**Your Brain: Don’t Leave Home Without It**

**Subject area/course**: Social Sciences/Introduction to Psychology

**Grade level/band:** 11–12

**STUDENT PROMPT SECTION**

1. **Task context**:

There is something very interesting that you carry around with you everywhere you go. It’s not your smartphone or your tablet. It’s something much more complicated and impressive – your brain. For this task, read the following scenario. It’s a situation that you have probably faced many times as a student.

*Imagine that Sophia has been studying hard for her psychology exam, and today is test day. As her instructor passes out the exam, Sophia starts to feel nervous. Her palms get sweaty, and her heart beats a little faster. Sophia listens to the instructions given by the instructor and then begins to read the first multiple-choice question about the sympathetic nervous system. She reads through the four answer choices and easily eliminates two of them. Sophia then thinks back to the chapter she reviewed just before class. She retrieves the correct answer from memory and uses her pencil to mark the correct response.*

Now read the scenario a second time and think about the parts of Sophia’s brain that would be more active than usual in this situation. What are the physical and/or cognitive processes that are taking place in this scenario?

Keep in mind that multiple areas of the brain are going to be active. Your job is to decide which areas would be *more* active than usual. For example, the medulla controls your heartbeat and respiration and is always active, but is there something that would lead you to believe that the medulla would be more active than usual in this situation? If so, then include it in your paper.

This assignment could change the way you take tests. Consider ways in which students might cope with the stress described in the scenario. Is it possible to overcome the physical and/or cognitive reactions that are taking place? As you describe the different regions of the brain and the way that they are involved in this scenario, justify your conclusions.

1. **The task**:

After researching the different regions of the brain, write a 2- to 3-page paper that describes the areas of the brain that would be most active in the scenario described above. Briefly outline how students might benefit from knowing the cognitive and physical processes that are evident while they take a test. Provide justifications for your thoughts by referencing articles and other resources that you find during your research.

Your paper should:

* Discuss your rationale for your choices as you incorporate evidence from your research.
* Take your audience into consideration.
* Use discipline-specific vocabulary.
* Cite your sources using in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
* Follow American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines or another style that your instructor specifies.

1. **Materials/resources:**

* Access to the Internet to do research
* The 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, or you can access Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/) for assistance with APA-style citations and references to the texts that you incorporate into your paper.

1. **Time requirements**:

This assignment is to be completed primarily outside of class. You will have approximately one week to complete the paper, depending on your instructor’s directions and deadlines.