

Parts of the brain – functions



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Medulla structure in the hindbrain involved in regulating basic life functions, such as heartbeat and respiration
Brainstem the "stalk" in the lower part of the brain that connects the spinal cord to higher regions of the brain

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Cerebral Cortex the wrinkled, outer layer of gray matter that covers the cerebral hemispheres; controls higher mental functions, such as thought, language, learning, memory, emotions and control of voluntary movement
Thalamus a structure in the forebrain that serves as a relay station for sorting and integrating sensory information and that plays a key role in regulating states of wakefulness and sleep
Corpus Callosum the thick bundle of nerve fibers that connects the two cerebral hemispheres
Hypothalamus a small, pea sized structure in the forebrain that helps regulate many vital bodily functions, including body temperature and reproduction, as well as emotional states, aggression, and responses to stress
Midbrain the part of the brain that lies on top of the hindbrain and below the forebrain; contains nerve pathways that connect the hindbrain and forebrain and control automatic movements of eye muscles
Pons a structure in the hindbrain involved in regulating states of wakefulness and sleep and in conveying sensory information from the spinal cord to the forebrain
Hippocampus a structure in the limbic system involved in memory formation
Pituitary Glands small endocrine gland in the brain that produces the hormone melatonin; involved in regulating sleep-wake cycle
Spinal Cord the column of nerves that transmits information between the brain and the peripheral nervous system
Cerebellum a structure in the hindbrain involved in controlling coordination and balance
Frontal Lobes the parts of the cerebral cortex, located at the front of the cerebral hemispheres, that are considered the "

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executive center" of the brain because of their role in higher mental functions; control motor responses and higher mental functions, such as thinking, planning, problem solving, decision making, and accessing and acting on stored memories

Parietal Lobe the parts of the cerebral cortex, located on the side of each cerebral hemisphere, that process bodily sensations relating to touch, pressure, temperature, pain and body movement

Occipital Lobe the parts of the cerebral cortex, located at the back of both cerebral hemispheres, which process visual stimuli and information, giving rise to sensations of vision

Temporal Lobe the parts of the cerebral cortex lying beneath and somewhat behind the frontal lobes that are involved with processing audio stimuli and information, giving rise to the sensations of sound

Broca's Area an area of the left frontal lobe involved in speech

Wernicke's Area an area of the left temporal lobe involved in processing written and spoken language

Axon the tubelike part of a neuron that carries messages away from the cell body towards other neurons

Dendrites tree-like structures in the neuron that receive neural impulses from neighboring neurons

Soma the cell body of a neuron that contains the nucleus of the cell and carries out the cell's metabolic functions

Terminal Buttons swellings at the tips of axons from which neurotransmitters are dispatched into the synapse

Nodes of Ranvier gaps in the myelin sheath that create non-insulated areas along the axon

Myelin Sheath a layer of protective insulation that covers the axons of certain neurons and helps speed transmission of nerve impulses