Puberty

Your parents seem to complain about everything you do. They just don’t understand you. Your body is doing very weird things – it’s growing in places it has never grown before! And your face has … pimples. Welcome to the world of puberty! Puberty is also sometimes called adolescence. It is the time of your life when your body changes from being a child’s body into the body of an adult. Special chemicals in your body called hormones instruct your body to begin developing into an adult body which is able to reproduce. The changes that happen during puberty occur over a few years. Different adolescents experience different changes at different times. This is very normal.

Part One: Puberty in a girl’s body

1. When does puberty happen in a girl’s body? What are the typical changes a girl’s body will go through during puberty? Write your answer as a list of bullet points.

   [10 marks]

2. Many strange stories are spread about girls’ periods and menstruation. This is because many people do not understand what is happening when a girl has her period. A list of statements is given below. Each statement is incorrect in some way. Change the statement so that they are true.

   a) When a girl is menstruating, she is unclean and should be separated from other people till her period is over.
      a) You can tell if a girl is menstruating by kissing her.
      b) A menstruating girl can tell what you are thinking.
      c) You can’t swim or wash your hair if you are menstruating.
      d) When you are menstruating, you can’t think right and you act mad.
      e) Girls who are menstruating should not play sports.
      f) Menstrual blood is dirty.

   [14 marks]
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Part Two: Puberty in a boy’s body

1. When does a boy start going through puberty? What changes happen in his body? Write your answer as a list of bullet points.

   [10 marks]

2. What is meant by ejaculation and does it only happen during sex?

   [14 marks]

Part Three: The role of hormones

Some teenagers blame their bodies and say their hormones cause them to have bad moods or want sex badly. It is quite normal for teenagers to have bad moods and to think about sex. But your brain is in control – not your hormones!

Does having an adult body entitle you to make adult decisions, like when you should have sex?

Discuss your ideas with a partner, then write down what you think in a paragraph.

   [12 marks]

[Total: 60 marks]
### Rubric to assess paragraph

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# Suggested Solutions

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| **1.1**         | 10            | The changes that take place in a girl happen any time between the ages of 10 and 17. ✓
|                 |               | A girl will start to grow hair under her arms ✓ and in her pubic region. ✓
|                 |               | Her hips may widen ✓ because she may have to carry and give birth to a baby one day. ✓
|                 |               | A girl will also start developing breasts during puberty. ✓
|                 |               | Breasts will produce milk and feed a baby one day. ✓
|                 |               | Her reproductive organs start preparing to produce eggs ✓ and carry a baby. ✓
|                 |               | A teenage girl will begin to go through monthly cycles of ovulation ✓ (the ovary producing an egg) and menstruation ✓ or having periods. |
| **1.2**         | 14: 2 marks for each answer well debunked | 1. *When a girl is menstruating, she is unclean and should be separated from other people till her period is over.*
|                 |               | A girl is not unclean while she is menstruating. She is only unclean if she does not bath, shower or wash herself well – just like at any other time of the month. There are some cultures and religions that traditionally separate menstruating women from men. There is no biological reason for doing this.
|                 |               | 2. *You can tell if a girl is menstruating by kissing her.*
|                 |               | You can’t tell if a girl is menstruating by kissing her or looking at her.
|                 |               | 3. *A menstruating girl can tell what you are thinking.*
|                 |               | Many cultures are in awe of the woman’s ability to have a baby. Menstruation is directly linked to this and is seen as a powerful and magical thing. Women do not have any special powers while they are menstruating. Is there any power in the fluid called blood? No.
|                 |               | 4. *You can’t swim or wash your hair if you are menstruating.* 6. *Girls who are menstruating should not play sports.*
|                 |               | 4 and 6 are discussed here together. A girl can swim, bath, wash her hair, play sports, do ballet dancing – in fact she could, and should, do anything that she does for the rest of the month while she is menstruating. Maybe in the days gone by, women were scared to swim in case some menstrual blood was seen in the water. Today, tampons are so effective that no blood will escape while a girl is swimming or playing sports.
|                 |               | 5. *When you are menstruating, you can’t think right and you act mad.*
|                 |               | A girl’s brain is not involved in menstruation! She can think just as well while menstruating as at any other time of the month. In days gone by, women were not thought ‘suitable’ for certain jobs because they may become mad during their periods. Many women today believe that myth was a way of keeping women out of specialised jobs. What do you think?
|                 |               | 7. *Menstrual blood is dirty.*

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Blood from a nose bleed, blood from a cut on your arm, menstrual blood – it is all the same blood. Blood is not dirty. If a girl does not wash while she is menstruating, the blood may get old and harbour bacteria and begin to smell. Pads and tampons must be changed regularly and the body should be washed. Bad body odour develops in boys who don’t wash their penises too!

2.1

| 2.1 | 10 | A boy starts going through puberty between the ages of 10 and 17. ✓ A boy’s skin may get oily. ✓ A boy grows hair under his arms and in the pubic region. ✓ However, a boy may also start to develop chest hair ✓ and facial hair. ✓ Just as a girl’s hips widen, a boy’s chest widens ✓ and his shoulders broaden. ✓ He may become more muscular as a result of the hormones in his body. ✓ Something which can cause embarrassment to a boy is his change of voice. A boy’s larynx or voice box becomes wider and his voice will deepen in pitch. ✓ Just as a woman must produce an egg to make a baby, a man must produce sperm to fertilise the egg. ✓ The testes produce the sperm. ✓ Hormones which are developing the sperm producing cells cause the testes and penis to grow in size too. ✓ Sperm and some fluid called semen are produced by the male’s reproductive organs. ✓ |

2.2

| 2.2 | 14 – 2 marks for each valid point made | During sex, the penis gets filled with blood ✓ and becomes larger and erect or stiff. ✓ The sperm and semen are shot out of the penis through muscular contractions. ✓ This is called ejaculation. ✓ However, while a boy is developing, his penis may get erect even if he is not having sex or even thinking about sex. ✓ He can also have an ejaculation at night ✓ while he is sleeping. The penis can go down from an erection by itself – an ejaculation is not needed. ✓ This behaviour of a boy’s penis is quite normal. A boy can also rub his penis himself and ejaculation can occur. This is called masturbation and is also normal. ✓ (Girls can masturbate too; this is also normal.) |

3

| 3 | 12 | See rubric in Appendix of Assessment Tools. |
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### Rubric to assess paragraph

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