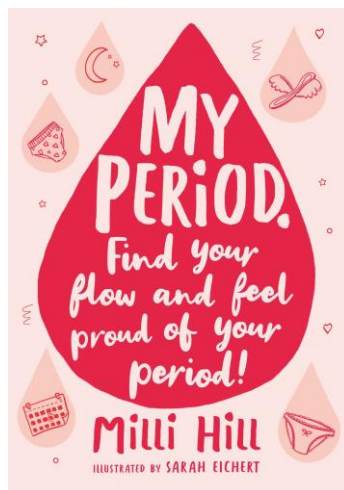


# **My Period: Find Your Flow and Be Proud of Your Period!**

**by Milli Hill**

## **Notes for Key Stage 2 and 3 Teachers and Librarians**



**Suitable for:** Girls ages 10+ / PSHE lessons

**Explore themes of:** ✓ Body Positivity ✓ Puberty ✓ The Menstrual Cycle ✓ Female Reproductive Organs ✓ Self-Care

### **CONTENTS**

**EXTRACT 1:** Understanding your Body (taken from Chapter One – Let's Get Started!)

Objectives: Understand the importance of talking openly about your period; promote body positivity in class discussions; identify internal and external reproductive organs and what they do.

**EXTRACT 2:** The Menstrual Cycle (taken from Chapter Two – Puberty and your Brilliant Body)

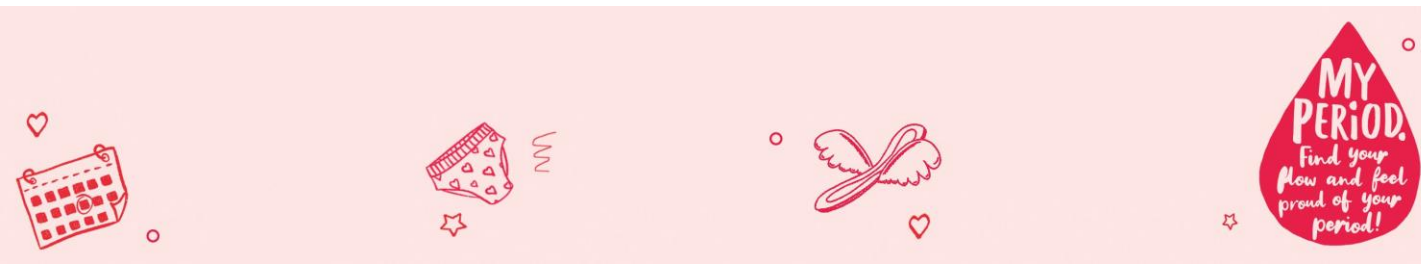
Objectives: Understand why we have periods and how the menstrual cycle works; become a 'Cycle Detective' and track changes in your body and feelings throughout the month.

**EXTRACT 3:** Surfing the Emotional Waves (taken from Chapter Seven – Looking After Number One)

Objectives: Make four S.U.R.F self-care promises to help support you through puberty; write a journal including what you have learned about yourself, periods, and puberty throughout these lessons and discussions.

*A note on the resources:*

*It is advised that teachers, parents and carers read through this pack to check that themes and activities are suitable for their students. This pack is primarily aimed at girls, though all questions and activities can be adapted and delivered at the teacher's discretion to mixed groups.*



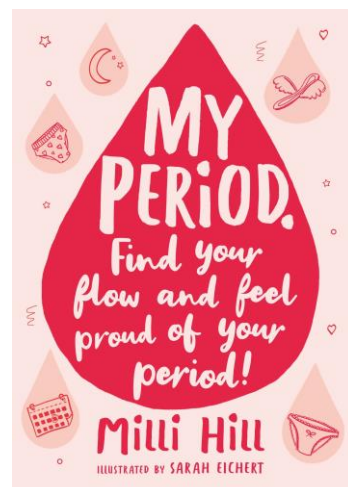
### About the Book

Getting your first period can be exciting – but there are a lot of questions you might be too embarrassed to ask. Like how much will I bleed? Does it hurt? How can I prepare? And what's the point of a period anyway?

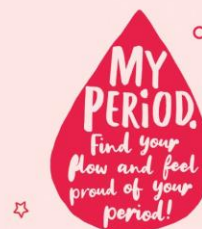
Separating the fact from the fiction, Milli Hill answers everything you need to know - from menstrual cups and period pants, to cramps and hormones. She'll explain how incredible your body is, what is actually going on each month and why.

