

Mindfulness (Year 6)

Unit Overview

Summary

Children will practice a variety of mindfulness techniques and make links between mindfulness and their emotions with strategies that they can use in everyday life to calm themselves. They will find out about the science behind mindfulness and how it affect their developing brain. They will re-visit techniques introduced in previous units such as mind jars, mindful eating, finger tracing. The lessons aim to deepen mindfulness practice to enable children to shift their own attention to different aspects of their environment and reflect upon and feel empowered to control and change, feelings in their own bodies and minds.

Prior learning

If children have been following the Striver plan since the beginning, they will have had 6 sessions of mindfulness in each of the previous years. These focused on breathing, sounds, focus objects, breathing buddies, mindfulness jars, gratitude and positive wishes, colouring and doodling, mindful eating and visualisation. Children may have continued some aspects of mindfulness from these sessions. If pupils have completed the Yoga units, they will recognise some features of mindfulness within yoga practice. The first session recaps some of the techniques introduced last year.

Teaching Tips

- Timings in the lesson are based on short sessions of 15 minutes.
- You might wish to incorporate these sessions into the school day. For example, a short session after break time to calm and be ready for lessons.
- For most sessions, children should sit in a chair so they can place their feet flat on the floor. Some children might be more comfortable in a more relaxed pose such as reclining on a bean bag but a connection between their body and the Earth is important.
- If possible, dim the lighting though it should not be completely dark.
- Carry out the session in a quiet area so that children can focus on their thoughts with minimal distraction.
- Lessons incorporate the use of a chime sound. This could be from a triangle or xylophone chime with a soft, reverberating sound.
- The aim of this unit is to practice mindfulness exercises introduced in previous years and introduce new mindfulness practices to give children tools to help them focus attention, increase self-awareness and know how to handle anxiety causing situations..
- Some children will find it hard to focus for a full session initially, praise those children for the time that they manage and see whether their ability to focus and pay attention increases over time. Reassure children that it is normal to lose concentration at some points and learning to re-focus their concentration again is a valuable skill. The sessions incorporate variety and children might find some easier or more attention grabbing than others.
- Pick a time when children have been active and are ready to settle down.
- The lessons are written as a script with some suggested actions or activities.

Lesson 1 - Introduction (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To recap what Mindfulness means and reacquaint themselves with some mindful techniques and reflect how these could help them through the transitions they will be experiencing.

Success Criteria:

- Pupils understand the aim of practising Mindfulness.
- Pupils explore moving their mind focus and attention to environmental aspects and then back to themselves.

Key Vocabulary:

Mindfulness, calm, noticing, emotions.

Equipment & Resources:

- See Teaching Tips section for advice.

Introduction (5 minutes)

<div>1</div> <div>Can children suggest how mindfulness is a useful thing to learn to do? You could create a mind-map on the board if you wish with relevant mindfulness words.</div>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <div>You might need to give some prompts:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotional control.• Learning your own mind• Ability to change your focus.• Attention.• Relaxation.• Getting you ready to learn.</div>
<div>2</div> <div>Remind children that mindfulness is a way to understand how your mind reacts to things that happen and practice ways to settle your mind down. It includes exercises to help you develop your concentration, be aware of yourself and calm yourself.</div>	
<div>3</div> <div>Can children remember learning about the red zone and the green zone last year? Do they remember that mindfulness helps them to develop techniques to move from the red to the green zone by pausing, reflecting and calming.</div>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <div>Children discussed physical and mental characteristics of a person the the red zone and a person in the green zone.</div>

Main (7 minutes)

1 Can they remember what position they sat in when doing mindfulness sitting?
Can they get ready for mindfulness now?

- 2
- Find a comfortable sitting position in a chair with your feet flat on the floor*.
 - Shut your eyes if you are comfortable to do so.
 - Some children will feel more focused if they shut their eyes, others will not feel comfortable doing this. If they do not feel comfortable with eyes shut, they should gaze gently towards the ground, not at other people.
 - Rest your hands gently on your legs.
 - Focus your awareness on the feeling of your feet touching the floor, the strong Earth is supporting you.
 - Try to straighten your back but don't strain upright. Imagine a string coming out of the top of your head with a floating balloon attached to it. The balloon is stretching you gently upright.
 - Relax your shoulders. Bring them up towards your ears then roll them back to relax the muscles.
 - Focus on your mouth and your tongue. Your tongue should be lying relaxed in your mouth, not pushing anywhere. Your mouth should not feel tight and tense, think about how you have your mouth when you are going to sleep; relaxed and not clenched tightly shut.

3 Breathe quietly through your nose, feel your lungs fill and empty. Sit quietly just concentrating on your breathing for a while.
Clean air coming in to your lungs, feel your lungs expanding like balloons and then silently let the air out again and feel your lungs contracting.
Think about how your body feels when your lungs fill, do they pull your spine up straighter? Does the breath relax your muscles?
Breathe silently for a few moments.

4 If your mind wanders and you start to think of other things, try to bring your mind back to just focusing on your breathing.

5 Now, imagine you are holding a mug of warm hot chocolate in your hands. Imagine the feel of the warm mug in your hands. The steam gently rising up and disappearing into the air. The mug is full right to the top.

6 You bring the hot chocolate up towards your mouth carefully and slowly. Use your nose to breathe in the smell deeply.

7 You want to cool the hot chocolate a little so take a deep breath in to smell the chocolate then blow out through your mouth to cool the chocolate.

TEACHER NOTES

See the next step for the guidance that children were given last year.

VARIATION

*As noted in the teacher's notes, make adaptations for children who cannot sit still in an upright position but encourage contact between the feet and the ground if possible.

VARIATION

If children have a blocked nose, they should breathe in whichever way is most comfortable. Breathing should be quiet.

VARIATION

Children can move their hands if they wish - if it helps the visualisation.
Any warm drink is okay to imagine if they don't like hot chocolate.

8	Don't blow too hard or your will make the chocolate spill put. A deep breath in through your nose, smell the chocolate, then gently blowing through your mouth to cool it down.	TEACHER NOTES Repeat this for a few breaths.
9	Now take a quiet sip. Can you imagine the taste in your mouth?	
10	Imagine that the hot chocolate gradually fades and vanishes from your hands.	
11	Place you hands gently on your tummy.	
12	Return the focus to your breathing again, feel your hands move as you fill your lungs with air and then feel them shrink as you exhale.	
13	Try to make your breathing deep into your lungs as I count to 3, then hold the breath for a moment and release slowly and with control as I count back down to 1.	
14	1,2,3.....2,1,0	TEACHER NOTES Count slowly, pause for only a moment at 3, then count back down slowly. Repeat this a few times and then instruct children to count to themselves in their heads.
15	I am going to play a chime in a moment, listen to the sound until you can no longer hear it then gently open your eyes and bring your attention back to the room.	

