Name: _____ Date: _____

Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

Circle group

Some mornings you jump out of bed. Other mornings the alarm rings and you feel slow, as if you are walking through mud. It may not be about how long you slept. It may be about when you were woken.

Sleep is not one long, quiet block. At night the brain goes through stages. The stages repeat in loops called sleep cycles. In light sleep, the body slows down, and it is easy to wake up. In deep sleep, the heart and breathing are slow and steady. It is very hard to wake someone then. Later in a cycle there is a stage with vivid dreams. The brain is busy, but the body is still. Then the loop starts again.

If an alarm rings in deep sleep, the brain has to wake up in a hurry. You may feel heavy, slow, and mixed up. Scientists call this sleep inertia. It fades soon, but you may feel clumsy and cranky for a while.

You cannot see your own sleep, but some habits help. Go to bed and get up at about the same time each day. Open the curtains in the morning. Bright light tells the brain that the day has begun. Get enough hours, too. Kids and teens need more sleep than adults.

Questions

1. What are sleep cycles?

_____

_____

2. What happens to the heart and breathing in deep sleep?

_____

_____

3. What is the heavy, mixed up feeling after waking called?

_____

_____

4. What is one habit that helps a person wake up better?

_____

_____

5. Why might the same alarm feel worse some mornings?

_____

_____

6. Why does bright morning light help?

_____

_____

7. Why is it hard to wake someone from deep sleep?

_____

_____

Words to know

cycles: patterns that repeat again and again
stages: separate steps or parts of a process
vivid: very clear and full of detail
inertia: a slowness to get moving after being still
clumsy: awkward and likely to bump into things

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: _____

Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

Triangle group

Some mornings you pop out of bed ready to go. Other mornings the alarm rings and you feel as if you are walking through mud. The difference can depend less on how long you slept and more on the moment you were woken up.

Sleep is not one long, quiet stretch. During the night the brain moves through stages, and the stages repeat in loops called sleep cycles. In light sleep, the body slows down and it is easy to wake. In deep sleep, the heartbeat and breathing settle into a slow, steady pattern, and it is very hard to wake someone. Later in a cycle comes a stage with vivid dreams, when the brain is busy even though the body is still. Then the loop starts again.

If an alarm rings during deep sleep, the brain has to climb out of a very quiet state in a hurry. People often feel heavy, slow, and confused for a while afterward. Scientists call this feeling sleep inertia. It usually fades within a short time, but it can make a person clumsy and cranky in the meantime.

You cannot see inside your own sleep, but a few habits help. Going to bed and getting up at about the same time each day teaches the body when to expect waking. Bright light in the morning tells the brain that the day has started, so opening the curtains is a simple trick. Getting enough hours matters too, because kids and teenagers need more sleep than adults do.

Questions

1. What are sleep cycles?

_____

_____

2. What happens to the heartbeat and breathing in deep sleep?

_____

_____

3. What is the feeling of being heavy and confused after waking called?

_____

_____

4. What is one habit that helps a person wake up better?

_____

_____

5. Why might the same alarm feel worse on some mornings than on others?

_____

_____

6. Why does bright morning light help?

_____

_____

7. Why is it hard to wake someone from deep sleep?

_____

_____

Words to know

cycles: patterns that repeat again and again
stages: separate steps or parts of a process
vivid: very clear and full of detail
inertia: a slowness to get moving after being still
clumsy: awkward and likely to bump into things

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: _____

Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

Square group

On some mornings you spring out of bed, fully ready for the day. On others, the alarm sounds and you feel as though you are wading through thick mud. The difference may depend less on the total length of your sleep than on the precise moment at which you were woken.

Sleep is not a single, uninterrupted stretch of calm. Throughout the night, the brain passes through distinct stages, and those stages repeat in loops known as sleep cycles. During light sleep the body slows down and awakening is easy. During deep sleep the heartbeat and breathing settle into a slow, steady rhythm, and it becomes extremely difficult to rouse a person. Later in each cycle comes a stage of vivid dreams, in which the brain is highly active even though the body remains still. Then the whole loop begins again.

If an alarm sounds during deep sleep, the brain must climb out of a very quiet state in a great hurry. People frequently feel heavy, sluggish, and confused for some time afterward. Scientists refer to this sensation as sleep inertia. It generally fades within a short while, but in the meantime it can leave a person clumsy and irritable.

Although you cannot observe your own sleep, a few habits can help considerably. Going to bed and rising at roughly the same time every day teaches the body when to expect waking. Bright light in the morning signals the brain that the day has started, so opening the curtains is a simple strategy. Obtaining enough hours of sleep matters as well, since children and teenagers require more sleep than adults do.

Questions

1. What are sleep cycles?

_____

_____

2. What happens to the heartbeat and breathing during deep sleep?

_____

_____

3. What is the heavy, confused sensation after waking called?

_____

_____

4. What is one habit that helps a person wake up more comfortably?

_____

_____

5. Why might the same alarm feel worse on some mornings than on others?

_____

_____

6. Why does bright morning light help?

_____

_____

7. Why is it so hard to rouse someone from deep sleep?

_____

_____

Words to know

cycles: patterns that repeat again and again
stages: separate steps or parts of a process
vivid: very clear and full of detail
inertia: a slowness to get moving after being still
clumsy: awkward and likely to bump into things

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: Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

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

Circle: Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

Easier · 213 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.3

1. Loops of sleep stages that repeat in the night.
2. They are slow and steady.
3. Sleep inertia.
4. Going to bed and waking at the same time, or opening the curtains for bright light.
5. It may ring in deep sleep, when the brain must wake in a hurry.
6. It tells the brain that the day has begun.
7. The brain and body are in a very quiet state.

Triangle: Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

This passage · 253 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.9

1. Loops of sleep stages that repeat during the night.
2. They settle into a slow, steady pattern.
3. Sleep inertia.
4. Keeping regular bed and wake times, or opening the curtains to let in bright light.
5. It may ring during deep sleep, when the brain has to wake up in a hurry.
6. It tells the brain that the day has started.
7. The brain and body are in a very quiet state.

Square: Why the Alarm Feels Worse in the Middle of a Dream

Harder · 271 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.7

1. Loops of sleep stages that repeat throughout the night.
2. They settle into a slow, steady rhythm.
3. Sleep inertia.
4. Keeping regular bed and wake times, or opening the curtains to let in bright light.
5. It may sound during deep sleep, when the brain must wake in a great hurry.
6. It signals the brain that the day has started.
7. The brain and body are in a very quiet state.