

# Mind Up- Unit 1 Getting Focused

## Lesson 1: How Our Brains Work

### GOALS

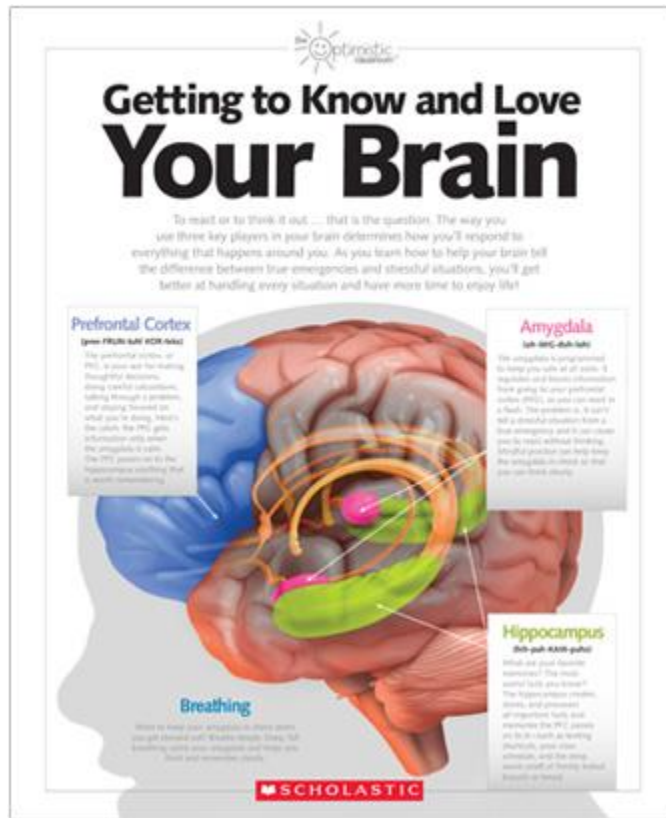
- Children identify the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the prefrontal cortex (PFC) on a diagram of the brain.
- Children will give a simple definition of these three parts of the brain.

# Just Breathe



Click the Picture

# Security Guard- Guard Dog



- **Amygdala**- The amygdala is a pair of almond shaped structures that reacts to fear, danger, and threat. The amygdala regulates our emotional state by acting as the brains “security guard”, protecting us from threats.

When we are safe the amygdala sends information that allows us to think and react.

When we are stressed or fearful the amygdala blocks our ability to think and react.

This is where the concept of “fight, flight, or freeze” comes from.

What would you do?



What would you do?