Conclusion (3 minutes)

1	Ask children to reflect briefly upon how they feel now. Firstly, how does their body feel? Then how does their mind feel?.	
2	Through the mindfulness sessions this year, we will reflect upon how they could help you as you move through this last year of primary and on to becoming teenagers. What sorts of emotions are you likely to feel more this year than when you were younger?	
3	Are you more likely to move towards the red zone than you have been in the past?	
4	What actions do you think that you could take to keep yourself in the green zone and look after yourself?	

Lesson 2 - The Mindful brain (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To find out about what parts of the brain are involved in our emotions and what practising mindfulness does to the brain.

Success Criteria:

- Children have some understanding of the science behind mindfulness.
- Children have a basic understanding of how the different parts of the brain affect emotions.

Key Vocabulary:

brain, hemisphere, lobes, neurobiology, neuroplasticity.

Equipment & Resources:

There is quite a lot of information in this session. If you wish, it could be an extended session. Look in the Variations section for additional activities for children to carry out if you wish to do this.

- The Human Brain (**See resource 1**) to display on the whiteboard.
- The parts of the Human Brain (**See resource 2**) to display on the whiteboard.
- Inside the Brain – Cross-Section (**See resource 3**) to display on the whiteboard.
- The Hand Model of the Human Brain (**See resource 4**) to display on the whiteboard.
- Brain Responses sheet (**See image 1**) - if you are extending this session then each child will need a copy.
- Neuroplasticity cartoon strip (**See resource 5**) to display on the board if you are extending the session.

Introduction (3 minutes)

<div><div>1</div><div><p>Explain that in today's mindfulness session, children will be learning a bit about the science behind mindfulness and how it affects the brain. They will hear lots of new words for the names of the parts of the brain; they do not have to remember all of these!</p><p>It is important for us to have an understanding of how our bodies work so that we have the knowledge to make choices that will improve our wellbeing.</p></div></div> <div><div>2</div><div><p>Collect class knowledge about the brain and its component parts and how this affects the way that humans are.</p><p>It might be useful to create a mind map for purpose. Adapt the content below dependent upon the extent of children's existing knowledge.</p></div></div>	<div><div>TEACHER NOTES</div><div><p>Emphasise how important our brain is in our behaviour and feelings. So if we are going to feel as good as possible in life, it is useful to understand what we can do for our brains.</p></div><div><div>VARIATION</div><div><p>If you wish to extend the session with more pupil activity.</p><p>Use the *****Brain Responses***** sheet. At this point, ask children to write down three situations that make them worried, scared or angry.</p><p>For example, 'A dog runs up to me in the park (I am very scared of dogs)', 'Thinking about the tests that I have coming up' or 'When my brother won't let me use the computer'.</p><p>Children can keep these private or share them.</p></div></div></div>
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Main (10 minutes)

- 1

What the brain does

Show image *****The Human Brain ***** and explain that this is what your brain looks like from the outside.

The brain has two halves - the two hemispheres of the brain; left and right.

Brain cells are called neurons, we have on average 86 billion neurons that control everything we do.

Our brains have trillions of connections between the neurons passing messages around our brain and creating our thoughts, memories, feelings and actions.
- 2

The parts of the brain

The brain can be split into different parts: four lobes in the hemispheres plus the cerebellum and the brain stem. Each part is responsible for different aspects of our thoughts and behaviour. The parts communicate with each other sending messages and receiving input.

Show image *****The parts of the Human Brain *****. Can children identify all the areas that could have an impact upon mental health particularly?
- 3

Point out that these complex features of what it means to be human are all in the lobes.

Look at what the cerebellum and the brain stem control.
- 4

Look at the image *****Inside the Brain – Cross-Section*****

Notice that the lobes surround the brain stem and the cerebellum.
- 5

An **inter-personal neurobiologist*** called Dr. Dan Siegel came up with a 'hand model' of the human brain to explain how it has developed during evolution.

- TEACHER NOTES

Children should be able to identify:

 - Frontal lobe: reasoning, behaviour.
 - Parietal lobe: reasoning
 - Temporal lobe: behaviour, emotions.

- TEACHER NOTES

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Neurobiology is the study of the cells of the nervous system (neurons) and the organisation of these cells to identify the ways that they affect behaviour.

Inter-personal means the connections between people.

Inter-personal Neurobiology is the study of how the human brain has evolved in relation to connections between people. These connections being affected by the way that our brains work.

https://m.drdansiegel.com/about/interpersonal_neurobiology/

There is a video in this site that you could watch.

- 6 Ask the class to make a fist with the thumb tucked in, and hold it up in front of them with the fingers facing towards them.

The model in this position has the front of the brain facing towards you.

- 7 Your arm leading up to your wrist represents the spinal cord

- 8 Where your wrist meets your hand is the bottom of your skull.

- 9 This area of the brain represented by the bottom part of your palm, was the first part to evolve. It is often known as the **Reptile** brain because reptiles have this type of brain.

This is the life support system responsible for basic functions such as breathing and pumping blood.

Display *****The Hand Model of the Human Brain***** at any time to explain this model.

- 10 If you open your fingers to look inside the brain, your curved thumb represents the **Mammalian** brain.

This is also called the **limbic** brain and the **emotional** brain. It has a big role to play in emotions.

It also makes a connection between the reptile brain and the lobes of the brain.

- 11 The part of the limbic system to note is an area called **amygdala**.

- 12 Fold your fingers down again. These represent the lobes of the brain (also called the **cerebral cortex**).

This is the **thinking** brain. The thinking brain is present in all mammals but is much thicker in primates and at its thickest in humans.

- 13 At the front of the cerebral cortex, where your middle finger tip and first knuckle are, is the **prefrontal cortex**.

This is the bit that has a big role in mindfulness and awareness.

VARIATION

Some additional information to share if you wish.

Reptiles have limited responses to the world that don't involve emotions.

For example, the flight or fight response to being threatened.

Children could research the meaning of the 'flight or fight response' and give some examples.

VARIATION

There are several videos available online that describe the parts and functions of the limbic system in more details. You could watch one if you wish to extend the session.

