

Name: _____

Achoo!

by Cynthia Sherwood

Achoo! We all sneeze sometimes. Sneezing is a reflex that your body does automatically. That means you cannot make yourself sneeze or stop one once it has started. When you sneeze, your body is trying to get rid of bad things in your nose, such as bacteria. You have extra germs when you have a cold, so you sneeze a lot more. You might also sneeze when you smell pepper!



Inside your nose, there are hundreds of tiny hairs. These hairs filter the air you breathe. Sometimes dust and pollen find their way through these hairs and bother your nasal passages. The nerves in the lining of your nose tell your brain that something is invading your body.

Your brain, lungs, nose, mouth, and the muscles of your upper body work together to blow away the invaders with a sneeze. When you sneeze, germs from your nose get blown into the air. Using a tissue or “sneezing into your sleeve” captures most of these germs. It is very important to wash your hands after you sneeze into them, especially during cold and flu season.

Do you ever sneeze when you walk into bright sunlight? About 25% of people experience this phenomenon. Scientists believe that the brain gets confused when signals from the optic nerve trigger the sneezing reflex in direct sunlight. This usually runs in families.

If someone nearby sneezes, remember to tell them “Gesundheit!” That is a funny-looking word which is pronounced “gezz-oont-hite.” It is the German word that wishes someone good health after sneezing.

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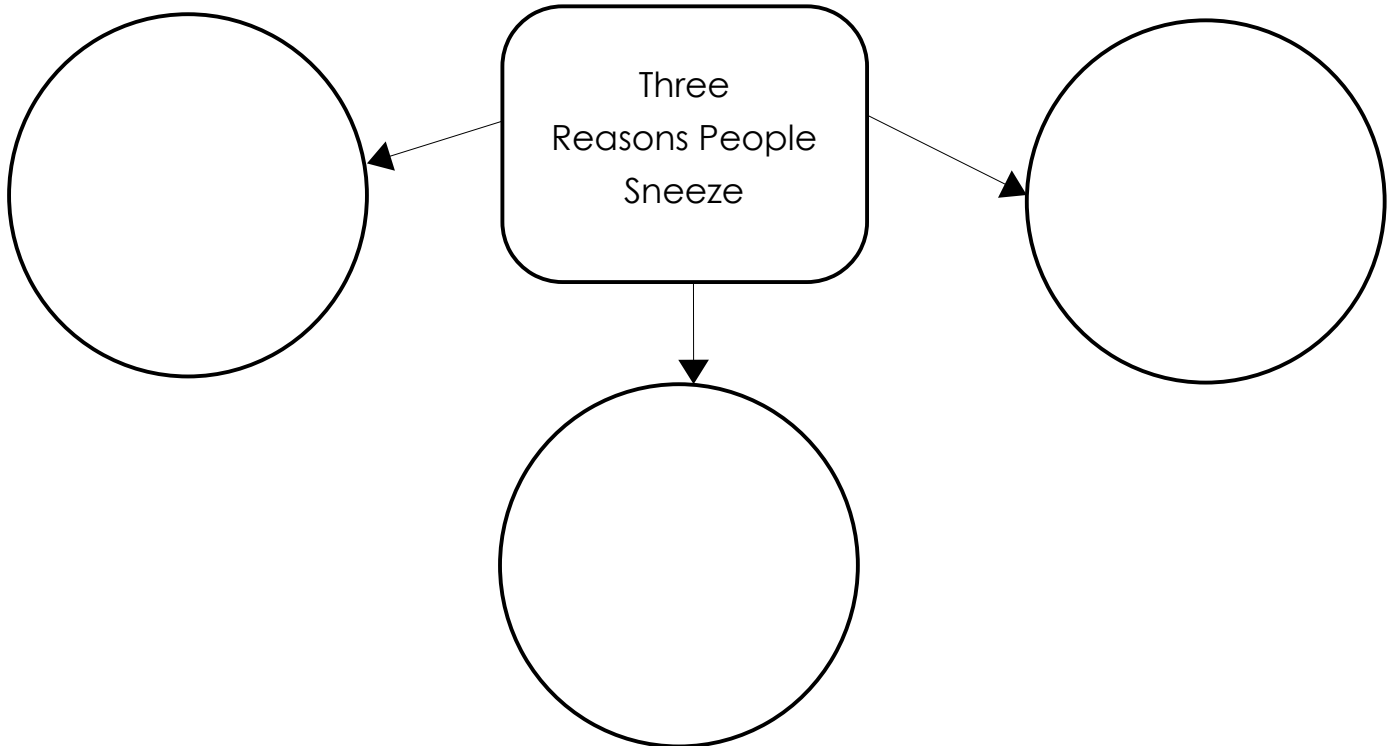
1. Which parts of your body work together when you sneeze?

