



Lesson Activities for Grades 1-4

This lesson plan was adapted from Epilepsy Action. For more information, please visit www.epilepsy.org.uk.

Note: Depending on the grade and age of your classroom, you may find the *Preschool–K lesson plan* equally appropriate. This lesson plan is available at www.epilepsyclassroom.com.

ACTIVITY 1

Learning Objective

To understand what epilepsy is and how seizures affect the brain and body

Introduction

Explain to the students that

- They are going to learn about a medical condition called epilepsy.
- The focus of this session will be on understanding what epilepsy is and what effect it has on the body.

Ask: Has anyone heard of epilepsy before? What do you know about it? Share and discuss ideas.

Give a brief explanation of epilepsy.

A condition (not an illness) that means that the brain does not always work as it should.

What is the role of the brain in the body?

What might happen if it cannot always carry out its role?

Explain that the students are going to explore these questions in a practical way.

Activity

This activity teaches students how neurons work in the brain. By working together, they can see that the parts of the brain cooperate with other parts of the brain.

- Ask the students to stand in a circle and join hands (tips of fingers could be joined instead, if students are reluctant to hold hands).
- Explain that the students are each going to represent a brain nerve cell (neuron).
- What does the brain do?
- Each neuron is important in sending messages from the brain to different parts of the body to control it.
- Ask one pair of students to send a version of “The Wave” around the circle (where students with joined hands raise them in the air after the pair before them in the line have raised their hands). This should create a domino effect so that eventually the wave reaches the pair who started it. Ask the starting pair to stop the wave when it reaches them again.

Explain that neurons work in this way, producing brain waves that give instructions to the rest of a person’s body.



Recap the definition of epilepsy that was given at the start of the session, and explain that epilepsy causes a disruption in these brain waves.

Demonstrate this in the circle. Ask another student to start the wave again but ask another student halfway around to break contact with a partner's hand so that there is a gap in the circle. What happens to the "wave"? Introduce a beanbag "message" into the circle and pass it around the circle with another student breaking contact. What happens to the beanbag?

Now ask the students to imagine that the "message" being passed through the neurons is a message about *movement*. Pass the beanbag around with another student breaking contact with a partner's hand. How would this affect the body?

Repeat with beanbags representing messages to do with

1. Senses
2. Emotions and memory
3. Sight

What would happen to the person if neuron activity in the *whole brain* were disrupted? Explain that, in breaking the wave pattern neurons use to pass information in the brain, the students have shown what happens during a seizure in someone who has epilepsy. These seizures only last a short time, and then brain waves continue as they did before the seizure. People experience different types of seizures because their neurons are affected in different places in their brain.

Review and Discuss

- What have we learned about epilepsy so far?
- What questions do you have about epilepsy?



ACTIVITY 2

Learning Objective

To empathize with a student who has epilepsy. Ideal for Social Studies lessons.

Introduction

Recap the first activity. What is epilepsy? How can the body be affected when a person has a seizure? Discuss what the students have remembered. Remind the students that many people have epilepsy, and it is not contagious.

Explain that in this session they are going to hear the story of one student who has epilepsy.

Activity

- Watch the “Advice From Students” video on EpilepsyAdvocate.com.
- Discuss the information presented in the clip.
- Ask your students what they were thinking while they watched the video.
- Sample questions to facilitate the discussion:
 - How old is the student in the video?
 - Where does he live?
 - How old was he when he found out that he had epilepsy?
 - How did he find out?
 - How has it changed his life?
 - How does he manage his epilepsy?
- Ask the students to imagine that they are the student in the video.
- Read out a list of scenarios from his story and ask the students to “thought-track” the student’s thoughts at each of those moments. (This could be carried out as a written task in the first person on whiteboards or as a drama task if the class is familiar with the convention of “thought-tracking.”)
 1. After his first seizure
 2. At the doctor’s office or hospital when he was told he had epilepsy
 3. After he had been given medication to take
 4. Now, years after his first seizure

Ask the students to share their thoughts for each “moment” before reading out the next event so that the sequence of the story is maintained and the session ends on a positive note.

Review and Discuss

- How do you think students who have epilepsy might feel about their condition?
- Who would you go to if you wanted to talk about it?
- Who would you go to for help and support?