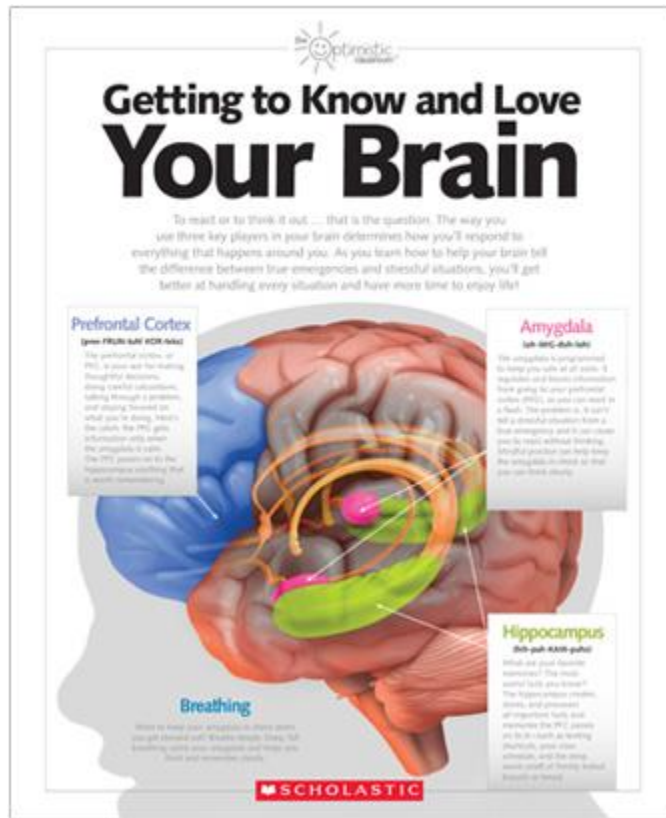


# Brain Games: Fear Response



Click the Picture

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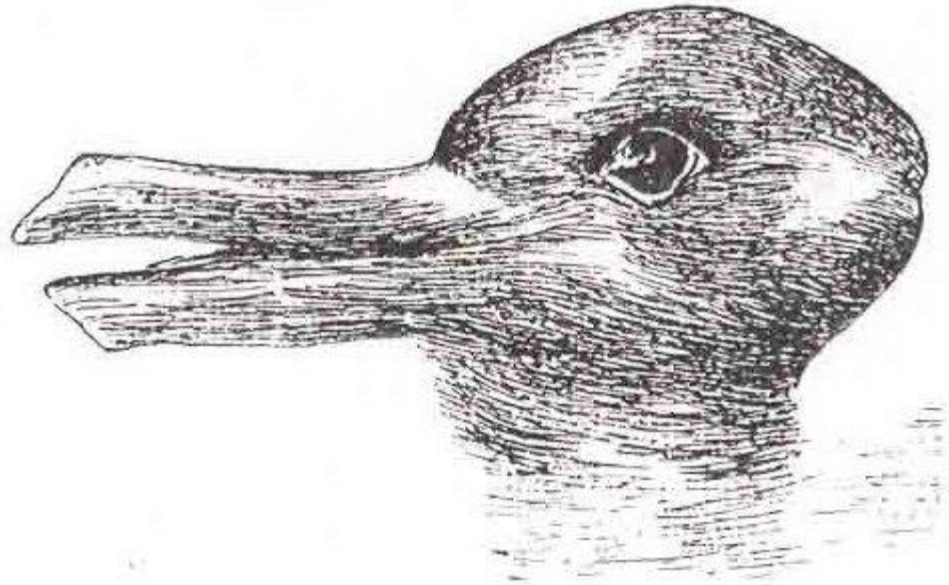
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# The Old Lady and the Beauty

