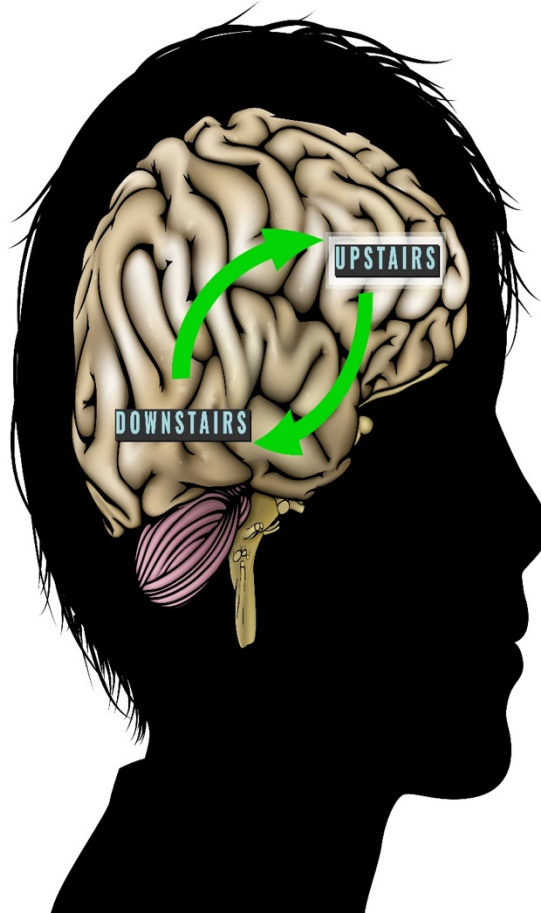


Grade 5 HOPE Launch Lesson Handout Activity #1 – Brain Matters

Brain Matters!

Part 1 – The Brain

There are two areas of the brain that we will call the **upstairs brain** and **downstairs brain**. Each part of the brain has a different job:



Upstairs Brain

- Helps us make good decisions
- Gives us control over our emotions and our body
- Helps us understand the feelings of others

Downstairs Brain

- Where our emotions are stored
- Helps us react if we feel threatened

Key Points

When the downstairs brain takes over, our upstairs brain may shut down.

This means that if we are angry, upset, scared, or frustrated, it can really be difficult to make good choices and to develop hope.

The goal is to stay in our upstairs brain even when we have strong emotions.

Part 2 – Which Part of the Brain?

For each situation below, which part of the brain was in charge?

Situation #1

Caleb was walking home from a friend's house when a neighbor's dog broke through the fence and was growling and barking. Then the dog started coming toward him. Caleb ran as fast as he could to the safety of his home. When he got home, his heart was beating very fast, and he could barely catch his breath. Which part of the brain had taken control? _____

Situation #2

Emily had a math test the next day and it was important that she do well on the test because it was the final grade of the semester. Her friend, Casey, texted her to say that some friends were going to hang out at her house that evening. Emily really wanted to go be with her friends, but she took the time to consider the consequences and decided to stay home and study for her math test. Which part of the brain had taken control?

Now that you understand how each part of the brain works, please answer the following questions:

Describe a time when you were angry, upset or frustrated and it seemed like you couldn't control how you acted.

Which part of the brain had taken control?

Think about the time that you described above. What are some strategies you could use to keep yourself calm and keep the upstairs brain in control?