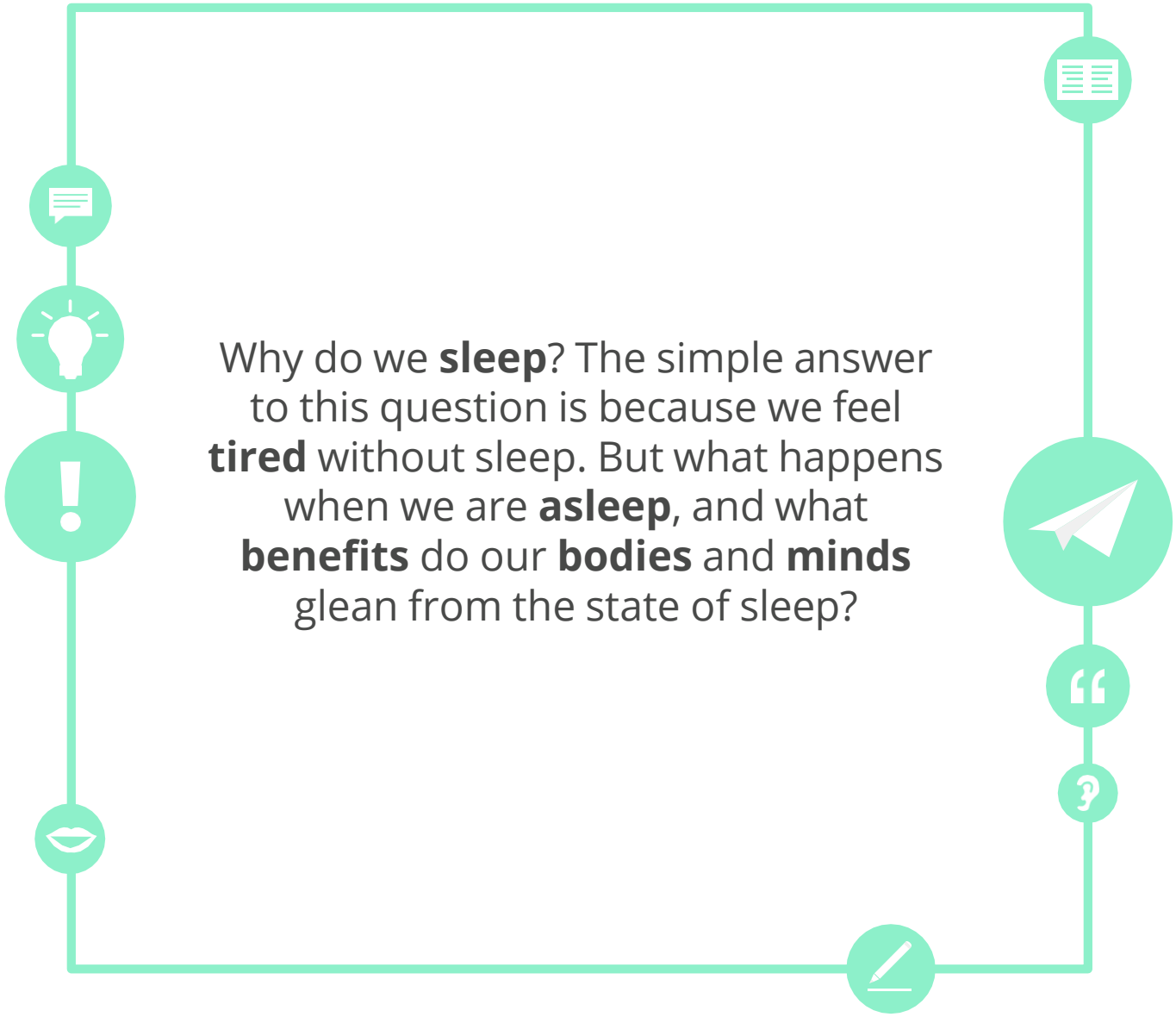

ProTalk
Discussion Files
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C1. Why we sleep
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Goals

- Can read and understand a factual text about the reasons why humans sleep.
- Can compare theories related to sleep and well-being and draw on my own experience to strengthen my argument.





Why do we **sleep**? The simple answer to this question is because we feel **tired** without sleep. But what happens when we are **asleep**, and what **benefits** do our **bodies** and **minds** glean from the state of sleep?

Tell your teacher

What kind of things do you think are essential to our well-being?



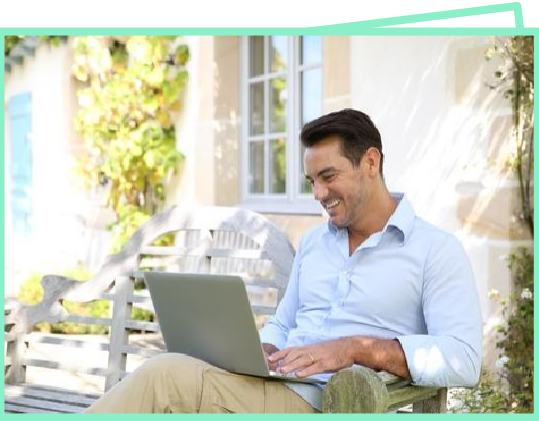




How much sleep do you think these people need? Why does our need for sleep differ throughout our lives?