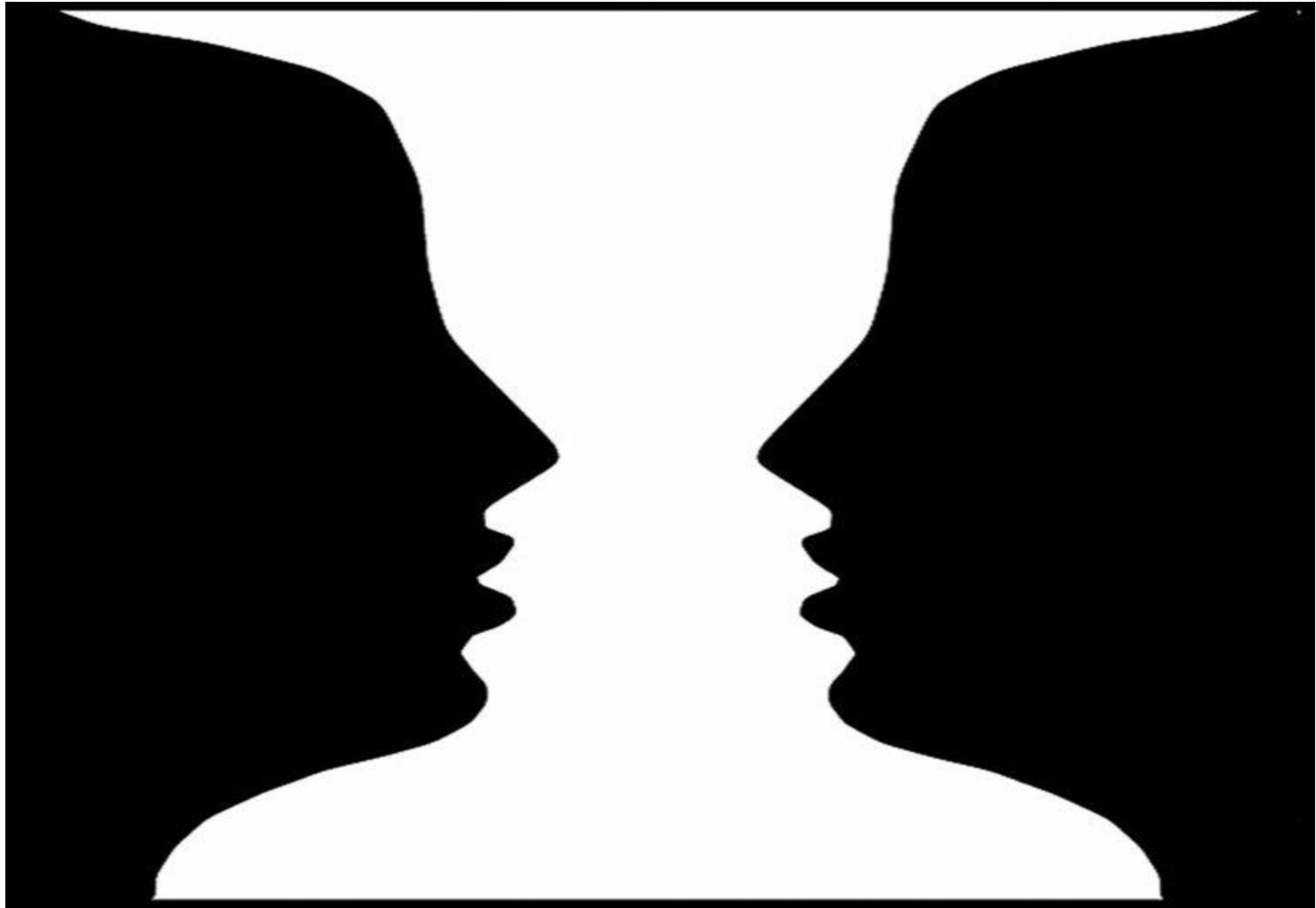




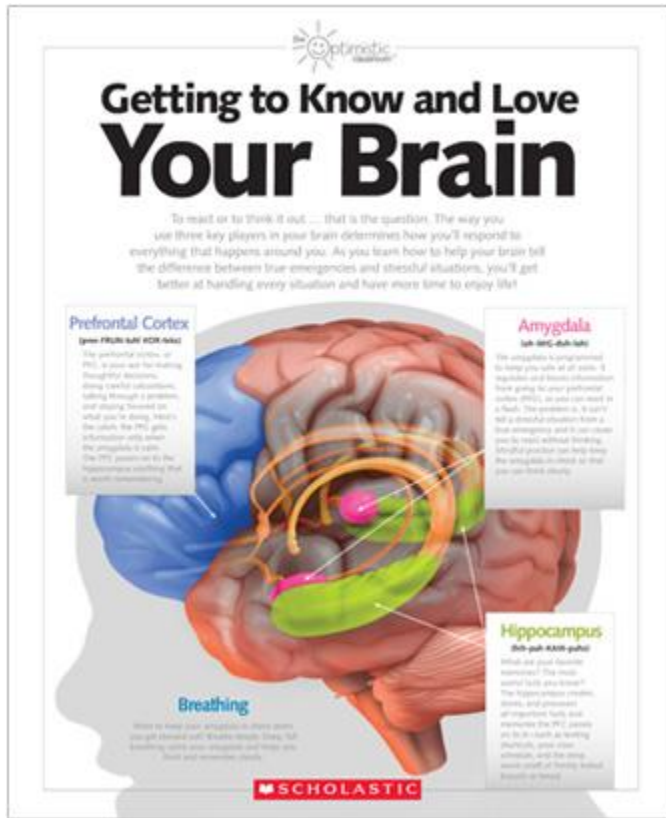
# The Duck or The Rabbit



# Rubin's Vase



# Saver of Memories- File Cabinet

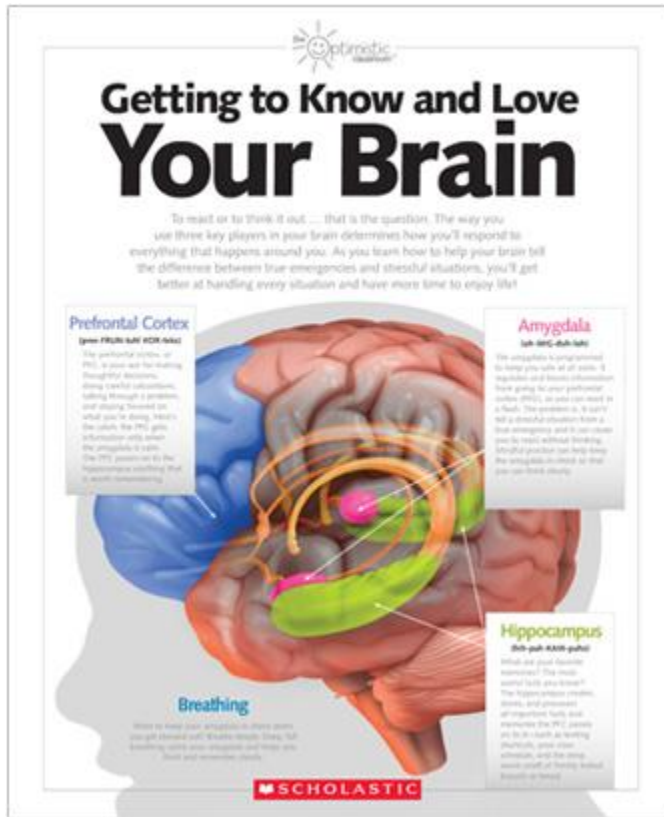


- **Hippocampus**- is another structure in the brain. These twin crescent-shaped bodies reside in the central brain area, one behind each ear, in the temporal lobes. The hippocampus assists in managing our response to