

Suzy's World

Brain - What does my brain do?

Fact

- Your brain acts as the “control centre” of your body.
- It sends and receives messages all over your body in the form of electrical pulses using your nervous system (like a computer and the internet!).
- One part of your brain is controlled by you – you ask your body and muscles to move and your senses to work. This part of your brain allows you to think, learn, feel, move, talk, see, hear – in fact do everything that makes you, you.
- The other part of your brain works automatically to keep you alive by constantly making your heartbeat, your lungs breathe and by keeping your digestive system working. These are called involuntary actions – you do them automatically, without thinking.

Do you know

- Your skull is made up of 28 bones. New-born babies have a soft spot in the front of their skull to allow them to be born easily. But as the baby grows that spot gets harder and harder.
- Your brain is surrounded by a jelly-like liquid to protect it.
- Different parts of your brain are in charge of different jobs. The left side of your brain does all your thinking (logical) stuff and the right side of your brain does all the creative stuff.
- The human brain is the most intelligent brain in the world
- A whale's brain is the largest in the world (about the size of 3year old curled up in a ball)
- You're never too young or too old to learn new things.
- Your brain is just like the rest of your body – use it or lose it!

Experiments you can do

Tease your brain. This can be tricky so you may have to try it a few times. Hold your hands out in front of you and put your right arm over your left. Turn your hands so the palms are touching and let your fingers on your right-hand slip between the fingers on your left and hold on tight. Without letting go twist your arms so your hands move down and towards your body. Keep moving them until they're up in front of your chest. Now, get someone to point to a finger (without touching it) and see if you can move that finger.

What happens? What happens when they point to that finger and touch it? Can you move it then? Your eyes are seeing a picture of your hands clasped together and sending that image to your brain. But the fingers on your right hand now look like they're the fingers on your left hand so your brain can get a bit confused. If your friend points to a finger on the left the brain thinks it must be a finger on your left hand and sends a message down your left arm – but really it should have sent the message down your right arm.

Other Investigations

The left side of your brain controls the right side of your body and the right side of the brain controls the left side of your body. How many people in your class are left handed and how many are right handed? Try doing things with the other hand like writing, throwing a ball or brushing your hair – how do you get on. Some people can use both hands. That's called being ambidextrous (am-bee-decks-truss). Is anyone ambidextrous in your class?

Jokes

What did the question say to the brain? Can you think of my answer?

From Nikki Leigh