With guidance on choosing period products, charting your cycles and preparing a first period kit, alongside profiles of 'cycle superstars' such as Amika George who are working to end period poverty, this book is the complete guide to getting your period.

So find your flow, bust some myths and start to feel proud of your monthly cycle and your truly amazing body!



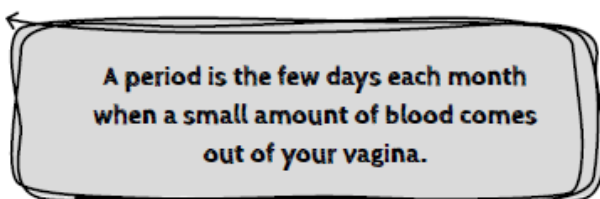
These resources have been created  
by Shapes for Schools



**EXTRACT 1:** Understanding your Body (taken from Chapter One – Let's Get Started!)

★ **WAIT A MO! WHAT EVEN IS A PERIOD?** ★

Perhaps you're thinking, hang on, I'm not quite sure what a period **IS**! Trust me, this book will give you a *lot* more detail but put *really* simply:



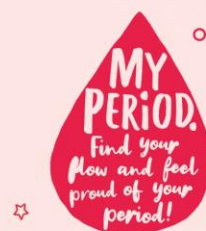
Your first period happens during the phase in life you're probably having around now, called *puberty*. But if you don't know too much about this either, don't worry, all of this and more will be explained as we go through this book. Periods are just one part of something called your *menstrual cycle*, which the female body experiences each month (see pages 116-145). For now, rest assured that periods are a part of normal life for most women and girls, just like you, all around the globe.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- Say the words, 'My Period' out loud. How does it feel to say this? Did it make you giggle or embarrassed in any way?
- What other names might you or others use for their period?
- What is a period? Why is it important to be open about your period and puberty?
- Have you heard of 'period poverty'? What is this and how is it being challenged?
- Why might some people be secretive or ashamed about their period? How can you and others help reassure them?

**ACTIVITY: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FEMALE BODY**

- As the book states on page 24, 'YOUR BODY IS ALWAYS CHANGING!' This is true throughout your life but especially during puberty. This is an amazing time but it can also be unpredictable and confusing!
- Get started by looking over the Puberty Checklist on the next page. These are just some of the changes you and your beautiful body might experience throughout puberty. Mentally 'tick' those which you think apply to you. Which have you yet to experience? Remember, when you think about yourself in this way, it is important to be 'body positive' and proud of your body!



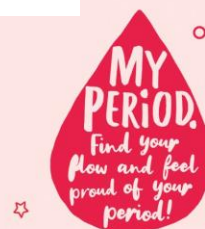
- ✓ Getting taller – you will probably 'shoot up' at some point during puberty, and your body will gradually start to look more adult. Your hips usually widen and get bigger.
- ✓ Breasts beginning to grow – starting with little bumps called 'breast buds', your breasts will gradually develop.
- ✓ Hair growing in new places – body hair will start to grow on your pubic area and in your armpits.

