

LESSON 4

Cerebral Cortex



OBJECTIVE: Students understand how alcohol can harm their brain development.

GRADE LEVEL: 6-12

TOPIC: The Brain

TIME: 30-45 minutes

VOCABULARY: Cerebral Cortex, Alcohol

MATERIALS NEEDED: Sheets of paper

STARTER:

- Review that SADD is an acronym for Students Against Destructive Decisions.
- Ask the students if they remember how old you are when your brain is fully developed. Answer: 25
- Remind the students that this does not mean they are done learning by 25. It just means their brain is done developing and growing.
- Today, we are going to talk about a particular part of the brain. It is called the cerebellum.
- Ask the class to repeat that word back to you.
- The cerebral cortex is the part of the brain that is in charge of your decision-making.

ACTIVITY:

- Ask students to write on a piece of paper all of the decisions that they can remember making so far today. (Examples: what to wear, what to eat, how to spend free time, etc.)
- Include all types of decisions on your list.
- Now, ask students to go back through their list and rate their decisions on a scale from 1 to 10, with a rating of "1," meaning an automatic, habitual decision. A rating of "10" means a decision that requires careful studying and thought.
- Put the students with a partner. Have them go over their lists. Then have them answer the following questions with their partner.
- What does this exercise tell you about how you make most of your decisions?
- Do all decisions have consequences?
- Do you have control over the decision, the outcome, or both?
- Go over this entire activity as a class.

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WRAP UP:

- Our cerebral cortex is essential.
- We make decisions every day, whether they are big or small.
- All decisions have consequences. There is such a thing as a good consequence. Does anyone have some examples? Ex: studying for a test normally means a better grade.
- You have control over every decision that you make. If that is a good decision, it normally comes with a good outcome. If it is a bad decision, it always comes with a bad outcome.
- Decision-making skills are critical, and alcohol can damage this part of the brain.
- Your brain is not fully developed until you are 25, so alcohol can hurt you much worse than an adult.
- Remember, alcohol is a chemical substance that can alter the way your mind and body function.
- You need to have your coordination skills, and we keep them safe by not messing with alcohol or using other drugs.