fear and threats, and is a storage vault of memory and learning.

# Hippocampus

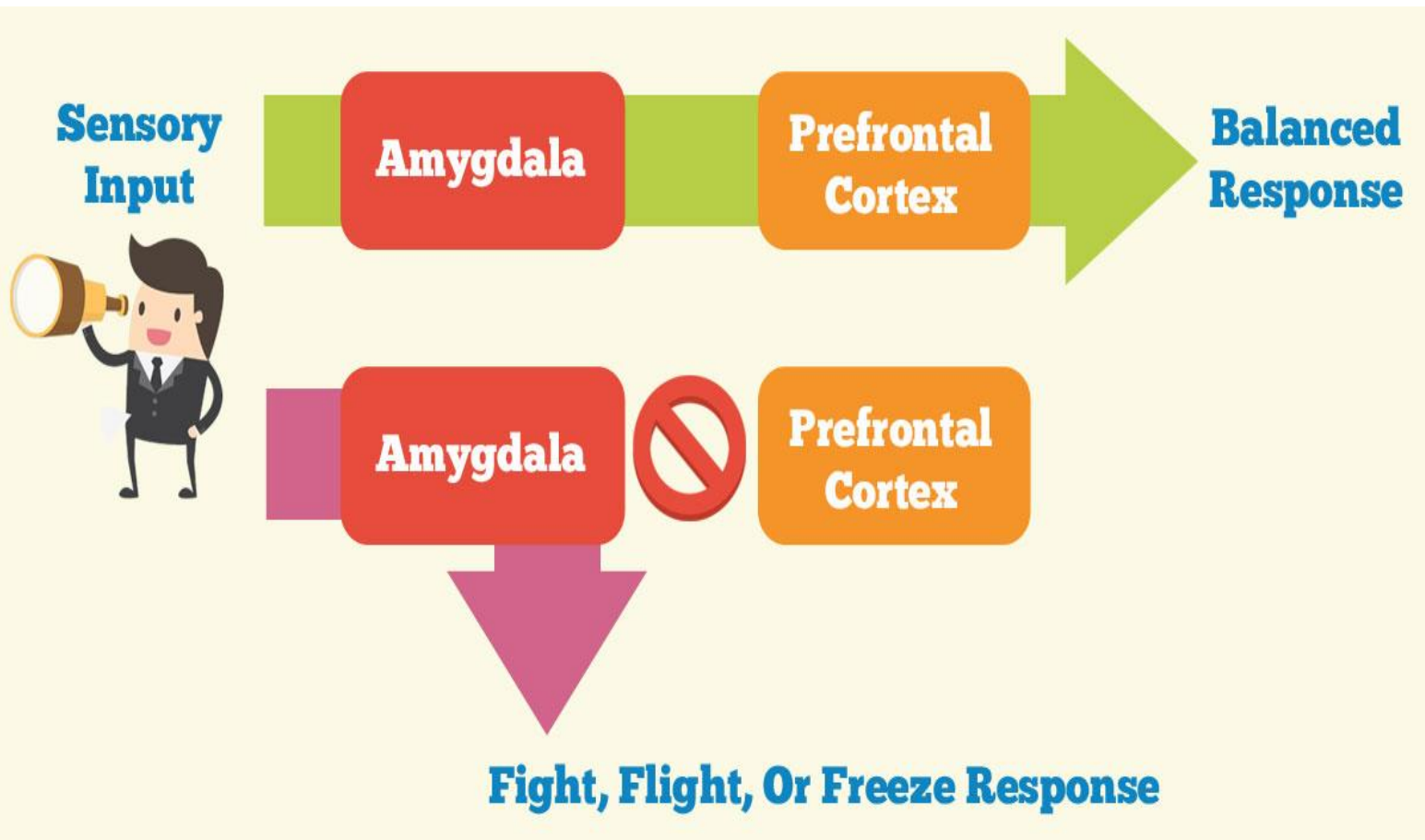
Your brain forms, organizes, and stores memories in the hippocampus. This tiny organ helps you form long-term memories, connect memories to other memories, and connect memories to emotions and senses. When you smell cookies and think of your grandma — or maybe the mall — that's the hippocampus at work.