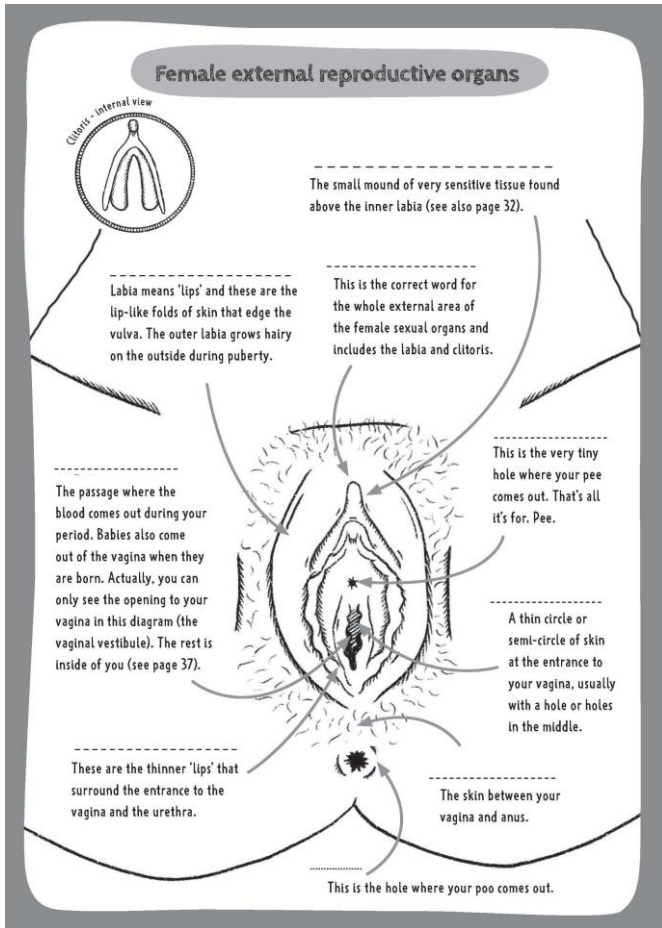


- ✓ Sweating more – you might notice that you perspire more and this can cause body odour. You can help prevent this by using underarm deodorant, making sure you bath or shower daily and putting on clean clothes each day.
- ✓ Greasier hair and skin – hormone changes can cause oily hair and skin, and sometimes this can lead to spots called acne.

- Next, it's time to get to know both the outside and inside of your body a little better! Read over the descriptions on the two diagrams on the next page and have a chat about any words you're unsure of. Then, see if you can label both diagrams with the correct terms from the word banks. Perhaps write them in pencil first before you go through them as a class.
- Reflect on why is it important to understand how your body works. How can this help you through puberty? Does it change how you think about your period? Discuss your ideas.

*Your body is like your own special house that you get to live in for an entire lifetime. It makes sense to look after it! And it makes sense to be proud of it, and to love it, too.*





## FEMALE EXTERNAL REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

OUTER LABIA      HYMEN

PERINEUM      VULVA      INNER

LABIA      ANUS      URETHRA

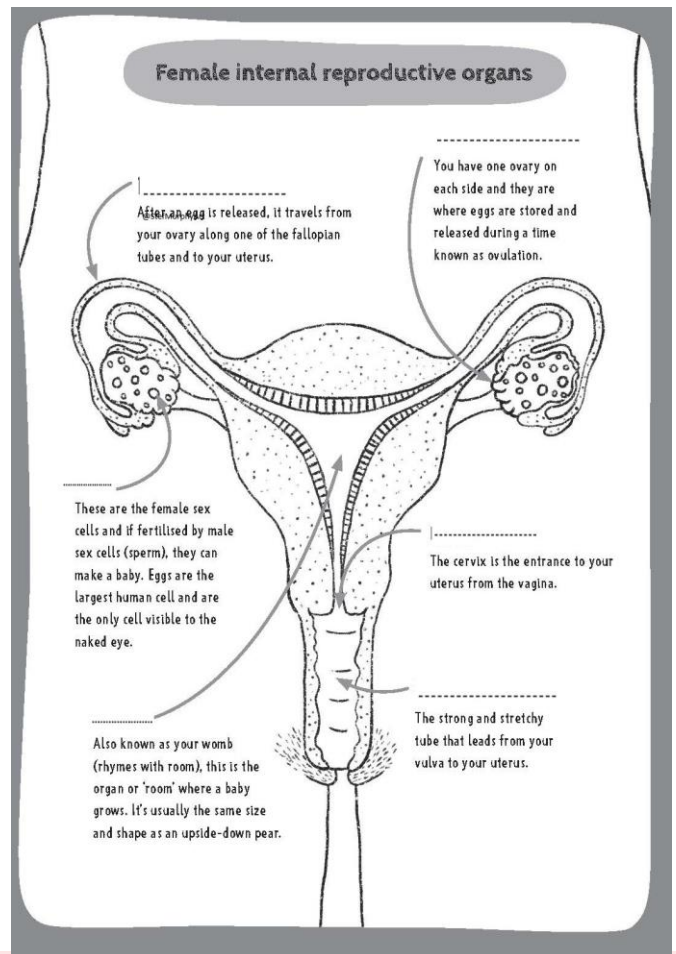
CLITORIS      VAGINA

## FEMALE INTERNAL REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS

CERVIX      EGGS

UTERUS      FALLOPIAN TUBES

OVARIES      VAGINA





**EXTRACT 2: THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE** (Taken from Chapter Two – Puberty and your Brilliant Body)

**SO WHAT EXACTLY IS A PERIOD?**

OK. So now we have learned more about our beautiful bodies, inside and out, we can start to understand in more detail what actually happens when you have a period. We have already talked about how your period is:

The few days each month when a small amount of blood comes out of your vagina.