Discuss

Under what circumstances do you have a good or a bad night's sleep?





the weather





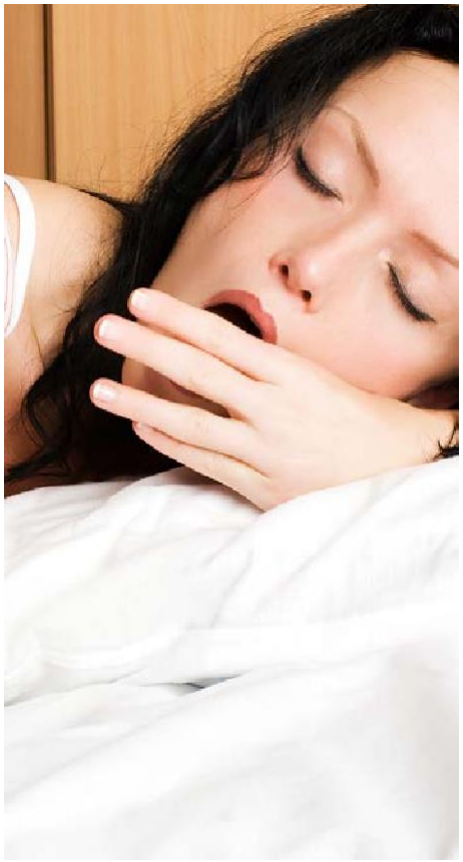
peace and quiet

Big question

Why do you think we sleep?

Read the text and summarize it.

Why do we sleep?

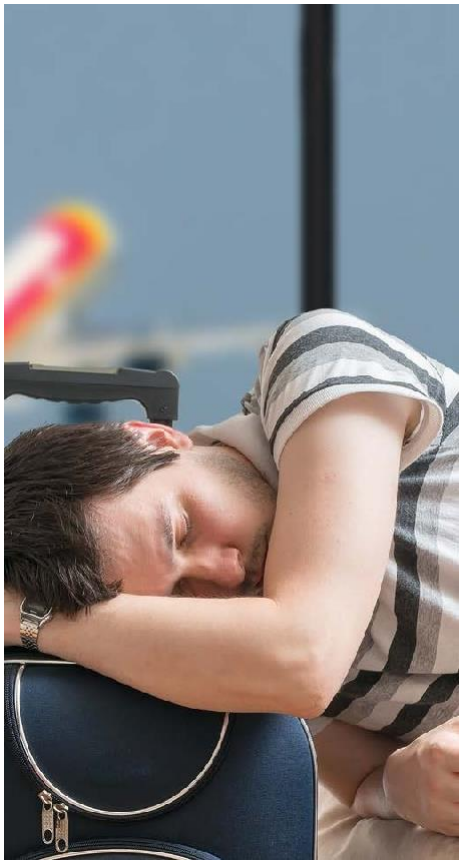


Sleep is such a natural part of our daily routine that we rarely think about why we do it. What we do know is that without sleep, our physical and mental states deteriorate. When we are tired, we find it difficult to concentrate, are irritable, we make more mistakes and react more slowly, and in extreme cases, we die. A good night's sleep makes us feel infinitely better. But why is this?

For thousands of years, sleep was thought to be a time of inactivity; a passive state when the body and mind were at rest. However, as science has developed, a greater interest is being taken in the role of sleep, though the exact reason for sleeping remains a mystery.

Read the text and summarize it.

Why do we sleep?



An early theory as to why we sleep was thought to be for energy conservation. Although food is plentiful in the present day, over the past few millennia humans had to work hard to find food. Thus, being able to conserve energy when food was scarce was a positive thing. Not only does our metabolic rate drop during sleep, but so does our core body temperature.

This means that when we sleep, we need to use less energy to keep our bodies going. There is, however, a powerful counter argument to this hypothesis. It postulates that sleep, as a state of unconsciousness, would have made humans vulnerable to attack by animals or other humans in the past millennia.

Do you know what these words mean? Practise saying them with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

deteriorate	irritable	infinitely
inactivity	plentiful	scarce
conserve	core	vulnerable

Choose the correct answer. What is wrong with the other answers?

1. If we don't sleep enough, our mental capacity...

a. strengthens. **b. weakens.** **c. decomposes.** **d. infinitely.**

2. For many millennia, sleep was thought to be an _____ state.

a. apathetic **b. inertia** **c. unassertive** **d. unconscious**

3. In the past we had to conserve energy because of a _____ of food.

a. scarcity **b. shortcoming** **c. failure** **d. scarce**

4. In times past, sleeping humans were _____ to attack.

a. irritable **b. unsafe** **c. susceptible** **d. unprotected**

Tell your teacher

Humans are generally sleeping less than they used to. Do you think this might be because we now have an abundance of food and no longer need to conserve as much energy? What other reasons can you think of?

food

technology

stress

light pollution

Why do you think different kinds of animals have different sleeping patterns?







Discuss

Of the theories that you have read about, which seems to be the most likely explanation as to why we sleep? Do you know of any other theories?



conserve energy

repair our bodies

form memories

strengthen neural connections

Dreaming

Are you the kind of person who remembers their dreams? When was the last time you remembered a dream? Can you explain what happened in the dream in your own words? Was it similar to other dreams you've had?



familiar faces

colours

one moment blurred into the next...

who was I?

images

feelings

Exercise p. 11

1. B, 2. D, 3. A, 4. C

Match the beginnings and endings

1. Sleep is a natural part of our day,...
2. For many millennia, sleep was...
3. In the past, sleep made us vulnerable to animal attack,...
4. Sleep is thought to be especially essential in new-borns and infants...

a. thought to be a time of physical and mental inactivity.

b. which means that sleep was a dangerous time for humans.

c. because this is when new neural connections are strengthened.

d. which is why we rarely think about why we do it.

Homework answer key

Exercise p.24

1. D, 2. A, 3. B, 4. C

Presentation

Using the words below, try to prepare a two-minute presentation about sleeping. Include several reasons to support your point of view.
Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.

brain recovers	neural connections
memories formed	babies and infants
memories pruned	dreaming