

Epilepsy awareness

Topic

Epilepsy

Aims

- To develop reading and speaking skills
- To watch a video and learn first aid

Age/level

Secondary/B1+

Time

50–60 minutes +

Materials

1. Student worksheet
2. Extra resources: infographic and video (<https://www.epilepsy.com/learn/seizure-first-aid-and-safety/first-aid-seizures-stay-safe-side>)

Introduction

This lesson gives students the opportunity to learn about the brain and a brain disorder known as epilepsy. It can be freestanding or used in conjunction with November's annual Epilepsy Awareness Month.

Procedure

1. Warm-up game (10 minutes)	<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: 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.
2. Infographic and discussion (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the board write a clue: <i>Anyone with a brain can suffer from this illness.</i> Ask what illness this might refer to and encourage guesses. (Answer: epilepsy. Other possible answers include Parkinson’s disease, migraines, autism, stroke, dementia.) • Hand out copies of the infographic or project it onto a screen. Ask: What is the infographic about and what do the figures refer to? Elicit ideas. Read aloud the definition of epilepsy and 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.) • Put students into pairs and give each pair a copy of the worksheet. Have them follow the instructions. Monitor the discussions and give help where necessary.
3. Video (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the board write: <i>Anyone with a brain can suffer from epilepsy. Anyone with a brain can help people with epilepsy.</i> 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 <i>want</i> 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 and pause at 0:55. Ask students: Were your predictions correct?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Q.1–3 and play the first 55 seconds of the video again. Discuss the answers to Q.1–3. Then play the rest of the video and check the answers to Q. 4–6. (Optional: have students carry out a role play. Use a new location, e.g. in a shop, in the street).
4. Project (leaflet or poster)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give students some topics to choose from. Ask them to research their topic and produce a leaflet or poster, with the aim of informing others about epilepsy. Topics: Famous people with epilepsy / Different types of epilepsy / How to support someone who has epilepsy• Have students put their posters/leaflets around the classroom. Encourage them to share and discuss their information.

Contributed by

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