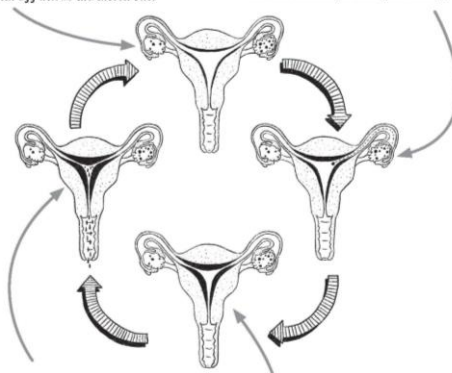
BUT WHAT DOES THIS MEAN AND WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?



Each month the female body goes through a process, called a 'menstrual cycle'.

**COMPETING EGGS:** Your ovaries contain little sacs called follicles where there are always eggs in different stages of development. Each month, some of these eggs start to get bigger and stronger, ready to be released. It's almost like a competition to see which egg will be the chosen one!

**THE WINNING EGG:** The 'winning egg' (usually the biggest and strongest) is then released from one of your ovaries and travels down the nearby fallopian tube. (If you are a non-identical twin, congratulations, this means TWO eggs were released to make you and your sibling!)

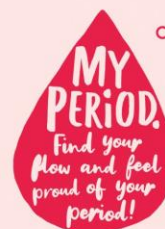


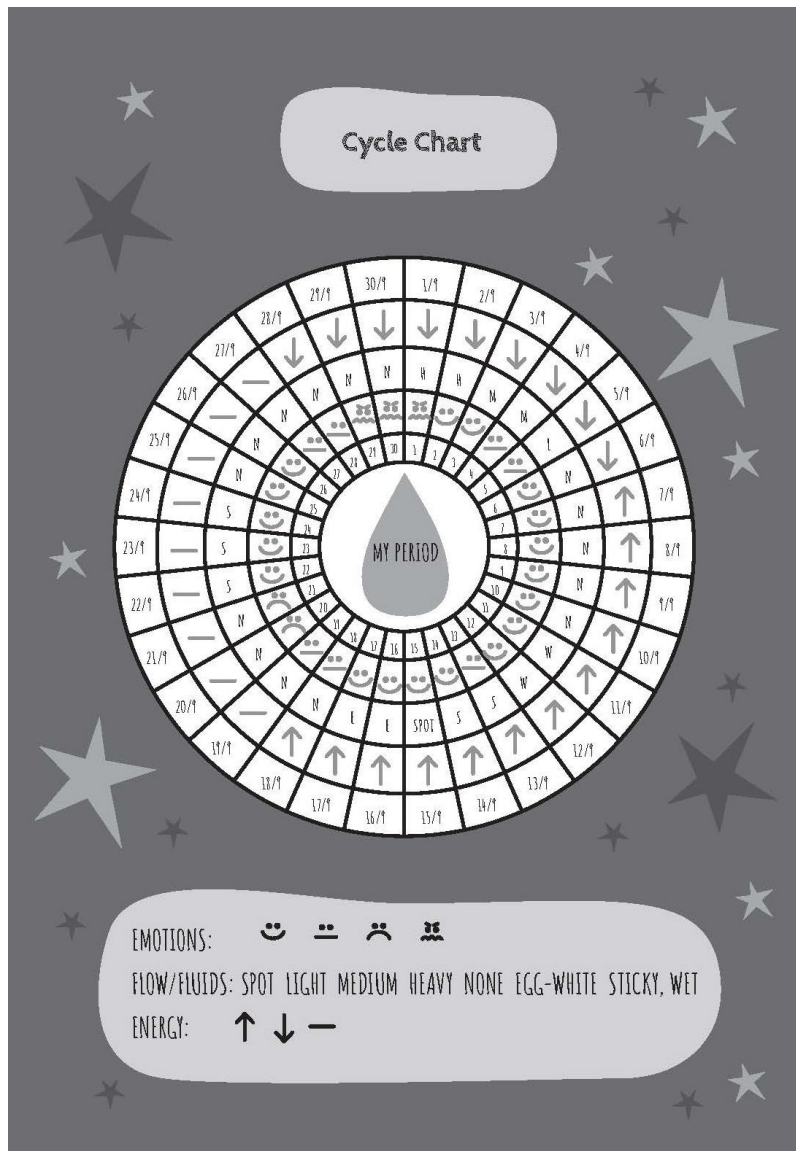
**THE PERIOD:** If the egg isn't fertilised, the womb lining comes away and out through your vagina. This is your period. Only about half of your period is 'blood' – the rest is mostly the lining of your uterus, along with vaginal fluids, which are a mucous or gel-like substance made by the cells of the cervix (more about these fluids on pages 155-158). It's often a reddish-brown colour, a bit darker than the bright red blood you see when you cut yourself (although it can be bright red too).

