

Name: _____

Your Brain

by Cynthia Sherwood



You may not realize that you have a boss, just like adults do at work. But when it comes to your body, your brain is your boss! It is in charge of just about everything you do. When you remember what you ate for breakfast, you use your brain. When you jump up and down, you use your brain. When you draw a picture, you use your brain. Even when you are dreaming, you use your brain.

The brain looks like a wrinkled, wet sponge. In adults, it weighs only about three pounds, but it is made up of billions of nerve cells. These cells send and receive electrical signals that direct all of your body's activities. Sometimes, like when you are learning at school, you know you are using your brain. Many times, though, your brain controls your body without you even thinking about it. The "brain stem" takes care of things your body does automatically, like breathing air, pumping blood, and digesting food.

The biggest part of your brain is called your "cerebrum" (suh-ree-brum). This is the thinking part of your brain. It controls your memory, the movements you choose to make, your ability to figure things out, and your imagination. The cerebrum is made up of two halves. It may sound mixed up, but the left side controls the right side of your body and the right side controls your left side.

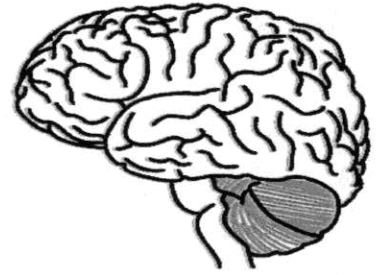
Even your feelings come from your brain. Scientists think emotions are controlled by a part of your brain called the "amygdala" (uh-mig-duh-luh). It is shaped like an almond and is only an inch long. So next time you get in a bad mood, you can blame it on your brain.

You should be glad you have a human brain. It is very complex, which means we can think in different, more complicated ways than other animals. In fact, every day your brain produces about 70-thousand thoughts. No wonder your head hurts when you have too much homework!

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1. According to the information in the article, what does your brain look like and how much does it weigh?

2. Which part of your brain controls your memory?

3. Which part of your brain automatically controls parts of your body without you having to think about them?

4. Which part of your brain controls feelings, like happiness, sadness, frustration, and anger?

5. Why does the author say that your cerebrum seems "mixed up"?

6. Your brain is made of nerve cells. What do nerve cells do?

7. Which statement from the article is an opinion?

- a. Even your feelings come from your brain.
- b. Sometimes, your brain controls your body without you even thinking about it.
- c. You should be glad you have a human brain.
- d. Every day your brain produces 70-thousand thoughts.