

Phobias

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What are some common fears that people have?
2. What are you afraid of?

B. Ranking

Rank the following items in order from the scariest (1) to the least scary (6). Compare your answers with a partner.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| ___ Public speaking | ___ Heights |
| ___ Dentists | ___ Needles |
| ___ Spiders | ___ Snakes |



C. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. cause | a) about, more or less |
| ___ 2. anxiety | b) a person with special knowledge |
| ___ 3. medical treatment | c) a time when two or more people are together |
| ___ 4. social situation | d) something that happens to you when you are young |
| ___ 5. population | e) closed in on all sides often without an accessible exit |
| ___ 6. childhood experience | f) stress and fear |
| ___ 7. expert | g) in all parts of the world |
| ___ 8. approximately | h) to make something happen |
| ___ 9. worldwide | i) the number of people who live in a place |
| ___ 10. enclosed | j) care given to people who are sick or injured |

Reading

PHOBIAS IN THE US AND AROUND THE WORLD

1. A phobia is a strong fear of an object or situation. Phobias often **cause anxiety**, and they can make it difficult for some people to do everyday activities. Between 15 and 20% of people have a phobia at some point in their lives. Common phobias include a fear of animals, the natural environment, **medical treatment**, and **social situations**.

2. *Fear of animals*

One in every 20 people has a fear of dogs. About 3% of people have a phobia of snakes, and up to 6% of the world's **population** has a phobia of spiders.

3. *Fear of the natural environment*

It is common for young children to have a fear of the dark. Around 6.5 million people in the US have a fear of lightning and thunderstorms. One in 50 Americans has aquaphobia, which is a fear of water. This phobia often develops after a **childhood experience** like an accident in a lake or ocean.

4. *Fear of medical treatment*

Experts say that around 25% of Americans have a fear of needles. Between 5 and 10% of people around the world have a phobia of dentists, and up to 4% of people have a phobia of blood.

5. *Fear of certain situations*

Approximately 7% of Americans have a fear of public speaking. Around 1% of people **worldwide** have agoraphobia—a phobia that makes people anxious in many different situations such as being outside or traveling on buses and trains. Other situational phobias include a fear of heights, a fear of flying, and a fear of **enclosed** spaces.

Comprehension

A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- _____ 1. About 5% of people have a fear of dogs.
- _____ 2. More people around the world fear snakes than fear spiders.
- _____ 3. Agoraphobia is a fear of water.
- _____ 4. About half of Americans are scared of needles.
- _____ 5. More people fear the dentist than fear blood.
- _____ 6. More people fear traveling on buses than speaking in public.

B. Scanning for Information

Scan the article to match the sentence halves.

Each sentence contains a statistic about phobias.

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. Between 15 and 20% of people | a) has a fear of dogs. |
| _____ 2. Up to 6% of the world's population | b) have a fear of lightning and thunderstorms. |
| _____ 3. Around 6.5 million people in the US | c) have a fear of needles. |
| _____ 4. One in every 20 people | d) have a fear of public speaking. |
| _____ 5. Between 5 and 10% of people around the world | e) has a phobia of spiders. |
| _____ 6. About 3% of people | f) have a phobia at some point in their lives. |
| _____ 7. Around 25% of Americans | g) have a phobia of snakes. |
| _____ 8. Around 1% of people worldwide | h) has a phobia of water. |
| _____ 9. One in 50 Americans | i) have a phobia of dentists. |
| _____ 10. Up to 4% of people | j) have agoraphobia. |
| _____ 11. Around 7% of Americans | k) have a phobia of blood. |

Vocabulary Building

A. Chart

Read the clues in the chart. Then search for the words or phrases in the reading that go with each clue. Some examples are given.

#	Clue	Word/Phrase
1	a word that means "a strong fear"	•
2	words and phrases used to introduce examples	• <i>include</i> • •
3	words and phrases that mean "close to, but not exactly"	• <i>about</i> • •
4	a phrase meaning "no more than this amount"	•
5	phrases similar to "people around the world"	• •

B. Your Turn

Write sentences using each word or phrase from Part A in your notebook.

Examples:

- **About** 40% of people in this class are male.
- My favorite animals **include** koalas and pandas.

Discussion

1. Which information in the reading did you find the most surprising? Why?
2. In your opinion, which phobia mentioned in the reading would be the most difficult to live with? Why?
3. What other fears or phobias have you heard of?
4. What are some possible ways to cure phobias?

Role-Play

Read each scenario with a partner. Choose one and create a dialogue for it.

Scenario 1

Student A:

You are a nurse. You are getting ready to do a blood test on a patient (Student B). The patient looks very nervous.

Student B:

You are at the hospital. You are about to get a blood test. You have a phobia of needles and you hate the sight of blood!

Scenario 2

Student A:

Your friend (Student B) is taking you on a surprise trip. How exciting! Where are you going? A restaurant? The movies? An art gallery? Anywhere but Snake World—that's where your phobia of snakes began. Wait, did you just see something move in your friend's pocket?

Student B:

You are taking your friend (Student A) on a surprise trip. You just know that they'll love Snake World! There are snakes everywhere! You can hold them, put them around your neck, and give them a cuddle. They'll love it! You've brought your new pet snake with you. It's in your pocket.

Scenario 3

Student A:

You're traveling on a bus. It's very crowded. Suddenly, the person next to you (Student B) seems anxious. Ask them if they are okay. Try to calm them down.

Student B:

You're on a bus. You have a phobia of traveling by bus. Last year, you had some psychotherapy to help you overcome your fear. You have felt okay on buses for a while, but today the bus is full and you're feeling very, very anxious.

Scenario 4

Student A:

You've invited your friend (Student B) to your house for coffee. Your dog, Fido, comes running down the stairs to greet your friend. Your dog is big and loud, but he's very friendly!

Student B:

Your friend (Student A) has invited you to their house for coffee. That's nice! Just as you sit down, you hear a noise. Was that a bark?! Oh no! You have a fear of dogs!

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about some common phobias that people in the US and around the world have. They learn vocabulary related to fears, scan an article for facts and statistics, and discuss possible cures for phobias.

LEVEL: Low Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, phobia, fear, scan, scanning, statistics, role-play, agoraphobia

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Answers will vary.

B. RANKING

After students rank the items from scariest to least scary, have them work in pairs to discuss their answers.

C. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. h | 3. j | 5. i | 7. b | 9. g |
| 2. f | 4. c | 6. d | 8. a | 10. e |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

A. TRUE OR FALSE?

1. T
2. F – 3% fear snakes; 6% fear spiders.
3. F – Aquaphobia is a fear of water.
4. F – 25% of Americans are scared of needles.
5. T
6. F – More people fear public speaking than traveling on buses.

B. SCANNING FOR INFORMATION

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 3. b | 5. i | 7. c | 9. h | 11. d |
| 2. e | 4. a | 6. g | 8. j | 10. k | |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Building

A. CHART

#	Word/Phrase	Example
1	a word that means "a strong fear"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> phobia
2	words and phrases used to introduce examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include like such as
3	words and phrases that mean "close to, but not exactly"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> about around approximately
4	a phrase meaning "no more than this amount"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> up to
5	phrases similar to "people around the world"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the world's population people worldwide

B. YOUR TURN

Encourage students to be creative as they write their sentences. If they are comfortable, have them share their sentences with the class when they are finished.

Discussion

Answers will vary.
Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Role-Plays

Place students in pairs to practice the role-play scenarios. Invite students to perform for the class.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Traveling* and *Favorite*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Travelling* and *Favourite*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.