**SLEEPOVER READY:** At the same time the lining of your uterus thickens and gets soft and cushiony, waiting for the egg to arrive – a bit like making your bedroom all nice for your friend to come on a sleepover. If the egg is fertilised by sperm, this is where a baby will grow.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

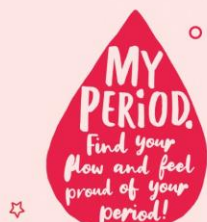
- Why do we have periods? How can you make sure you're prepared for your period?
- Why is it called the menstrual 'cycle'? What have you learnt from the menstrual cycle diagram?
- Why can periods be inconvenient at times? What kinds of side effects can the menstrual cycle produce?
- What might be the positives of having a menstrual cycle? Think about how your mood and energy levels can be affected at different times of the month.
- Can you name any period products and how they work? Which of them might you use? Discuss why.
- Can you name any 'Cycle Superstars'? (Teachers, see pages 17–18, 63–64, 66–67, 70–72, 109–111, 114–115, 193–195, 200–202)





### ACTIVITY: MY CYCLE CHART

- Spend some time looking over the 'Cycle Chart' and talking through its key. What do you notice about this person's emotions, flows/fluids, and energy levels? Note for Teachers: For more in-depth information around the menstrual cycle, see pages 153–162 of book.
- Think about how this chart relates to you and why it might be useful to keep track of how your body and emotions change over the course of your cycle. Remember, this chart is only an example and everyone's cycle is unique and special!



- Now it's time for you to become a CYCLE DETECTIVE! Have a go at tracking what is happening with your body on 'My Cycle Chart'. Even if you haven't started your period, it's really helpful to listen to your body and track its changes over the month. As the book states on page 150, 'This can also help to give you clues about when your menstrual cycle will start.'
- At the end of the month, reflect on your Cycle Chart. How might this process help you to plan for next month?
- For an extra challenge, read and learn about one of the many 'Cycle Superstars' from the book!

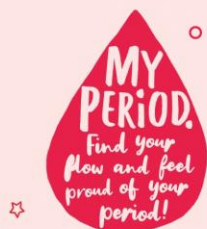
**My Cycle Chart**

Trace a copy of the blank cycle chart below every month to track your own cycle,  
or download a printable PDF of this at: <https://geni.us/MyPeriodCycleChart>

MONTH/YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

You can also download and print this template at  
[geni.us/MyPeriodCycleChart](https://geni.us/MyPeriodCycleChart)





### EXTRACT 3: SURFING THE EMOTIONAL WAVES (taken from Chapter Seven – Looking After Number One)

Periods are part of growing up, and growing up means starting to learn to look after yourself more and more. Although it's a new and daunting feeling, it can also be really exciting to begin to feel more independent, and to take charge of looking after you – inside and out! This is sometimes called 'self-care'.

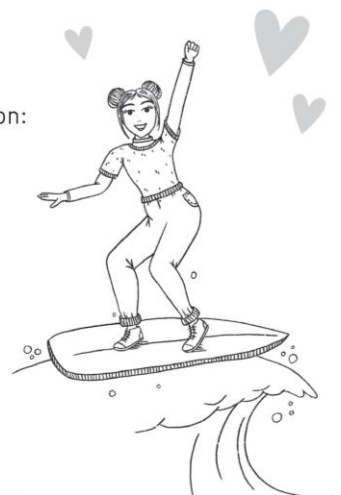
This book is full of 'self-care' ideas, from the Body Buddy Boxes to charting your cycles and learning about and celebrating your first period. This final section will give you a few more ideas on how to look after that VIP – you!