# Wise Leader or Wise Owl



- **Prefrontal Cortex**- This is the learning, reasoning and thinking center of the brain. This highly evolved area of the brain controls our decision making, focuses our attention, and allows us to learn to read, write, compute, analyze, predict, comprehend, and interpret.

# How We Think!!!!



# Mindfulness

*Blissful Kids*

## Mindfulness and the Brain – How to Explain It to Children



**Amygdala**  
**“The Jumpy Superhero”**

Tries to protect us at all costs, but often mistakes stress for real threats and stops the Prefrontal Cortex from getting the information it needs to help us make good choices. When the Amygdala is calm, it gives the PFC what it needs.

**The Brain**

**Prefrontal Cortex**  
**“The Smart One”**


Figures out stuff for us and helps us make good, well balanced choices. The PFC also sends and retrieves memories to and from the Hippocampus. When the Amygdala is upset, the PFC cannot help us.

**Hippocampus**  
**“The Librarian”**

The Hippocampus stores and recalls memories. When the Amygdala is upset, poor Hippocampus cannot store memories or properly bring them to mind.

**Mindfulness To The Rescue**

Mindfulness helps us to calm down, and this, in turn, calms the amygdala so that it allows the information flow to the prefrontal cortex—that part of our brains that helps us make good choices. When we’re calm, we can more easily be mindful and make good choices.

[WWW.BLISSFULKIDS.COM](http://WWW.BLISSFULKIDS.COM)      [FACEBOOK.COM/BLISSFULKIDSHQ](https://FACEBOOK.COM/BLISSFULKIDSHQ)       *Blissful Kids*

# Mind Jar

Can you think of a time when your brain feels all shaken up and confused - like the sand, glitter, and confetti in this shaken bottle? What helps you calm down so you can think?

The settling solution represents the calming mind.





# Celebrating the Brain Song!

## My Brain Is So Very Important to Me

- My brain is so very important to me, it helps me do most everything.
- Located here in my head, it's why I can think, choose, and sing.
- My brain, my brain; it is so important to me, to me,
- My brain, my brain, it is so important to me.
- My brain, it helps me think and remember, my brain tells me to fight, flee or freeze;
- It helps my parts work together, and that is why I just have to say,
- My brain, my brain; it is so important to me, to me
- My brain, my brain; it is so important to me.

