

WHAT IS A PHOBIA?

[Video](#): "Specific Phobias, Agoraphobia, & Social Phobia" by Osmosis from Elsevier

1 JOKES AND RIDDLES

Task 1: Do you find the following jokes funny?

Proficiency in language includes the ability to understand and use humour effectively.
Can you explain the humour in the following Halloween-related examples?

- a. I have a speed bump phobia...I'm slowly getting over it.
- b. I have a real phobia of trampolines... they always make me jump.
- c. A man goes to a doctor because of his phobia of getting married.
The doctor asks, "Do you know about any of the symptoms?"
The man replies, "Can't say I do."
- d. I have a phobia of elevators, but I'm taking steps to overcome it.
- e. I have a phobia of procrastination, but I'll tell you about it later.
- f. I have a huge phobia of hair... I dreadlocks.



Task: Can you figure out the answers to the following riddles?

1. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years. Which room is safest for him? **The third room. The lions will be dead because they haven't eaten for 3 years.**
2. A person is found dead in the middle of the desert, wearing a backpack. The backpack is unopened, and there is nothing else around. How did they die? **The backpack was full of a parachute.**
3. Three men are sitting in a small motorboat one mile from the shoreline. The first is afraid of water, the second is afraid of drowning, and the third is afraid of sharks. The boat's motor is not operational, and there is nothing to row with. How do they get to the shoreline? **They walk because the boat is one mile inland.**



2 PHOBIAS: DEFINE AND DISCUSS

Task 1: Match the phobias from the box to their definitions.

triskaidekaphobia	coulrophobia	phobophobia	pinaciphobia	aviophobia
arachnophobia	alektorophobia	nyctophobia	hemophobia	pyrophobia

1. **Pyrophobia:** the fear of fire.
2. **Alektorophobia:** the fear of chickens.
3. **Triskaidekaphobia:** the fear of the number 13.
4. **Phobophobia:** the fear of developing a phobia.
5. **Nyctophobia:** the fear of darkness or the night.
6. **Arachnophobia:** the fear of spiders.
7. **Pinaciphobia:** the fear of lists.
8. **Hemophobia:** the fear of blood.
9. **Aviophobia:** the fear of flying
10. **Coulrophobia:** the fear of clowns.



Task 2: Answer the following questions.

- a. Which of the phobias do you think is most rational and irrational?
- b. Discuss how each phobia would impact a sufferer's life.
- c. Do you have any phobias or intense fears? How do they affect your life?
- d. How can understanding and addressing phobias be beneficial to individuals, families, and society as a whole?
- e. Are there any benefits to having a fear or phobia?



3 KEY TOPIC-BASED VOCABULARY

Task 1: Match the words from the box to their definitions listed 1-6.

coping strategies	trigger	fight-or-flight response
cognitive-behavioural therapy	systematic desensitisation	

1. a mental health therapy that modifies thought patterns and behaviours. **Cognitive behaviour theory.**
2. a method for treating phobias through gradual exposure. **Systematic desensitisation.**
3. the body's instinctive reaction to stress, preparing it to either confront or escape from a threat. **Fight-or-flight reaction.**
4. techniques people use to manage stress and challenges. **Coping strategies.**
5. the specific thing or situation that causes extreme fear or anxiety. **trigger**

Task 2: Complete the sentences using the new words.

- a. She developed various **coping strategies** to deal with her arachnophobia, like keeping her distance from spiders.
- b. Watching a horror movie may **trigger** his fear of the dark, making it difficult to sleep.
- c. When confronted with a snake, his immediate **fight or flight response** kicked in, and he sprinted away.
- d. In **cognitive behaviour theory**, patients learn to identify and challenge irrational thoughts related to their phobias.
- e. Sarah's therapist used **systematic desensitisation** to help her conquer her fear of flying, starting with looking at pictures of planes and progressively working up to taking short flights.

Task 3: Practice using the words by answering the following questions.

1. Do you know any coping strategies for dealing with phobias? Are they effective?
2. What triggers could provoke fear in those with the phobias from exercise 2?
3. Explain the fight-or-flight response's role in phobias.
4. Do you believe cognitive-behavioural therapy should be free for all citizens?
5. What's systematic desensitisation, and why is it used to treat phobias?

4 VIDEO ANALYSIS

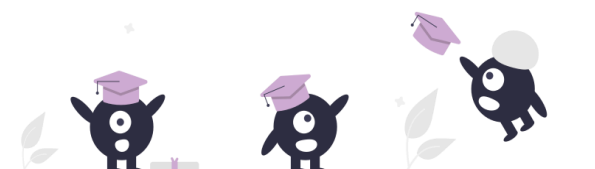
Task 1: Complete the quote using the words from the box.

powerless anxious irrational psychiatric

1. “Everybody, whether they like to admit it or not, has fears and gets **anxious** about certain things, whether it be a spider crawling on the ground or getting up in front of large groups of people. In most cases, though, people cope with those fears and confront them.
2. A phobia is the most extreme type of fear, where it actually causes them to go to great lengths to avoid being exposed to the fear or perceived danger, even if there’s no actual risk or danger, and people often feel **powerless** against it.
3. Phobias are considered the most common **psychiatric** disorder, affecting almost 10% of the population.
4. Phobias are extreme, often unreasonable, and **irrational** fears of something, which could literally be anything. Unreasonable or irrational fears get in the way of daily routines, work, and relationships, because patients with phobias might try to do whatever they can to avoid the anxiety and terrifying feelings associated with the phobia.”

Task 2: Discuss the following quotes as a class.

1. What is the difference between a fear and a phobia?
2. What are some of the consequences of phobias in daily life, work, and relationships?
3. Do you think 10% of the people you know have phobias?
4. Are there any phobias that you think are common in your culture?
5. What can patients do to avoid the negative feelings associated with phobias?
6. Do you think the fear of public speaking is irrational? Explain.

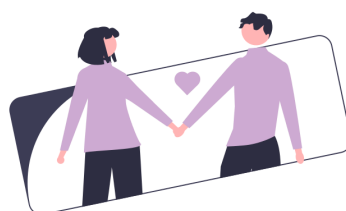


Task 3: Complete the quote by choosing the correct words.

1. Agoraphobia means fear of **public** places, but it has to do with being fearful in a public space where it feels like it might be hard to escape quickly and **return** to a place perceived as “safe” like the person’s home.
2. Therefore, people with agoraphobia tend not to venture out very often. Some commonly feared areas might be places like crowded shopping malls, or theatres, where it might be difficult to **escape** quickly.
3. Social phobias, on the other **hand**, are overwhelming and **persistent** fears of social situations and interactions. People with social phobias are fearful of being embarrassed or judged by others.
4. Being embarrassed or feeling “awkward” in a social interaction from time to time is totally **normal**, but people with social phobias often **feel** anxiety for weeks leading up to events before they happen, and are afraid of doing common things in front of others. For example, someone with a social phobia might be afraid to eat in front of someone else.
5. For people with phobias; seeing, being **exposed** to, or even thinking about the phobia causes severe anxiety that’s often not proportionate to the real threat.

Task 4: Discuss the following quotes as a class.

1. What is agoraphobia?
2. How do people with agoraphobia feel when they’re in public places?
3. How might agoraphobia negatively impact a person’s life?
4. What is the difference between social phobia and occasionally feeling awkward?
5. How might social phobia negatively affect a person’s life?
6. Do you think social media helps or hinders those with agoraphobia or social phobia?
7. Do you think schools could do more to prevent these phobias from becoming an issue in a child’s later life?
8. What support should governments give to people who suffer from these phobias?



Task 5: Each paragraph has one grammatical error, can you identify and correct them?

1. What causes a phobia? Well, we don't really know, but we do know you're more **likely** to develop one if you have a family member with a phobia.
2. Sometimes, though, phobias might be caused by specific traumatic events, like being **confronted** by an aggressive raccoon.
3. Now, tailoring treatment for the specific individual's fear is super important in effective therapy because different patients might respond differently depending **on** the therapy, especially if other conditions are involved, like depression and drug abuse.
4. Psychotherapy, particularly cognitive behaviour therapy, can be super beneficial for patients. Cognitive behaviour therapy teaches patients to be mindful that their fear is irrational and that the likelihood of their worst fears coming true, like being attacked by a pack of angry raccoons, **getting** rabies, and dying an unpleasant and untimely death, is actually very low.
5. Systematic desensitisation might be used, where a person is gradually and systematically exposed to the feared objects. Patients first learn to identify the anxiety, then they learn coping techniques, and lastly, they use **their** learned coping techniques to overcome situations. The vast majority of patients can be treated using these tailored methods.

Task 4: Discuss the following quotes as a class.

1. What is the significance of having a family member with a phobia?
2. Can you explain how a traumatic event might lead to the development of a phobia?
3. Why is it important to tailor the treatment for an individual's specific fear in effective therapy?
4. Are there any specific phobias that you think would be best treated by cognitive behaviour therapy over systematic desensitisation? Explain.
5. Are there any specific phobias that you think would be best treated by systematic desensitisation over cognitive behaviour therapy? Explain.
6. What are the challenges of convincing someone with a phobia that their fears are irrational and unlikely to come true?
7. How might cultural and societal factors influence the development of phobias?
8. What are the ethical considerations of using systematic desensitisation, especially in situations where patients may be exposed to their fears intentionally?

5 HOW TO TALK ABOUT PHOBIAS

Task: The 5 stages of talking about phobias. Match stage titles from the box to the relevant language. Practice using each one preparation for the role play in exercise 6.

Treatment and Progress Coping and Support Personal Experience and Emotions
Comparisons and Cultural Insights Introduction and Identification

1. Introduction and Identification

- I'd like to talk about a phobia, specifically...
- One common phobia that many people have is...
- Maybe we can begin by defining what _____ is.

2. Personal Experience and Emotions

- I have a phobia of _____, and it affects me in the following ways...
- When I encounter [trigger], I often feel...
- One of the most challenging aspects of my phobia is...

3. Coping and Support

- To manage my phobia, I typically...
- Having a support system is crucial because...
- One strategy that has been helpful for me is...

4. Treatment and Progress

- I've sought treatment for my phobia, such as...
- Over time, I've noticed that my fear of _____ has...
- I'm proud of the progress I've made in overcoming my phobia, like..

5. Comparisons and Cultural Insights

- In my culture, phobias are viewed as...
- I know someone who has a phobia of _____, and their experience is interesting because...
- It's fascinating to compare how different cultures handle phobias, especially when it comes to...



6

ROLE PLAY: TALKING ABOUT PHOBIAS

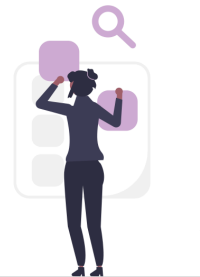
Task: Complete a role play exercise to practise talking about phobias.

Instructions

1. Work in pairs.
2. Take it in turns to tell the person about a phobia.
3. Follow the 5 stages of talking about a phobia from exercise 5.
 - a. Introduction and identification.
 - b. Personal experience and emotions.
 - c. Coping and support.
 - d. Treatment and progress.
 - e. Comparisons and cultural insights.
4. You must pretend to suffer from each phobia listed below; explaining what it is, your personal experiences, how you cope, and any treatment you have received, then give comparisons or cultural insights.
5. Practice how to talk about phobias by discussing the phobias below. Have fun!

Phobias

1. Pyrophobia: the fear of fire.
2. Triskaidekaphobia: the fear of the number 13.
3. Nyctophobia: the fear of darkness or the night..
4. Arachnophobia: the fear of spiders.
5. Hemophobia: the fear of blood.
6. Aviophobia: the fear of flying
7. Coulrophobia: the fear of clowns.
8. Alektorophobia: the fear of chickens.



7 WOULD YOU RATHER?

Let's finish the unit with a fun speaking game! Begin by deciding which scenario you'd prefer, then provide a detailed explanation, weighing the pros and cons of both options.

1. Would you rather spend a night in a room full of spiders or a room full of snakes?

2. Would you rather stand on the edge of a very tall building or be trapped in a small, dark space?

3. Would you rather have to give a public speech to a large audience or handle a venomous snake for a few minutes?

4. Would you rather have a rat down your top or a cockroach?

5. Would you rather be chased by a swarm of bees or a pack of dogs?

6. Would you rather swim in the open sea or get lost in the Amazon rainforest?

7. Would you rather get kidnapped by a psychopath or get abducted by aliens?

8. Would you rather be attacked by 20 bats or 20 tarantulas?

9. Would you rather live as a ghost on earth after you die or stay dead?

10. Would you rather learn about how you will die or know when you will die?



HOMework

Study and comprehend the phobia-related idiom, before completing a writing task.

1 IDIOMS RELATED TO FEAR AND PHOBIAS

Task 1: Match the idioms to the pictures.

to stab someone in the back

to be scared of one's shadow

to be like a deer in the headlights

to chicken out



1. **to chicken out**



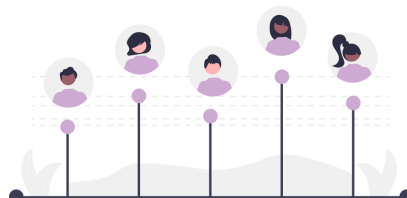
2. **to be like a deer in the headlights**



3. **To be scared of one's own shadow**



4. **to stab someone in the back.**



Task 2: Match the idioms to their definitions.

to stab someone in the back

to be scared of one's shadow

to be like a deer in the headlights

to chicken out

- to stab someone in the back:** used when a person betrays or hurts a friend secretly.
- to be scared of one's own shadow:** used to describe a person who is scared of everything.
- to be like a deer in the headlights:** a term for someone being frozen or unable to react when surprised or scared.
- to chicken out:** to decide not to do something due to fear, nervousness, or lack of courage, often at the last moment.

Task 3: Complete the sentences using an idiom, you may need to change the tense.

- Little Johnny is **scared of his own shadow** so he definitely won't want to go to the haunted house.
- Tim wanted to go bungee jumping, but he **chickened out** at the last moment and decided not to jump.
- As the police officer approached his car with the flashing lights, he was **like a deer in the headlights**, unsure of what to do next.
- He thought they were best friends, but she **stabbed him in the back** by spreading his secrets to everyone.

Task 4: Write detailed answers to the following questions.

- Have you ever felt like someone has stabbed you in the back? Can you share that experience?
- Do you know someone who is scared of their own shadow? What makes you think this way about them? How has this fear affected their life?
- Can you describe a time when you or someone you know was like a deer in the headlights? How did they react in that situation?
- Have you ever chickened out of doing something you initially wanted to do? What was it, and what made you change your mind?