## SURFING THE EMOTIONAL WAVES

Let's talk about how to **SURF** the ups and downs of puberty emotions. And like real life surfing, this is

**NOT** easy to master! Confession:

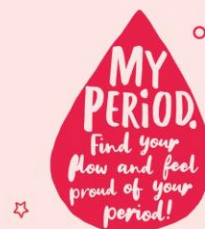
I've never actually *been* surfing, but I know that if I *did* go, I would not be able to stand up on the board **AT ALL**. Except maybe just once, when, after three hours of trying, I would probably manage to stand for a whole **3.4 SECONDS** before falling off, whacking my chin on the head of a handsome instructor called Brad, crying because it really flipping hurt and then, nearly dying from embarrassment, scuttling off up the beach feeling really daft in my wetsuit.

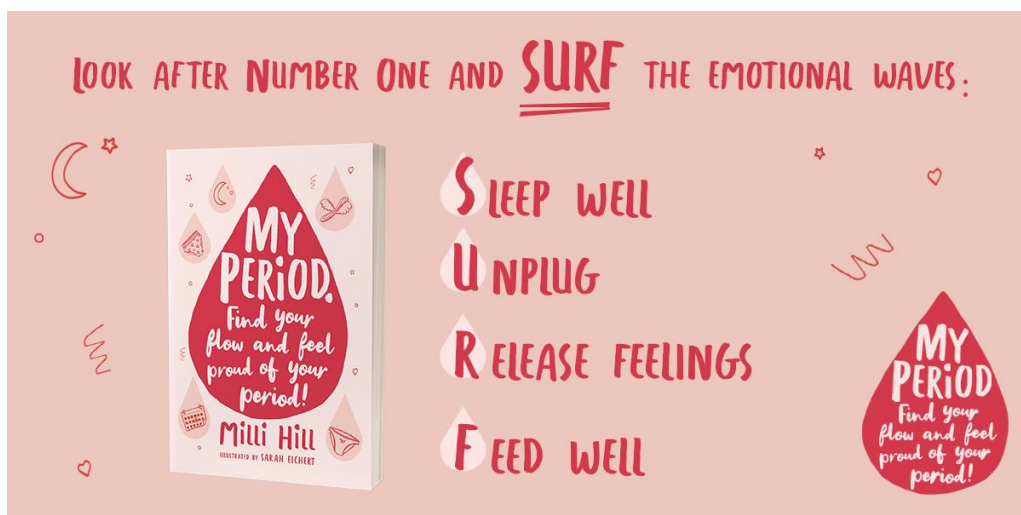


And that's a bit like the emotions of puberty, isn't it? We can talk about 'surfing the waves' if we like, but most of the time, it just feels like they are crashing around us while we flounder about in the ocean. It can sometimes feel like we just *can't* do it, we *can't* manage and we are *never* going to get the hang of it.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why does the writer compare puberty to surfing? Can you think of any other analogies?
- How can hormones impact your mood and energy levels? What else can have an impact?
- Why is puberty also an exciting time? What positive things are happening in your life and to your body?
- What is 'self-care'? Do you have any strategies or tips that help you surf those waves? Give examples.
- What other tips can help you during your period? I.e. think about: underwear; hygiene; period pain remedies.