14 The **amygdala** is the part of our brain associated with survival. It interprets threats. These could be real threats or they could be situations that your brain feels to be threatening.

So, for example if you are scared of dogs, your amygdala will get very active* when you are approached by a dog.

This puts you into fight or flight mode and your **thinking** brain will shut down - you will react on instinct to the threat.

15 When the lizard brain takes over, we cannot think of the future, be rational, or show compassion and empathy.

If the **amygdala** is over active over a long time - you are constantly perceiving threats in the world around you - it can actually shrink the **thinking** brain.

This leads to a person becoming more anxious (worried) and more aggressive in their response to the world around them.

16 How Mindfulness can help

Our brain has neuroplasticity. This word means that our brains can change and grow through our whole lives. Like our muscles, the more you use the parts of it, the stronger those parts get.

17 Practising mindfulness actually grows your **prefrontal cortex**. This makes us better able to think, including our ability to focus on what we need to, control our impulses such as flight or fight and make choices using our knowledge.

18 Mindfulness also reduces the activity of the **amygdala** so that your first response to a threat is not just fight or flight but can involve the **thinking** brain.

VARIATION

*Another way to say this is that the neurons of the amygdala will 'fire'.

VARIATION

Additional information and activity to extend the session.

Your brain connections use **patterns**: If the neurons are used to firing in a certain route then they will continue to use this route and those parts of the brain will strengthen and fire more. But you can work other parts of the brain and create new routes and change the routes that messages travel through your brain. This changes the way you will think about the situations that you come across.

The new way you are trying to think will be hard at first but over practice, this will become the brain's preferred route when given the situation.

Talk through the *****Neuroplasticity cartoon strip***** with the children. Can they come up with similar situations. Can they apply this to any of their worries that they wrote down; a different way to interpret them?

- 19

This means that we can handle stress and threats much better and the more we can use our thinking brain rather than our lizard brain, the better we get at doing this and the less conscious effort it takes. You will make yourself naturally good at handing threats in a balanced and not alarming way.

So the next time you have a test coming up, the butterflies in your tummy won't be so strong, your thinking brain will know that you can handle it and deal with whatever the outcome is.
- 20

It does take time and work to gain the effects, just like training our muscles to be stronger.

VARIATION

Additional information and activity to extend the session.

Children should complete the Brain Response sheet showing how the lizard brain will respond to the situation, contrasted with how the thinking brain could respond. Emphasise that children can teach themselves to respond using the thinking brain by practising.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

<div>1</div> <p>If you extended the session by using the Brain responses sheet, take some time to reflect upon some of these as a class.</p> <p>Otherwise, ask children to think of some stressful situations* and compare a lizard brain reaction to a thinking brain reaction.</p> <div>2</div> <p>Do children think that they could start practising the thinking brain responses to their worries?</p>	<div>VARIATION</div> <p>*Or the teacher can suggest some that are relevant to the class.</p>
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Lesson 3 - Mind jars (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To practise a mindfulness using a mind jar as a focus object.

Success Criteria:

Pupils are able to get into a mindful state using an object as a focus.

Key Vocabulary:

mind jar, focus.

Equipment & Resources:

- See Teaching Tips section for advice.
- Children who have been following the scheme would have had a mindfulness session making mind jars as part of the age 8-9 mindfulness unit. This lesson assumes that they have made their own jars, even if they no longer have the jars. If children did not complete this lesson last year then you can substitute that lesson in place of this one; the age 8-9 lesson also has information about what to do if making individual mind jars is not possible.
- For this session children will either need their existing mind jars or you will need to make one or more mind jars in advance. Use the document How to make a Class Mind Jar (**See resource 6**) for details of resources needed.
- Children should not be given the glass jars to hold if they are angry and likely to throw them rather than use them as a tool to calm.

Introduction (2 minutes)

<div>1</div> <div>Remind children of the lesson in which they made mind jars. Show them a completed one and ask them if they remember what the glitter that they added represented?</div>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <div>Children selected three colours of glitter to represent:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A colour to represent your thoughts.2. A colour to represent your feelings.3. A colour to represent your impulses - the way you behave without thinking.</div>
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Main (10 minutes)

1	Ask children to sit so that they can see a mind jar.	
2	Let's get ready for mindfulness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Find a comfortable sitting position in a chair with your feet flat on the floor.Shut your eyes if you are comfortable to do so. Or gaze downwards.Rest your hands gently on your legs.Focus your awareness on the feeling of your feet touching the floor, the strong Earth is supporting you.Try to straighten your back.Relax your shoulders. Bring them up towards your ears and then rotate them backwards to uncurl the muscles.Focus on your mouth and your tongue. Your tongue should be lying relaxed in your mouth, not pushing anywhere. Your mouth should not feel tight and tense, think about how you have your mouth when you are going to sleep; relaxed and not clenched tightly shut.	
3	Now breathe in whichever way is most comfortable to you.	
4	Open your eyes and look at your mind jar with the glitter settled.	
5	Shake the jar and place it back on the table.	
6	Look at the swirling glitter as a whole, think about the impression that the swirling glitter gives. Do this for a few moments.	
7	Now, try to focus on an individual flake of glitter - can you track its journey with your eyes? If you lose it, pick another	
8	Think about what direction the glitter is moving in, is there a pattern to it or is it moving randomly in all directions with no control?	
9	Now think back to the glitter you put in. This represented your thoughts, your feelings and your impulses. Imagine that the jar is like your mind during a day. First let the glitter settle.	
10	Your jar represents when you wake up in the morning - things are still and calm for a moment.	

- 11 Soon, things start swirling: swirl your jar a little.
What things could make it swirl in the morning? Swirl your jar for each thing that you think of.

- 12 You get to school and things get more active; you are excited to see your friends - shake your jar.
Maybe there is something fun happening in school -shake your jar.
Think of your own exciting things or things that make you shake or swirl.

- 13 Maybe you also have some things on your mind all the time at the moment: events in the foreground (sick siblings, worries at home, tests at school, moving schools) and events in the background (scary stories on the news). All of these make your glitter swirl too.

- 14 So it's just the start of the day and already your thoughts and feelings are all over the place. Can you see clearly through your jar now? Is your mind clear?

- 15 What can you do about this to get into a good frame of mind for thinking?

- 16 Take some time to be still.
Place your jar down now and watch closely as the thoughts, feelings and impulses settle down.

- 17 Now there is some space in your mind: you can see more clearly through your jar.

