Name: _____ Date: _____

The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Circle group

Have you bumped your elbow and felt a buzz in your arm? People call that spot the funny bone. But it is not a bone.

What you hit is a nerve. A nerve is like a thin wire. It sends messages to your brain. This nerve is at the back of your elbow. It sits close to the skin. It has little padding.

When you bump it, the nerve gets squashed. It sends a mixed-up message to your brain. You feel a tingle in your arm and little finger. The feeling goes away soon.

The name may be a joke. The long bone in your top arm is the humerus. That sounds like humorous. Humorous means funny.

Questions

1. What do people call the spot you bump on your elbow?

_____

_____

2. What is a nerve?

_____

_____

3. Where is the nerve?

_____

_____

4. What happens to the nerve when you bump it?

_____

_____

5. What is the long bone in your top arm called?

_____

_____

6. Why does a bump at the elbow feel stranger than a bump on your leg?

_____

_____

Words to know

nerve: a thin part of the body that carries messages to and from the brain
tingle: a prickly, buzzing feeling on the skin
padding: soft stuff that keeps something safe from bumps
humorous: funny or full of jokes

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Triangle group

Have you ever bumped your elbow and felt a strange, buzzing tingle shoot down your arm? Many people call that spot the funny bone. But it is not really a bone at all.

What you hit is a nerve. A nerve is like a thin wire that carries messages between your body and your brain. This nerve runs along the back of your elbow, close to the skin. It does not have much padding to protect it.

When you knock your elbow, the nerve gets squashed for a moment. It sends a jumbled message to your brain. Your brain feels the message as tingling, mostly in your arm and your little finger. The feeling fades in a minute or so.

The name may come from a joke. The long bone in the top part of your arm is called the humerus. That sounds a lot like the word humorous, which means funny.

Questions

1. What do people call the spot where you bump your elbow?

_____

_____

2. What is a nerve?

_____

_____

3. Where does the nerve run?

_____

_____

4. What happens to the nerve when you knock your elbow?

_____

_____

5. What is the long bone in the top of your arm called?

_____

_____

6. Why does a small bump at the elbow feel stranger than a bump on your thigh?

_____

_____

Words to know

nerve: a thin part of the body that carries messages to and from the brain
tingle: a prickly, buzzing feeling on the skin
padding: soft stuff that keeps something safe from bumps
jumbled: mixed up and out of order
humorous: funny or full of jokes

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Square group

Have you ever banged your elbow on a doorway and felt a strange, buzzing tingle race down your forearm? Many people call that spot the funny bone, yet it is not actually a bone at all.

What you strike is a nerve. A nerve works like a thin cable that carries messages between your body and your brain. This particular nerve runs along the back of your elbow, very close to the surface of the skin, and it has very little padding to protect it.

When you knock your elbow, the nerve is squashed for a moment, and it sends a jumbled message to your brain. Your brain interprets that message as tingling, mostly in your arm and your little finger. Fortunately, the sensation fades after a minute or so.

The name may have started as a joke. The long bone in the upper part of your arm is called the humerus, which sounds remarkably like the word humorous, meaning funny.

Questions

1. What do people call the spot where you bang your elbow?

_____

_____

2. How does a nerve work, according to the passage?

_____

_____

3. Where does this nerve run?

_____

_____

4. What happens to the nerve when you knock your elbow?

_____

_____

5. What is the long bone in the upper arm called?

_____

_____

6. Why does a small bump at the elbow feel stranger than a bump on your thigh?

_____

_____

Words to know

nerve: a thin part of the body that carries messages to and from the brain
tingle: a prickly, buzzing feeling on the skin
padding: soft stuff that keeps something safe from bumps
jumbled: mixed up and out of order
humorous: funny or full of jokes

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Easier · 118 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.2

1. The funny bone.
2. A thin wire-like part that sends messages to the brain.
3. At the back of the elbow, close to the skin.
4. It gets squashed and sends a mixed-up message to the brain.
5. The humerus.
6. The nerve is close to the skin and has little padding.

Triangle: The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

This passage · 152 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.1

1. The funny bone.
2. A thin wire-like part that carries messages between the body and the brain.
3. Along the back of the elbow, close to the skin.
4. It gets squashed and sends a jumbled message to the brain.
5. The humerus.
6. The nerve at the elbow is close to the skin with little padding.

Square: The Funny Bone That Is Not a Bone

Harder · 161 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. The funny bone.
2. Like a thin cable that carries messages between the body and the brain.
3. Along the back of the elbow, very close to the skin.
4. It is squashed and sends a jumbled message to the brain.
5. The humerus.
6. The nerve at the elbow lies close to the skin with very little padding.