### ACTIVITY: LEARNING TO S.U.R.F.

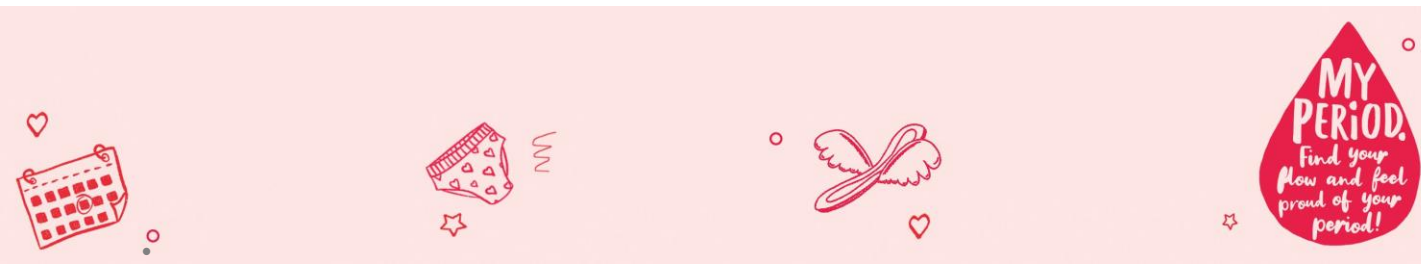
- As a class, go through the S.U.R.F self-care tips on the next page discussing why each one is important, especially during puberty and when you have your period. Consider which of them you are good at and which you are not so good at and why.

Note for Teachers: For more in-depth information around S.U.R.F, see pages 166–167 of book.

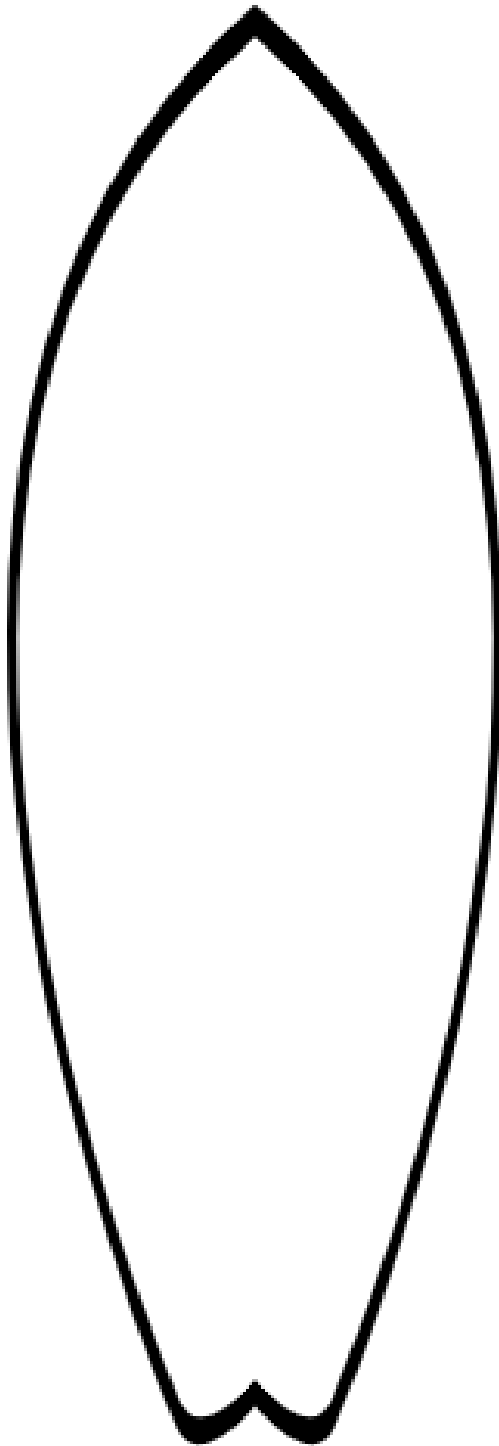
- Use these discussions to make yourself a promise for each of the sub-headings and fill them in on the S.U.R.F board on the next page. For example, S – *I will read in bed instead of watching TV* or F – *I will make sure I eat my fruit at lunchtime*.
- Colour-in and design your board with colours and images that make you feel good. Keep your S.U.R.F board safe and check-in now and then to see if you are able to keep up with your promises.
- Finally, write a journal of how you feel about your body changing and your period. Perhaps the *My Period.* book and these lessons have changed your mind about some aspects of puberty and the menstrual cycle? Maybe you've managed to bust some taboos and myths about periods in your class discussions? Hopefully, you've now got a better understanding of how your reproductive organs work and how you can look after yourself during those low-energy days?
- Keep up to date with your Cycle Chart from Lesson 2 and try to keep making journal entries on your journey through adolescence. Add in any final thoughts below before you forget them!

Questions I still have ...

People I would like to talk to about my body or my period ...



## S.U.R.F. THE EMOTIONAL WAVES



S – I will ...

U – I will ...

R – I will ...

F – I will ...