PUPIL TALK

Take suggestions from the class. You might need to give examples:

- You are slow getting dressed for school.
- You are being told to do lots of things at once; dress, breakfast, teeth, swimming kit, musical instruments.
- There's nothing nice for breakfast.
- You can't find your homework.
- You are angry with a family member.
- Something doesn't seem fair.
- You don't feel well.
- You don't want to do something that is being asked of you.
- Your team is losing its games.

TEACHER NOTES

Good things make the glitter shake and swirl too:

- A good comment on your work
- Meeting new people

18	When your glitter is swirling all around, can you force it to settle straight away? No, you need to take some time to calm and then things will become clearer.	
19	While we wait, does the glitter go away? No, it stays at the bottom. Our thoughts and feelings and urges are still in our minds, but they are no longer in our way, clouding our vision.	
20	You have some space in your mind to look at your feelings, your thoughts and the way you behave and make decisions about them without being involved in all the swirling and shaking.	

Conclusion (2 minutes)

<div>1</div> <p>Would it be better to empty all the glitter out of the jar so it is always calm? No, we need our thoughts, feelings and impulses. They make us who we are. But sometimes we need to have some space in out minds to see clearly and think about our thoughts, feelings and impulses. This moment of calm makes us ready to take them with us through the day and focus on the things that we need to do.</p>	
<div>2</div> <p>What makes them feel like the shaken glitter?</p>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <p>Falling out with a friend. Fighting with a sibling. Losing a sports game. Your team losing. An argument with your parent. Something that you are worrying about. Homework. Being late, rushing. Getting told off.</p>
<div>3</div> <p>What do they do to get from feeling like the shaken glitter to feeling like the settled glitter. What or who helps them? Can they do anything to help themselves?</p>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <p>You can make use of the mind jars in future mindfulness sessions but also in school time in general as a timer to calm or as a calming focus when children need time out.</p>

Lesson 4 - Mindful Eating (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To practice mindful eating.

Success Criteria:

Pupils have experienced integrating mindfulness with an everyday activity.

Key Vocabulary:

mindful, notice, sensations, flavour, saliva, texture, taste, mindless.

Equipment & Resources:

- See Teaching Tips section for advice.
- A food item for each child. clementines are suggested but if children are allergic to these or do not like them, choose a suitable alternative e.g. raisins, grapes, cherry tomatoes or apple. The exercise is done with a whole clementine but you could give each child a few segments of a peeled clementine instead and miss out the peeling steps.
- Children should wash hands before beginning the session.

Introduction (2 minutes)

1	Explain that we are using food to practice their mindfulness today. When you are given the food, do not eat it or touch it yet.	
2	Sit the children at a table and give each child a clementine (or alternative).	

Main (12 minutes)

- 1

Look at the fruit. How would you describe it?
Imagine you are eating it for the first time. Look at its colour and texture.
- 2

Now focus on the details of the fruit, can you see the patterns on the skin? Are there any marks or dents?
Notice the colour, is it all one shade or other there other shades. Does it have a shine on it?
- 3

Think about how your body is feeling now. Are you feeling hungry, what words could you use to describe how your body feels?
- 4

Now, hold the clementine in your hand.
Hold it up to the light and see the light reflect from its surface.
- 5

Roll it gently, between your palms. Is it warm or cold? Hard or soft? Smooth or rough?
- 6

Smell it. How does it smell?
- 7

Now, I want you to try peeling the clementine in as few bits of peel as you can.
Can you create a long chain of peel?
While you are doing this, think about whether the small changes.
How does the peel feel?
- 8

Rolled the peeled clementine in your hand, how does it feel?
Look closely at it, count the segments in your head. Notice the way the pith surrounds each segment.
Hold it up to the light again.
- 9

Slowly break off one segment. How does it feel to do this. Do the segments separate easily, how do the revealed sides feel to your fingers?
- 10

Hold up one segment to the light, does the light come through?
Look at the segment in detail, how does each side differ?
- 11

Try peeling the pith off the outside of the segment if it comes away easily.
Notice how it feels to do this.
- 12

Put the segment in your mouth but don't chew it.
Explore it with your tongue being careful not to squash it or bite it.
Can you taste it without chewing it? Is there more saliva in your mouth than usual?
- 13

Close your eyes and very slowly using your tongue, put more pressure the segment to release the juice and flavour. How does it taste?

TEACHER NOTES

At any point you could take suggestions from children about what they have noticed.

VARIATION

If you are using segments, talk about whether it is translucent; can you see light through it?

TEACHER NOTES

This will depend upon whether it is an easy peel clementine - the idea is to slow the peeling down.

14	Now, chew it slowly for as long as you can without swallowing it all and notice the taste and texture as the parts holding the juice burst in your mouth.	
15	Take another segment and this time bite a tiny piece off at a time to eat the segment slowly.	
16	Eat the rest of the clementine, slowly and mindfully in which ever way you wish. Keep noticing the taste and texture in your mouth. Try chewing with different parts of your moth; front teeth, back teeth on each side.	
17	When you have completely finished, sit quietly and focus on breathing in and out slowly until everyone has finished.	

Conclusion (2 minutes)

1	Did children enjoy this experience? Did they slowly chew it or was it too hard because they just wanted to swallow it?	
2	Slowing down helps your mind to be in line with your body when it comes to how full you are. Have you ever taken a big plate of food because you thought you were really hungry and then only been able to eat half of it?	
3	Our brain takes around 20 minutes to realise we are full after our tummies are actually full; that is why you sometimes feel too full after a big meal or full up when you think you haven't eaten a lot. If you slow down, you can give your brain a chance to receive the messages from your body so you eat the best amount for you.	
4	Mindful eating also helps you to appreciate all the flavours of your food instead of gobbling it all down in a hurry. You can try this with all sorts of food; have you ever eaten a chocolate wafer bar as slowly as possible by nibbling all the chocolate off first, then eating one layer of wafer at a time? Or sucked a sweet until it was just a sliver? This is a mindful way of eating and can be much more satisfying.	
5	Something else that prevents mindful eating is doing something else while you eat especially watching a screen; you can mindlessly eat a huge tub of popcorn or a whole pizza when you really didn't need or appreciate all of it? That's all down to eating mindlessly.	

Lesson 5 - Finger tracing (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To use their own bodies as a focus for mindfulness.

Success Criteria:

Pupils have explored a techniques that they could use at any time to calm their thoughts and promote attention.

Key Vocabulary:

mindful, calm, notice, attention, inhale, exhale.

Equipment & Resources:

- See Teaching Tips section for advice.

