

1. Read the text again and match the headings (1-6) to the paragraphs (A-E). There is one extra heading.

Remember the words:

sweat, beat, shake, catch your breath, fear, enclosed, nightmare, odd, ridiculous, suffer from, miss out, sense, signal, pump, adrenalin, muscle, tense, rational, get stung, trigger, little by little, work up to

Feeling afraid PHOBIAS

A As the doors of the lift close, your hands start to sweat. It's only a ten-second trip to the sixth floor, but your heart is beating fast, you're shaking like a leaf and you can't catch your breath. Everyone else in the lift seems calm, so what are you afraid of? Well, it sounds like you have claustrophobia, which is a fear of enclosed spaces. If you have a phobia like this, you're not alone.

B People can have either common phobias, like a fear of insects, needles and the dark, or some very strange ones indeed! Vicki Larrieux's fear of vegetables, for example – lachanophobia – makes a trip to the supermarket a nightmare. There are many other cases of odd phobias such as ablutophobia (fear of washing), anthophobia (fear of flowers), catoptrophobia (fear of mirrors) and even phobophobia (the fear of phobias themselves)! Some of these fears might sound ridiculous to you, but to a person who suffers from them, they are very real. Sufferers may miss out on opportunities, such as going on holiday because they are afraid of flying, feel embarrassed about their phobia and even get teased by their friends.

C To understand the reason why some people have phobias, first we need to understand fear itself. When we sense danger, our brain sends signals to pump adrenalin around our body. Our heart beats faster, our skin sweats to keep us cool and our muscles tense so that we are ready to escape the danger. This response is called 'fight or flight', which is necessary for our survival. If we met a bear while hiking, for instance, we would need to be ready to escape ... fast!

D When someone suffers from a phobia, however, the danger is mostly in their minds ... it's neither real nor rational. Maybe someone who is afraid of bees, for instance, once got badly stung by a bee. Their brain now remembers the experience and triggers a fear reaction every time they see a bee, or sometimes even just a photo of a bee. The fear signal is very strong, so the person believes the situation that they are in is more dangerous than it really is.

E So what's the solution for someone who has a phobia? Well, many try to avoid the places and situations which make them afraid, but this only keeps the fear strong. It's much better for the person to try to face their fear ... little by little. A person who is afraid of dogs, for example, could start by looking at a photo of a dog. Then they could stand near someone with a dog on a lead and slowly work up to the most difficult thing for them – maybe petting a dog. As they get used to the thing that they are afraid of, they will realise that their worst fear doesn't come true. In time, the brain will change how it reacts and their phobia will disappear for good!

1. Not so rare.
2. How to fix it.
3. Affecting lives.
4. Alone with your fear.
5. Getting to know fear
6. Imaginary fears

A	B	C	D	E

2. Fill in:

beating nightmare sensed trigger sweating shaking teased rational

1. He was so scared he started_____
2. His heart was _____ fast.
3. She was terrified, she was _____ like a leaf and crying.
4. The whole experience was a _____; we'll never do it again,
5. She didn't want to wear a dress in case her friends _____ her,
6. The dog _____ danger and started barking.
7. It's a _____ fear to be afraid of snakes, as some of them are poisonous.
8. Bacteria on your mobile phone can _____ an allergic reaction and cause a rash.

3. Fill in:

miss out on escape pet enclosed tense worst embarrassed

1. _____ spaces;
2. _____ opportunities;
3. feel_____
4. muscles _____
5. _____ from danger;
6. to_____ a dog;
7. _____ fear come true.

After reading doing a fearful task, enjoy this cutie:

