

Reading

Fears and phobias

1. Read the text and fill in the gaps with the phrases A-G.

There is one phrase you do not need to use.

"Come on, get in quickly!" your friend shouts from inside the lift that should take you up to the top floor of the department store. "Errm...I'll take the stairs and meet you up there!" you yell back. As the doors close, you feel very relieved. It's a long way up to the eighth floor, **1)**

If this sounds like you, or perhaps heights turn your legs to jelly, you scream loudly if you see even the tiniest spider in the bath or you shake like a leaf if you have to answer a question in class, you're not alone! The truth is, most of us are at least a little afraid of something – bees and wasps, for example, the dark, **2)**

So fear is a basic human emotion. In fact, we actually need it to survive. Whenever we meet danger or feel unsafe, the brain reacts, instantly sending signals to **activate** the body's nervous system. As a result, we might shake or sweat and our heart starts beating faster in order to pump more blood to our muscles to get us ready for action. **3)**

This response is called 'fight or flight' and is only turned off when the brain gets enough information to be sure that there is no more danger. What is incredible is that all this can happen in just a few seconds!

Needless to say, fear is not always a good thing! People who have a phobia such as agoraphobia (fear of being in crowded public spaces such as a busy market or a bus), claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces like lifts or tunnels),

arachnophobia (fear of spiders) or even something unusual like ablutophobia (fear of washing) are extremely afraid of something. This may have developed after a very scary experience. A teenager who was bitten by a dog as a young child, for example, may now be too afraid to walk to school with his friends in case he sees a dog. This is because his brain has 'remembered' the fear that he felt when the dog bit him, **4)**

This may **embarrass** him, cause him to miss out on spending time with his friends or even to be **teased** by them.

Between 5 and 10% of the population have phobias but there are ways to fight our fears. First of all, it's important to stop avoiding the scary situation. It may help to make a list of fears from the least to the most scary **5)**

This will not be easy, but when we see that our worst fears didn't come true, we will realise that they are **irrational** and there is no real reason to be afraid. Then, we will change how we respond to them **6)**

- A and then face them one by one.
- B or taking exams.
- C and eventually our fears will melt away!
- D so now even just thinking about seeing a dog triggers the same fear reaction.
- E but you don't care – anything to get out of going in a lift!
- F which will help you to find out the reason for your fear.
- G such as running away or fighting.

1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Match the highlighted words/phrases with their synonyms below

cause sth to start working _____

make sb feel shy/ashamed _____

shout _____

laughed at _____

sets off _____

disappear _____

not logical _____

3. Fill in:

human, fight, public, shake, beats, scream, nervous, come.

_____ loudly

_____ our fears

_____ like a leaf

heart _____ faster

_____ emotion

_____ places

_____ system

fears _____ true

4. Idioms Fill in: scared to death, long face, bright red, over the moon, green with envy, through the roof, butterflies in her stomach.

- 1 Samantha had before the first performance of the play.
- 2 Olga was when she saw the ghost.
- 3 Julia went when her teacher told her off for talking.
- 4 Liam was when he saw Jack's new car – he wanted one too!
- 5 Susan has got a very today. I think she's still upset about failing the exam.
- 6 Antony was when he found out that he had won the competition.
- 7 David went when he found out that his brother had taken his MP3 player without asking.

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	