Introduction (3 minutes)

<div>1</div> <div>Ask children to prepare themselves for some mindfulness.</div>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <div>Guidance is in the next step if you need it.</div>
<div>2</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find a comfortable sitting position in a chair with your feet flat on the floor*.• Shut your eyes or gaze gently towards the ground, not at other people.• Rest your hands gently on your legs.• Focus your awareness on the feeling of your feet touching the floor, the strong Earth is supporting you.• Try to straighten your back but don't strain upright.• Relax your shoulders. If they feel curved inwards, try to roll them up and back to relax the muscles.• Focus on your mouth and your tongue. You tongue should be lying relaxed in your mouth, not pushing anywhere. You mouth should not feel tight and tense, think about how you have your mouth when you are going to sleep; relaxed and not clenched tightly shut.</div>	
<div>3</div> <div><div>Breathe quietly in through your nose and out through your mouth, feel your lungs fill and empty. Sit quietly just concentrating on your breathing for a while.</div><div>Clean air coming in to your lungs, feel your lungs expanding like balloons and then silently let the air out again and feel your lungs exhaling.</div><div>Think about how your body feels when your lungs fill, do they pull your spine up straighter? Does the breath relax your muscles?</div><div>Breathe silently for a few moments.</div></div>	
<div>4</div> <div>If your mind wanders and you start to think of other things, try to bring your mind back to just focusing on your breathing.</div>	

Main (10 minutes)

<div>1</div> <div>Open your eyes and look at your hand.</div>	
<div>2</div> <div>Fan your fingers out like a star.</div>	
<div>3</div> <div>You will be using the pointing finger from your other hand to trace slowly along the outside of the hand that is fanned out.</div>	<div>VARIATION</div> <div>Children could lay the hand on the table in front of them.</div>
<div>4</div> <div>Start from the outside of your little finger or the outside of your thumb (whichever feels more comfortable).</div>	
<div>5</div> <div>Inhale through your nose as you trace the outside of the first finger. Pause your breathing at the top. Then exhale through the mouth as you trace along the inside of this finger.</div>	
<div>6</div> <div>Pause and then inhale as you trace the outside of the next finger and exhale as you trace the inside. Continue like this until you have traced your whole hand and then go back again, keeping your breathing in line with your tracing.</div>	
<div>7</div> <div>Keep the moments and the breathing slow but comfortable.</div>	
<div>8</div> <div>Notice the feeling in your hand that is still as your finger traces it.</div>	<div>TEACHER NOTES</div> <div>The movement, if applied slowly should have a calming and relaxing effect.</div>
<div>9</div> <div>Try starting with a fist held in front of you instead of a star. Uncurl each finger as it is traced until your whole hand is open. Try this with the opposite hand to see how it feels.</div>	<div>LEADERSHIP</div> <div>This is a quick mindful practice that you can do any time to relieve worry and calm yourself. You can even do it with your hand under the table so no one else sees if you prefer.</div>
<div>10</div> <div>Let's try another hand exercise. Hold your hands so that the tips of each finger touch the same finger on the other hand with your palms held apart.</div>	
<div>11</div> <div>Open the thumbs and try to circle them around one another without touching, both thumbs should move in a cycling motion.</div>	
<div>12</div> <div>Place the thumbs back together and move onto the pointer fingers with the same motion, then continue until you have done all of the fingers.</div>	<div>VARIATION</div> <div>Keep the thumbs apart and gradually open up your hands as you do each finger.</div>
<div>13</div> <div>Now come back from your little finger to your thumb. This time rotating in the opposite direction.</div>	
<div>14</div> <div>Now hold your hands up palms facing each other about shoulder-width apart.</div>	

15	<p>In a moment you are going to clap them together, then return them to their original position and then repeat this two more times.</p> <p>End up holding your hands how you are now.</p> <p>Then close your eyes and pay close attention to what you are feeling in your hands.</p>	
16	<p>Do this now.</p>	
17	<p>While you are concentrating on the feeling, keep your body as still as you can and just notice the feeling and how it changes for about 30 seconds.</p>	
18	<p>Rub your palms together a few times to warm them and then place them gently over your eyes for a few seconds to end the session.</p>	

Conclusion (2 minutes)

1	Did children enjoy this experience? How did it feel to do this?	
2	Do they think that this is something they could try another time? When do they think it would help?	

Lesson 6 - Visualisation (Year 6)

Lesson Overview

Learning Objectives:

To reflect upon their experiences of mindfulness using a visualisation and think of everyday mindful activities to try.

Success Criteria:

Pupils can explain how they could make mindful moments part of every day life and how this could improve the way they feel.

Key Vocabulary:

Visualisation exercise.

Equipment & Resources:

- See Teaching Tips section for advice.
- You could use a lavender spray as part of the visualisation exercise; it should be a silent spray rather than an aerosol. You can make a lavender spray by mixing some water with a little lavender essential oil in a spray bottle.

Introduction (3 minutes)

1	Ask children to think back to the mindful activities that they have done over the past weeks.	
2	<div>Make a list of the aspects of mindfulness that they have explored. They can add things that they have tried outside the sessions as well.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathing and types of breathing.• Knowledge of how the brain works and what mindfulness does to it.• Using a mind jar as a focus object.• Mindful eating.• Using physical movements to calm yourself; finger tracing.</div>	

Main (10 minutes)

- 1

Explain that we are going to settle into a good position for Mindfulness to do a visualisation exercise. Do children remember what this is?
- 2

- Find a comfortable sitting position in a chair with your feet flat on the floor*.
 - Shut your eyes if you are comfortable to do so.
 - Some children will feel more focused if they shut their eyes, others will not feel comfortable doing this. If they do not feel comfortable with eyes shut, they should gaze gently towards the ground, not at other people.
 - Rest your hands gently on your legs.
 - Focus your awareness on the feeling of your feet touching the floor, the strong Earth is supporting you.
 - Try to straighten your back but don't strain upright. Imagine a string coming out of the top of your head with a floating balloon attached to it. The balloon is stretching you gently upright.
 - Relax your shoulders. Bring them up towards your ears then roll them back to relax the muscles.
 - Focus on your mouth and your tongue. Your tongue should be lying relaxed in your mouth, not pushing anywhere. Your mouth should not feel tight and tense, think about how you have your mouth when you are going to sleep; relaxed and not clenched tightly shut.
- 3

Picture yourself standing in a lush green field.

Feel the grass between your toes.

