topic to cover without a proper conversation in the classroom. It has words in it that make people giggly or nervous or both. We do need to get used to words like **genitals** and **pubic** – it's fine to find these funny at first but they are scientific words that just describe parts of your body and parts of the bodies of every other animal on Earth as well.
7. So here are some of those words. (You don't have to know what all of them mean yet, but you will!) **Breasts, penises, testicles, periods, scrotum, sperm, eggs (ova), uterus, womb, menstruate, fertilise** ... and that is without getting to the words necessary to talk about sex. Perhaps try saying them all to yourself a few times until you get bored with them. (You may get a few funny looks if you do this too loudly, however!)
8. I have written **a short extra introduction to this for girls and another one for boys**. This does not mean that boys should not read the girls' one or girls should not read the boys' one. It is just that girls have a different starting point than boys and need to look out for different information. It might be a good idea to read both, but certainly read the one aimed at you.

And here are a couple of helpful videos:

A three-minute one with children asking questions:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/rse-ks2-puberty-whats-happening-to-my-body/znhdvk7>

A half-hour 'Operation Ouch' Special about Puberty

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0759l4k/operation-ouch-series-4-10-dont-panic-about-puberty-special>