

Have you ever felt sick to your stomach before a test?

Have you ever had days where you had so much homework you had trouble sleeping?

Have you ever been so worried you couldn't sleep or had a bad headache?

Did you know these might be feelings of stress?

Have you ever heard someone say "I'm really stressed out?"

Adults say this all the time but kids have a lot of things going on in their lives that can cause stress too.

So what is stress?

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(You have a handout to write this on)

Stress is the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure.

-<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

How can stress make you feel?

How can stress make you feel?

- angry
- frustrated
- scared
- sick
- sad
- not hungry
- cranky
- unfocused

Can stress be good?

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Good stress is the type of stress we feel when we are excited. It might make us nervous or overwhelmed, but in a good way. **This means there is no actual threat or fear.**

Can you think of any examples?



Can stress be good?

Good stress is the type of stress we feel when we are excited. It might make us nervous, but in a good way.

Can you think of any examples?

- when we ride a roller coaster
- on a first date
- the first time we do something new and fun
- competing in a contest, sports event, etc.
- performing/speaking in front of a crowd

Now that we know what good stress is, what do you think bad stress is?

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Bad stress: being unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure

Two Types:

**Acute Stress:** a quick surprise (that is not happy or exciting) that needs a response.

**Chronic Stress:** when we repeatedly face stressors that take a heavy toll on us. Our bodies weren't designed to experience chronic stress, so we can face negative health effects from this (both physical and emotional.)

Bad stress could become good stress and good stress could become bad stress. For example, if we see something as a threat, our body will react to negative stress. But if we see something as a challenge instead, the fear will turn into excitement so our body will react to positive stress.

Not all forms of bad stress can become good stress, even if we try to change our mind set about it.

So then, what should we do? What can we do if we're feeling stressed?

Living a balanced life is important to keeping stress away?  
What do you think a balanced life looks like?

Living a balanced life is important to keeping stress away?  
What do you think a balanced life looks like?

Keep your SELF in mind.

**Sleep**-getting enough sleep helps us handle stress.

**Exercise**-physical and emotional exercises (ex: breathing exercises, meditation, etc.) can help us get rid of stress.

**Leisure**-doing something you enjoy.

**Food**-eating healthy food will help us deal with stress.

There are many strategies that can help us when we're stressed, because there are many parts of us that react to the stress. Your body responds as if it is in danger. For example, if you run into a bear.

**Your brain** responds by your heart beating faster so you can breathe in more oxygen, which is important if you need to fight or run away from the bear.

**Your adrenaline** increases (energy) so you can move faster or be stronger.

**Your "smart brain"** goes offline because if you see a bear, it doesn't matter if you can do your math problems.

**Your digestive system** is suppressed, which is why you often don't feel hungry, because if a bear is going to eat you it doesn't matter if you have a snack first.

**You may not feel sleepy** because your body knows it is unsafe to fall asleep when there is a bear around.

When you try to actually respond in this state, our body responds to help us stay safe. On instinct (in the moment) we would likely respond in one of three ways:

1. Fight
2. Flight
3. Freeze

If we run into a bear, we might try to fight the bear off, we might try to run away, or we might freeze/hide/play dead.

These responses are automatic, so you don't know what you're deciding to do, you just do it. Different situations cause a different reaction.

For example, if you jump out and say "boo!" to someone, they might:

- a) look like a statue, they're so surprised. (freeze)
- b) back away or run away (flight)
- c) hit, yell, or get mad (fight)

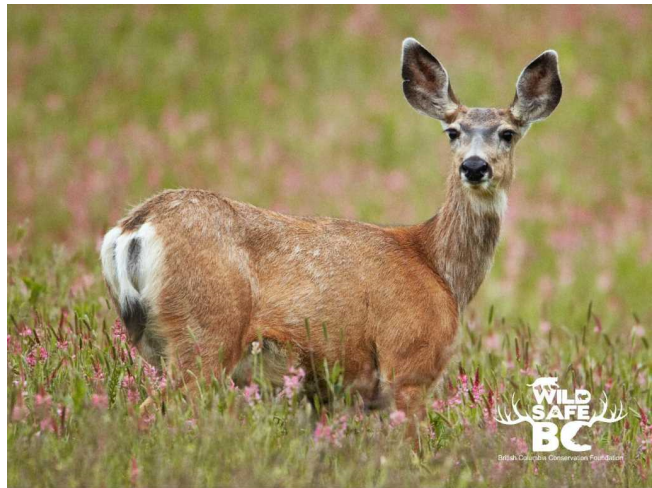


Animals also have these automatic responses.

For example, when a deer is scared or surprised, what does it do?

What about a bunny or a mouse?

What do you think a tiger would do?



What do you think these animals feel when they react? What is their breathing like? What would their muscles feel like?

Would their heart beat fast or slow?

What happens when they are no longer scared or surprised?

Is this relatable to humans?

Game: How would you react?

Each person is responsible of coming up with three questions that students may fight, flight, or freeze to. When I have all questions, I will read them out and we will have to put up our first reaction with colored.

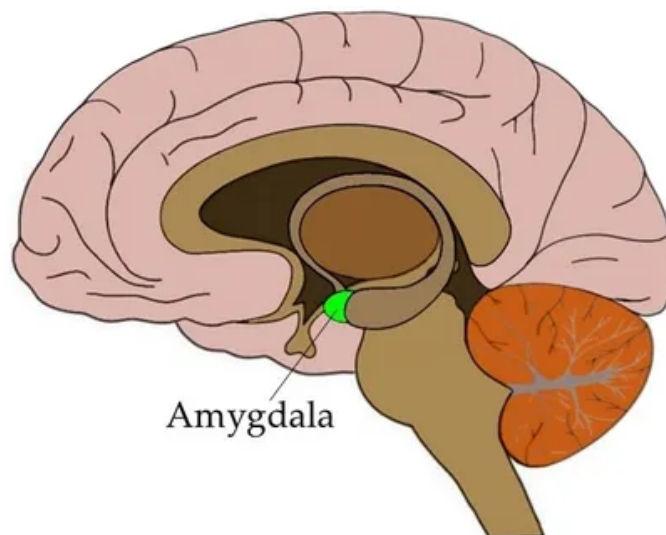
Red=Fight

Blue=Flight

White=Freeze

Game: How would you react?

How you think you would react when we talk about it, might be different than how you would actually react. This is because our brain does this for us automatically as a response to how we're feeling.



We have a part of our brain called the **amygdala**, **(ah-mig-dahla)** it is like an alarm in your brain, it is always checking to see if you are safe. If you get worried, stressed or scared then it turns on the alarm. Our body responds to this by either fight, flight, or freeze.

## Journal Response

Apply what we've learned about fight, flight, and freeze to your own life. Please complete this response in full sentences with neat writing.

So now that we know what stress is, what it could look and feel like, and what we could do, let's talk about what actually causes us stress.

Do you think we all get stressed out by the same stressors?

Stress is very common and is okay to have stressful thoughts and feelings about many different things. So many things cause us stress, that we can probably find something associated with stress (good or bad) for every letter of the alphabet!

Let's try!

\*Stress A-Z Worksheet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Nf2Pzcketg>

While you're watching the video, I will hand out the worksheet. You can fill some ideas in as you watch the video if some come up, or wait until the end to fill them in.