Feel the warm sunlight shining down on you.
- 4

Bring the focus to your breathing. It should be calm and relaxed.
- 5

Picture yourself crossing the field, there is a forest on the other side of the field and you are walking towards it.

Notice that the field is sloping upwards a bit so you need to put effort into your walking.

Your breath speeds a little.
- 6

You reach the edge of the forest at the top of the hill.

You stand still for a bit.

Listen.

Can you hear your heart beating?
- 7

What sounds can you hear around you? The sound of birds or a distant plane.

Perhaps you can hear the leaves of the trees rustling gently in the breeze. Can you hear movement in the forest?

Take some calming breaths while you listen to the sounds.
- 8

You continue your walk though the forest, can you feel and hear the crunchy leaves beneath your feet?

What can you smell?

What can you hear?

VARIATION

Some children might like to have bare feet for the visualisation to come.

VARIATION

If you have a lavender spray you could use it now.

- 9 You see that the trees are thinning out and ahead you see something else. You are not sure what it is. You feel curious.
Walk to the edge of the forest and look out. You are on the ridge of a sand dune that slopes down to the sea.
- 10 Step onto the sand.
Feel it between your toes.
Is the sand warm or cool?
It is soft sand.
Take a moment to breathe at the top of the dune. Listen to the calls of the sea birds.
- 11 You can hear the gentle waves at the coastline below.
Look at the shimmering sea. Gaze at the gentle waves moving up and down.
Slow your breathing to the speed of the waves... up... and down..... up and down.
- 12 Walk slowly through the sand towards the sea.
Can you see anything on the sea? Maybe you can see some sail boats in the distance. Maybe a big ferry on the horizon.
As you are walking notice more details around you; white froth on the tops of the waves, birds diving into the sea, perhaps a fish jumping out and then down again beneath the waves.
Gentle shouts of people playing by the sea.
- 13 Sit down on the sand. Feel it between your fingers.
Feel the warm sun on your body.
- 14 Lie back and look at the fluffy clouds above.
A distant plane is soaring across the sky.
The clouds are drifting.
You hear the sounds around you but you are totally relaxed.
You close your eyes and just breathe...
- 15 In a moment you will hear a chime, this is your sign to return to the room and open your eyes.
- 16 Ring the chime.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

1	Ask children how they are feeling. Did they enjoy the visualisation? Did they manage to get absorbed into it and keep other thoughts out of their mind?	
2	Reflect upon how powerful their minds are; they can take adventures like this whenever they wish just by taking a mindful walk. They could also make any real walk a mindful walk by noticing things that they usually miss and by stopping to look and feel what is around them.	

Appendix (images)

Brain Responses

Name _____

A situation that makes me worried, scared or angry	Lizard Brain Response	Thinking Brain Response

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Image 1:

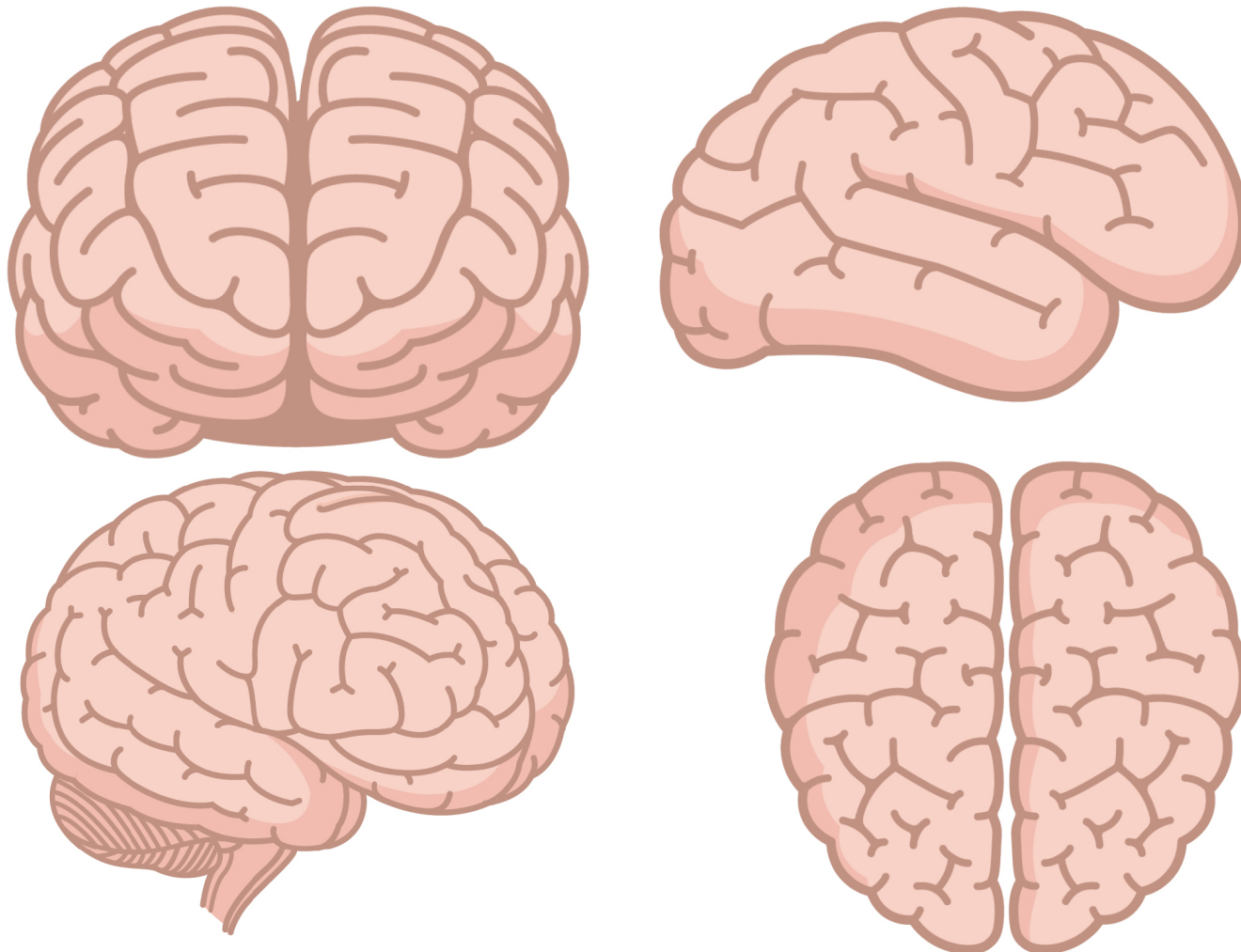
ID1145 Brain Responses

The Human Brain

Side View



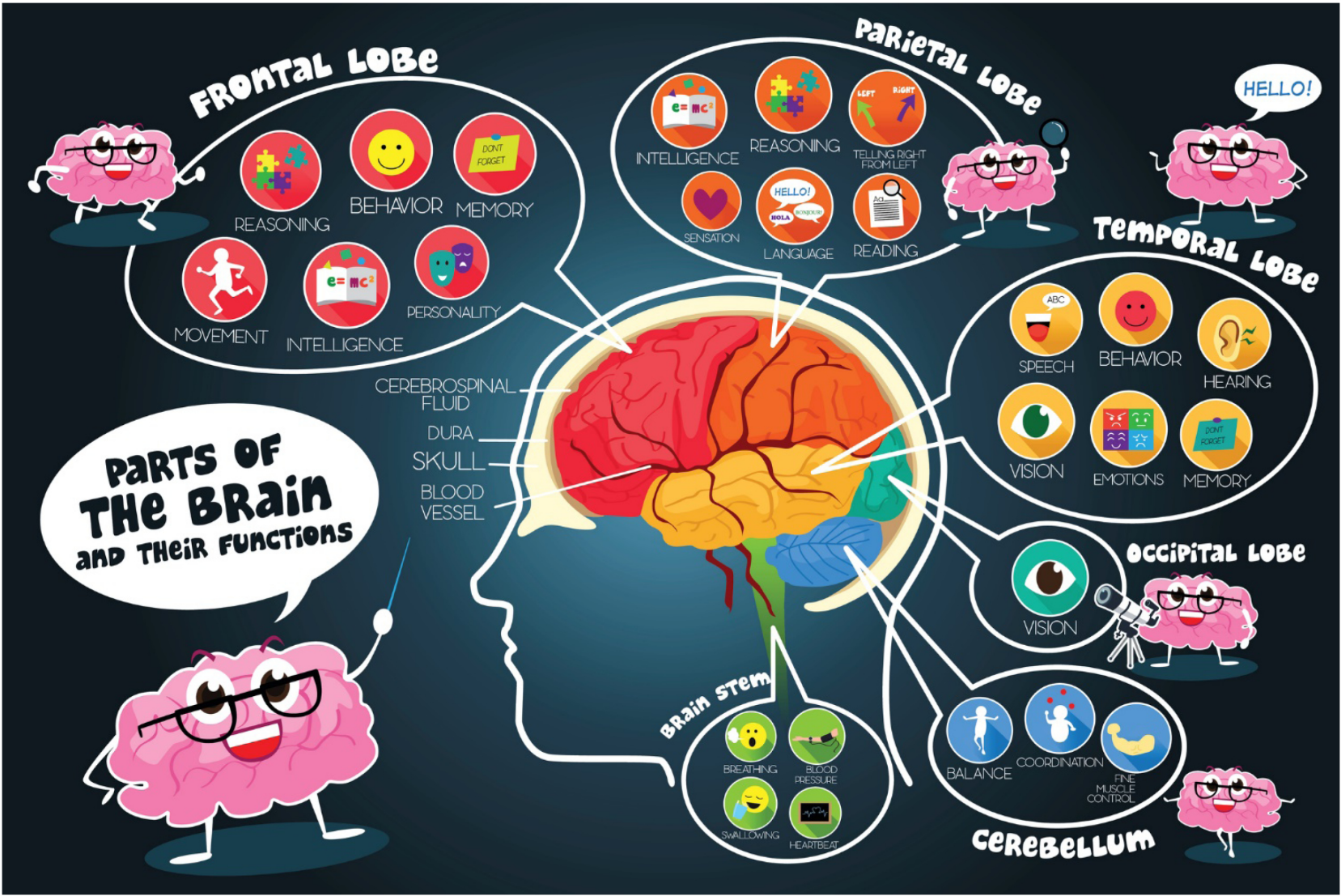
Human Brain Views



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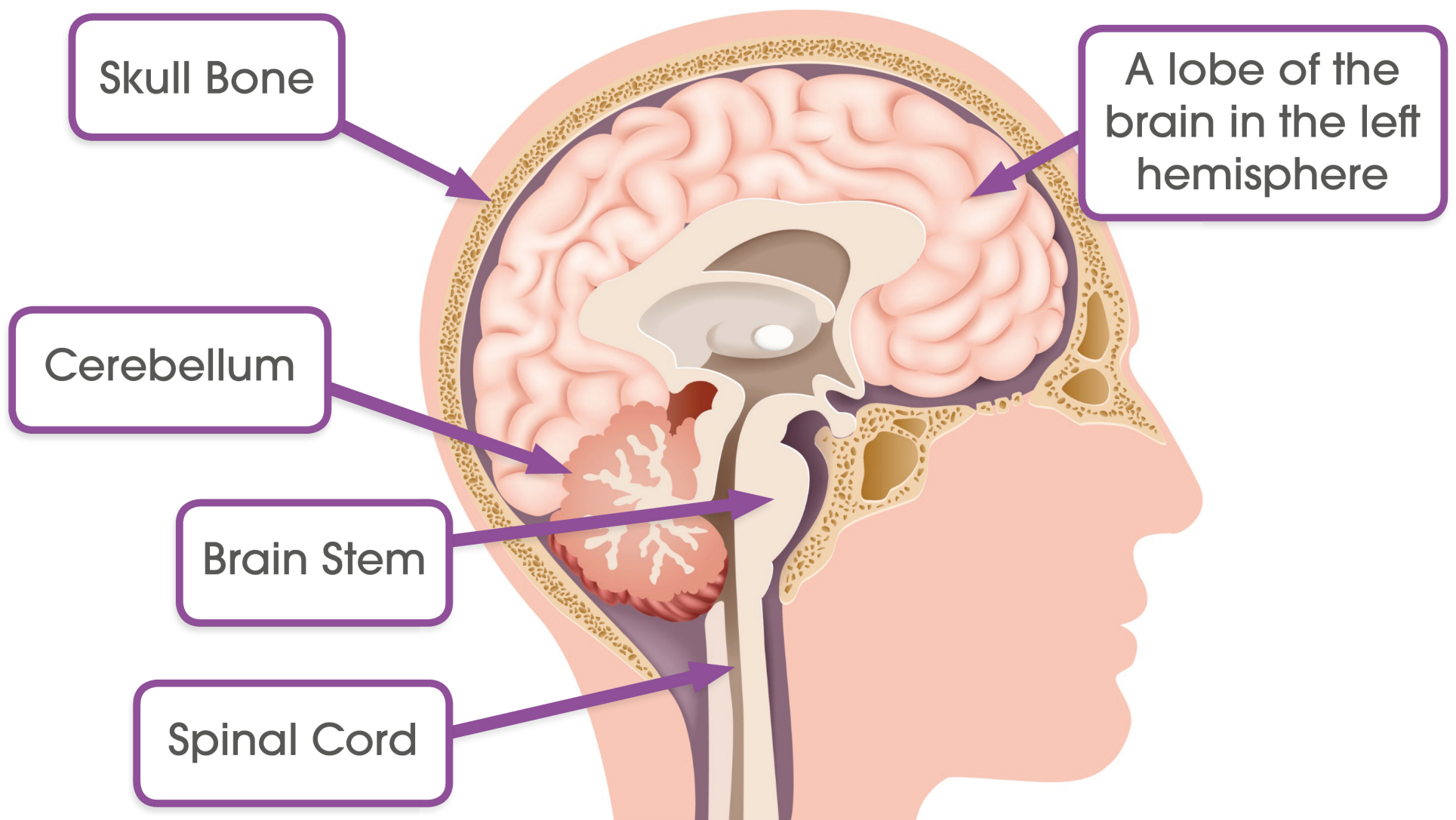
The parts of the human brain