2. What does the German word *gesundheit* mean?

- a. I wish you good health.
- b. I wish you God's blessings.
- c. I wish you a good day.
- d. I wish you would stop sneezing.

3. Why do some people sneeze when they walk into bright sunlight?

4. Complete the web with information from the article.



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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. filter | a. done unconsciously or spontaneously |
| _____ 2. invaders | b. relating to the nose |
| _____ 3. phenomenon | c. a nerve that senses messages between the eye and the brain |
| _____ 4. automatically | d. prevent unwanted material or debris from passing through |
| _____ 5. pollen | e. cause something to happen |
| _____ 6. optic nerve | f. an action that occurs as a response to a stimulus or outside influence |
| _____ 7. trigger | g. unwanted or harmful things that come into a place where they don't belong |
| _____ 8. nasal | h. unsure of how to respond |
| _____ 9. reflex | i. a powdery substance from a flower that can cause some people to sneeze |
| _____ 10. confused | j. an event or occurrence |

ANSWER KEY

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1. Which parts of your body work together when you sneeze?

When you sneeze, your brain, lungs, nose, mouth, and upper body muscles work together.

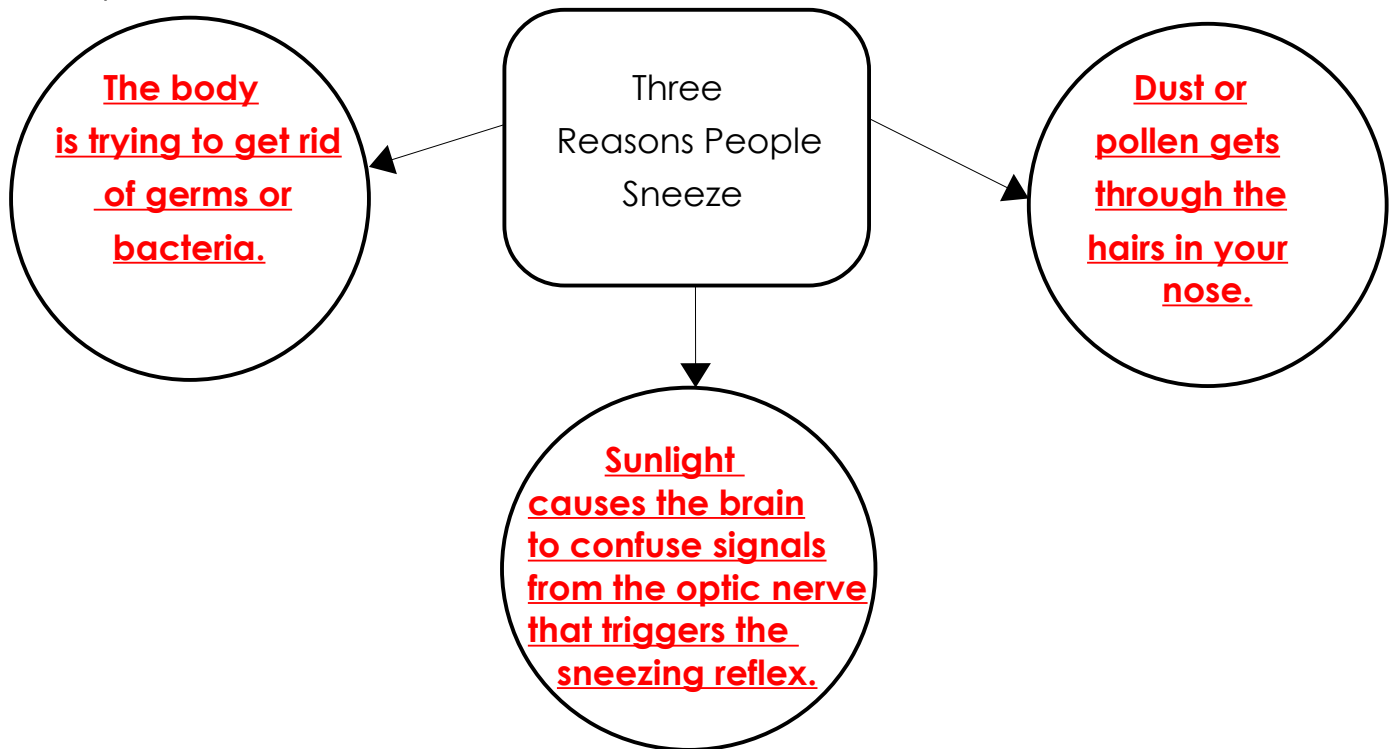
2. What does the German word *gesundheit* mean? **a**

- a. I wish you good health. b. I wish you God's blessings.
c. I wish you a good day. d. I wish you would stop sneezing.

3. Why do some people sneeze when they walk into bright sunlight?

The brain mixes up signals from the optic nerve, which triggers the sneezing reflex in some people.

4. Complete the web with information from the article.



ANSWER KEY

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

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