# Engage

**Discussion:** *What do your brains help you do every day and why are our brains so important to us?*

- *We need exercise to make our bodies strong. Running and playing help us make our bodies strong. We need exercise to make our brains strong too. Thinking helps us make our brains strong.*

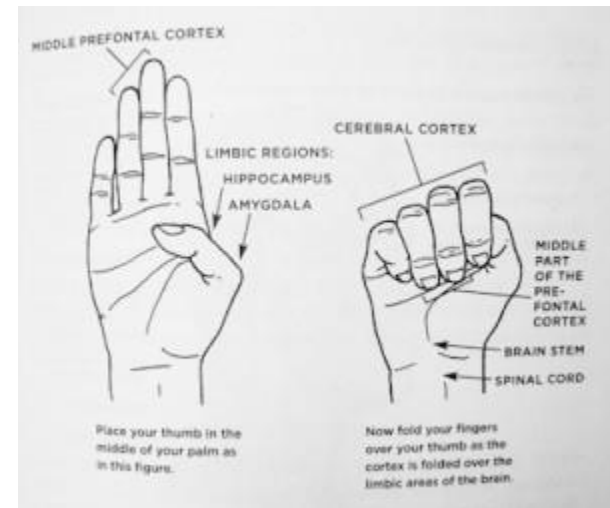
# Explore:

**Model brain with their fists together.**

*Thumbs- prefrontal cortex – Wise leader – helps us make good choices and pay attention.*

*Tips of pointer fingers are buried deep inside – amygdala – security guard – warns us of danger , keeps us safe, help express emotions.*

*Tips of middle fingers- hippocampus – savor of memories – keeps important information and brings it back when we need it.*

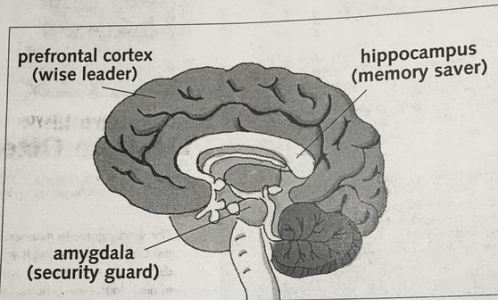


# Parts of the Brain:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Brain Power!



What does each part of the brain do? Draw a line to match.

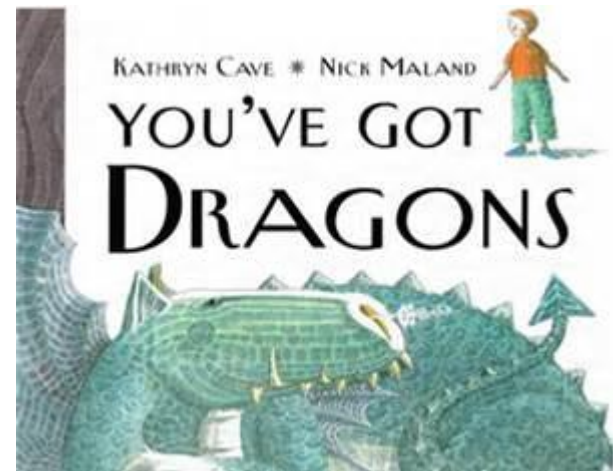
- |                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. amygdala          | a. helps us make good decisions |
| 2. prefrontal cortex | b. helps us learn and remember  |
| 3. hippocampus       | c. helps protect us             |

# Reflect:

Imagine this: You are asleep. A loud crash wakes you up.

- How does your body immediately react?
- What are you thinking?
- How does your body feel?
- Which part of your brain will keep you safe—
  - Your brain's wise leader (the prefrontal cortex)
  - Your brain's security guard (the amygdala)
  - Your brain's memory saver (the hippocampus)

# Read Aloud



# Follow Up Discussion:

*How can reflecting rather than reacting have a positive effect on our behavior?*

- *Reacting is defensive*

A child on a playground pushes another child, who promptly pushes back.

- *Reflecting is a factual representation of what is happening*

You are being mean- if you push me again I will let the teacher know

# Belly Breathing

- Focusing on our breathing helps us stay calm.

[Belly Breathing Video](#)

[Calm Down Video](#)