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Inside the Brain – Cross-Section

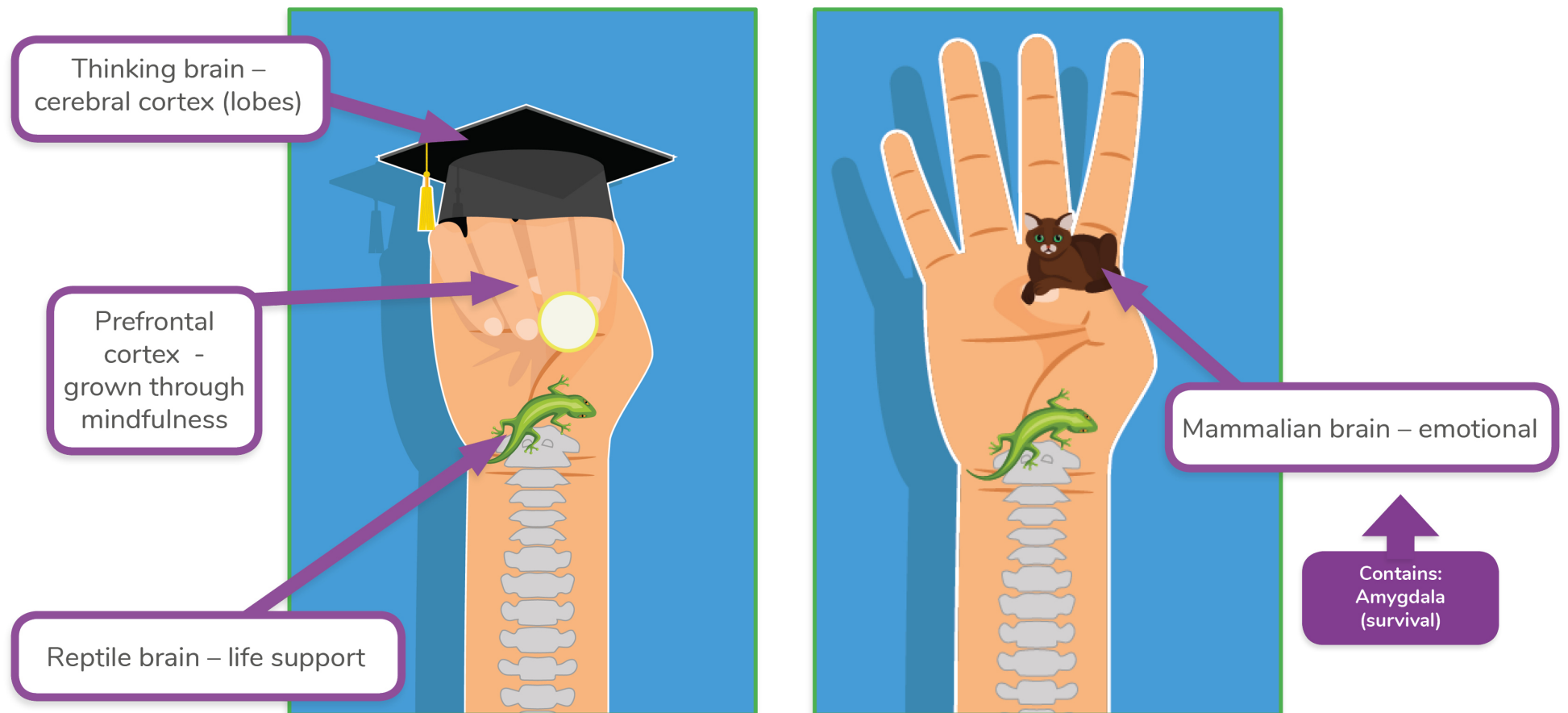


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The Hand Model of the Human Brain

Developed by Dr Dan Siegel



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Neuroplasticity in Action

You must learn your times tables.



It's ok I can just add on each time so 5×4 is $4 + 4$ that's 8, plus 4, that's 12, plus 4 makes 16, plus 4 makes 20!



You are slow in working out the answers.



I need to think of a different way to do this but my brain wants to do the adding way.



I am just going to have to try to memorise them properly. I'll start with the 2s and practice every day till I remember them and then I'll move on to the 3s. It will take some work but I know that I can train my brain to make these connections.



A few weeks later

Wow, you have really improved your speed when you do calculations, well done



I know, I have been working really hard and now my brain can do them a better way and it's becoming a lot easier than adding on ever was!



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How to make a Class Mind Jar

You will need:

- A clean, clear glass jar with lid. Remove all labels.
- Warm water.
- Clear glue or glitter glue.
- A glue gun to seal the lids (teacher to do this part). If the lids are not sealed, then care must be taken not to open or loosen the lids.
- Glitter.
- Food Colouring (optional).
- Glycerine (optional) - this can be used in place of the glue to thicken the water.

To make:

- Fill the jar with warm water and add either the glitter glue or the clear glue.
- Stir the mixture to dissolve the glue. The glue thickens the water.
- Add additional glitter and food colouring as desired.
- Seal the lid on using the glue gun.



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