

Epilepsy awareness

Topic

Epilepsy, the brain, first aid

Learning outcomes

- Identify key information in an infographic about epilepsy
- Say how people can help when somebody has a seizure
- Some students will research neurological conditions and identify key information to include in an infographic

Age and level

13-17 (B1+)

Time

45-55 minutes + optional 45-minute project

Materials

- Infographic
- Student worksheet
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyDHG02phs0>
- (Optional) Materials for Project: chart paper, coloured marker pens

Introduction

This lesson gives students the opportunity to learn about the brain and a neurological condition known as epilepsy. It can be used at any time or in conjunction with November's annual epilepsy awareness month.

During the lesson, students read an infographic with key information about epilepsy. They then watch a video and learn how they can support a person during a seizure. They have the option to research epilepsy or another neurological condition in order to create and present an infographic.

Procedure

<p>1. Warm-up game (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a fun game. Rub your stomach and pat your head at the same time! Repeat and speed up the activity. Then have students try it. (Optional: Add a third challenge, such as ‘Spell your name’ at the same time.) Note: this activity is noisy! • After the game, ask the class the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What was happening in your brain during the game? (Answer: The brain was sending multiple messages to different parts of the body.) ○ Why did it go wrong? (Answer: Our brains have billions of neurons, programmed to carry out messages, but they don’t always work perfectly!) ○ How did you feel when it went wrong? Why? • Elicit or explain facts about the brain. Use computers as a point of comparison, e.g. the brain is programmed to transmit information, like the computer. (The brain is more developed, though. It transmits thoughts, memories, feelings, senses, etc.) • Like a computer, the brain uses electrical signals at high speed, and the speed of electricity is always changing. Both have a memory that can grow. Both can adapt and learn. Both can be damaged.
<p>2. Introduction to infographic (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the board, write the following sentence: Anyone with a brain can be affected by this condition. • Ask what condition this might refer to and encourage guesses. (Possible answers include Parkinson’s disease, migraines, autism, stroke, dementia, epilepsy.) • Hand out copies of the infographic or project it onto a screen. Ask: What is the infographic about? (Epilepsy) • Read aloud the definition of epilepsy: ‘Epilepsy is a neurological condition characterized by seizures. Seizures happen when there’s sudden electrical

	<p>interruption in the brain. The rest of the time the brain acts the same as everyone else's.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that students understand the definition and help with any unfamiliar vocabulary e.g. neurological, seizures, interruption. • Ask students if they can think of a similar scenario with computers. (Possible answer: When excessive electrical charges occur in the computer, your computer briefly malfunctions or the screen freezes.)
<p>3. Task 1: Reading and discussion (10-15 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put students into pairs and give each pair a copy of the worksheet. Refer them to Task 1 in the worksheet. Alternatively, read out or dictate the questions. • In pairs, students read the infographic and discuss questions 1-5. Monitor the discussions and give help where necessary. • Ask some pairs to share their answers with the rest of the class. Review any unfamiliar vocabulary e.g. absence, staring, mumbling, jerk etc. <p>Answers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, anyone can get it. Since you have a brain, you too can be affected by epilepsy! 2. Only 40 per cent of seizures cause falls. (Other types of seizure include a brief absence, staring, mumbling or a very quick jerk of the arm or leg. You might be conscious or just partly conscious of what's happening.) 50 million people live with epilepsy worldwide. One in 26 people in the USA will have a seizure once in their lifetime. 3. Head injury. (Common causes of head injury in teens are not wearing a helmet while riding a bike/skateboarding, walking across the road while texting or without looking, pushing people over, etc.) 4. Ask people with epilepsy how you can help them (there are many types of epilepsy, so the answer won't be the same for all), learn first aid, be kind! 5. Tonic-clonic seizures, which cause people to fall on the ground, are the best-known because they're the most visible. Absences (a slight look of confusion and forgetfulness) are more common, but less obvious.
<p>4. Video (15–20 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the board write: Anyone with a brain can help others with epilepsy.

- Elicit ways we can support people with epilepsy. (Possible answers: Epileptic seizures are very upsetting for people, so keep calm / be kind / don't discriminate / don't laugh. Remember that 60 per cent don't fall to the floor or shake – in fact, some seizures are so subtle, you might not even notice it – so ask people with epilepsy how they want you to support them! Learn first aid to help those who do fall to the floor during a tonic-clonic seizure.)
- Introduce the video and set the scene (a boy has a tonic-clonic seizure in a sports lesson). Have students predict what the coach might do to help during the seizure.
- Play the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyDHG02phs0>
- Pause at 0:50 and ask students: Were your predictions correct?
- Refer students to **Task 2** in the worksheet. Ask them to read questions 1-3 and check that everyone understands. Alternatively, you could read out or dictate the questions (omit the steps for question 3).
- Play the first 50 seconds of the video again. In pairs, students discuss the answers to Q.1–3. Check answers with the class (see below) and review any unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Refer students to **Task 2** again. Ask them to read questions 4-6 and check that everyone understands. Alternatively, you could read out or dictate the questions.
- Play the rest of the video. In pairs, students discuss the answers to Q. 4–6. Check answers with the class (see below) and review any unfamiliar vocabulary.

Answers:

1. He looks confused and then suddenly tips over. His hands and body begin to shake.
2. They rush towards him and some look nervous.
3. a. 2 The coach comforts a young boy who looks scared.
b. 5 He puts some towels under the boy's head.
c. 4 He times the length of the seizure.
d. 1 The coach tells everyone to move away and give the boy some space.
e. 3 He asks the boys to help him turn the boy on his side.

	<p>4. It's scary for him, scary for other people and very scary when people don't know what to do.</p> <p>5. a. Keep him protected by supporting the head (so that he's not banging it); b. Lay him down and move the head down (so that he doesn't choke); c. time the seizure till the end (so that you can tell the doctor). NEVER restrain or force them.</p> <p>6. Stay with the person and protect them, even if you feel powerless!</p>
<p>5. Project: Make an infographic (45+ minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise students into pairs / small groups and explain that they should make an infographic. They can do this online or make one on a poster. • Give students some topics to choose from. The topic could be related to epilepsy (e.g. famous people with epilepsy; different types of epilepsy; how to support a friend / classmate with epilepsy), or it could be about another neurological condition. • Once they have chosen their topic, give them time to research (this could be done as homework). • Hand out materials to make the infographics if necessary. Monitor pairs / groups as they make their infographics and help where needed. • When they are ready, students present their infographics to the rest of the class (or to other groups if you have a large class). Students read / listen and make notes of things they have learned.

Contributed by

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