



Meet Myg

Lesson Plan



Meet Myg
Middle/High School

Target Concepts

- The brain has a full-time alarm system that is constantly looking out for potential threats.
- Perceived threats trigger a *fight/flight/freeze impulse*. This impulse is called a *Myg Moment*.
- Animals and humans both have *amygdalae*, and therefore both have *Myg Moments*.
- For humans the *fight/flight/freeze survival instinct* is not always helpful. For this reason it is important to recognize this impulse for what it is, in order to choose whether following it will be helpful or harmful.

Lesson Preparation

- ✓ Read and/or review the video, script, lesson plan, and handouts
- ✓ Print primer worksheet (one per student/pair/group)
- ✓ Print My Myg Moment worksheet (one per student)
- ✓ Print “Home Letter” and video script (one per student)

Review

This review activity is designed to activate students’ learning from the previous lesson. Students are asked to review what they remember about seeking and avoiding.

The following script is intended to provide a general guide for how you may choose to lead this activity:

- “Before we begin our new Brain Talk lesson, let’s review what we remember about seeking and avoiding.”
- [Individually, in pairs, or in small groups] “Choose an animal and think/talk about when your animal would simultaneously experience both seek and avoid urges, which one wins out, and why.”
- “Now describe a situation when *you* simultaneously experience seek and avoid urges. Which one wins out, and why?”
- “Who would like to share about their experience?” (class discussion to follow)

Primer

This primer activity is designed to prepare students for the lesson by activating known information to scaffold new learning. Students are asked to consider various alarm systems and their purposes.

The following script is intended to provide a general guide for how you may choose to lead this activity:

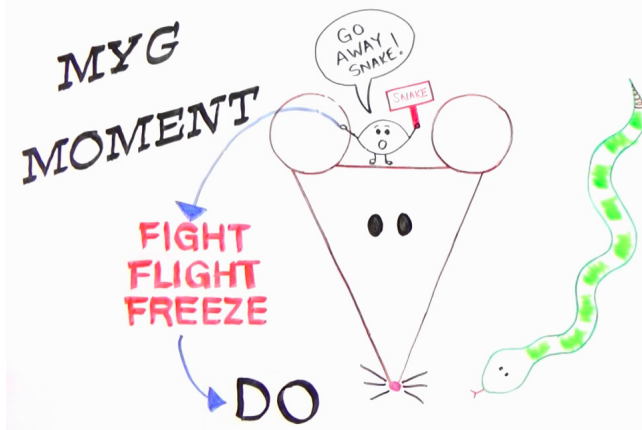
- “Today we’ll be talking about the brain’s alarm system.”
- “What types of alarm systems do you know about? How does X alarm work? How does X help things stay safe? What would happen if X wasn’t working?”

Provide the primer worksheet for students to discuss/complete [Individually, in pairs, or in groups].



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Watch Video: Meet Myg



Guided Instruction

Discussion Points:

- Myg Moments in all creatures can lead to three different types of reactions: fight, flight, or freeze. Myg urges these reactions with the hope that the threatening thing goes away.
 - Talk about animals that typically have primary fight reactions. What are other ways they might react in a Myg Moment?
 - Talk about animals that typically have primary flight reactions. What are other ways they might react in a Myg Moment?
 - Talk about animals that typically have primary freeze reactions. What are other ways they might react in a Myg Moment?
- Humans have Myg Moments too. What are common situations/triggers for human Myg Moments? What does fight/flight/freeze look like for a human versus an animal?
- Although alarms are helpful by alerting us to danger, they can become problematic when they are overactive (e.g., overly sensitive smoke detector, overly sensitive car alarm, etc.). What might happen if the brain's Myg is overactive?

Activity

- "My Myg Moment" Worksheet

Background Information

- The *amygdala* is an almond-shaped cluster of neurons located within the limbic system, which is activated by fearful stimuli.
- When the *amygdala* is activated, it blocks information from going to the higher-order thinking areas of the brain and initiates the reactionary survival instinct called *fight, flight, or freeze*.
- The *fight, flight, freeze survival instinct* has helped keep animals (and humans) alive throughout history by helping them react quickly to avoid things that appear threatening.
- However, for humans, this survival instinct is not always helpful. For this reason it is important to recognize this impulse for what it is, in order to choose whether following it will be helpful or harmful.
- Common *fight* reactions for humans include yelling, hitting and arguing. Common *flight* reactions for humans include procrastinating and engaging in off-task behaviors. Common *freeze* reactions for humans include drawing a blank and refusing to participate in an activity.



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Taking it Further

- Provide the script for the Meet Myg video and invite students to create a poster illustrating the target concepts, design a book corresponding to the script, or recreate their own movie using the script.
- Look for cross-curricular opportunities to identify times when people (literary characters, historical figures, etc.) experience fear-based Myg Moment reactions.

Teacher Notes

- Often, animals and humans engage in fight, flight, and/or freeze in quick succession rather than only experiencing one per event (e.g., a deer initially freezes, and then runs).
- Help students look for opportunities to help students connect this lesson to their own lives by identifying situations that create Myg Moments for them (e.g., tests, competitive sports, etc.).