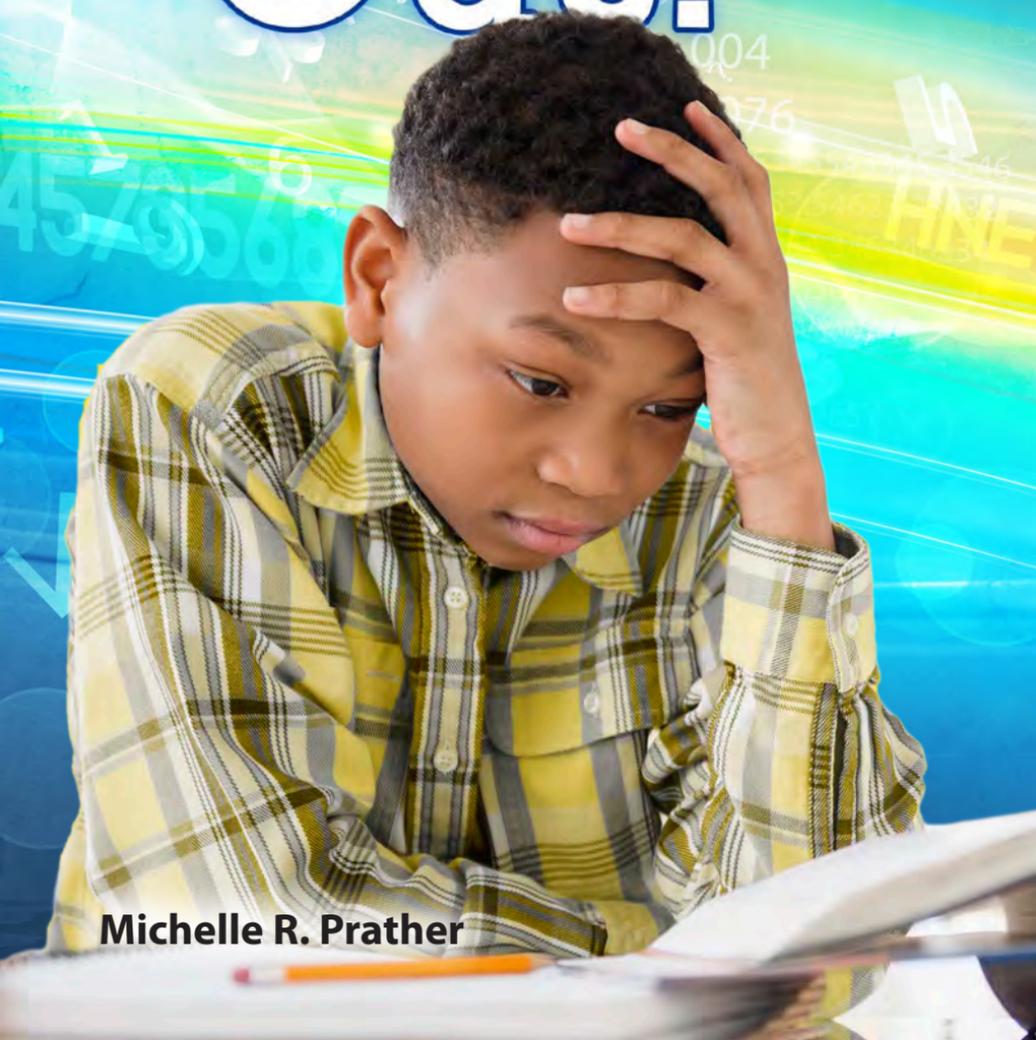


3 Life in 2  
Numbers

TIME  
FOR KIDS

# Stressed Out!



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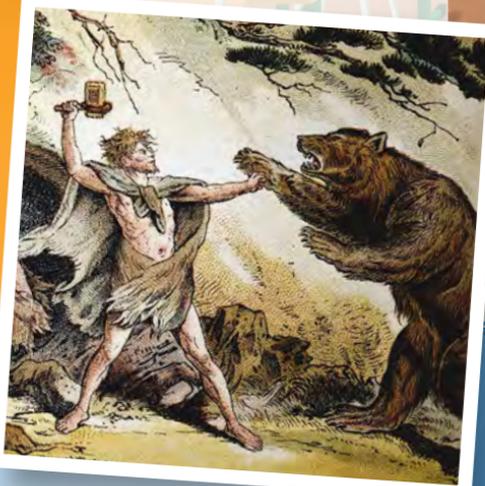
# What Is Stress?

It is unusual to go a day without hearing someone talk about being stressed. Maybe a parent mentions during dinner that a big work project has been “very stressful.” Or you and your friends worry about an upcoming math test. Stress is the body’s reaction to certain situations and feelings. It changes how the body functions and how you feel about life—at least temporarily.

Stress sounds...well, stressful! But stress is a normal part of your day, and you should not be afraid of it. Stress can help you protect yourself from threatening **circumstances** and get things done. But too much stress can wear out your body and mind.

## Prehistoric Stress

Our ancestors often crossed paths with wild animals. This stress sent adrenaline through their bodies. The adrenaline helped them quickly decide if they should fight or run away.





## Such a Rush

Adrenaline is one of the hormones released into your bloodstream when you are under pressure. It makes your heart beat faster and your blood pressure rise. It gives you a rush of energy, too.

# Are You Stressed Out?

Every day, you **confront** a variety of things that cause stress, even if you do not realize it. You might be unsure of what you are feeling at first. But pay close attention to your body's reactions. These signs can help you **gauge** your stress levels in different situations.

Imagine that you have to present an oral report. If you feel relaxed and confident, you might also feel happy. You know you will get a good grade. Your body and mind feel peaceful. On the other hand, you are definitely *not* at peace if thinking about the report gives you a headache. Signs of stress might include a racing heart, weak knees, or **nausea** (NAH-zhuh).

## Fighting Stress

Everyone reacts to stress differently. When you start to experience signs of stress, take slow, deep breaths. Focus on calming images. This will distract your mind and help your body calm down.



## **The State of Stress**

If you find yourself feeling stressed a lot, you are not alone. Many kids are often stressed. One report showed that almost one-third of kids suffered a health problem due to stress in the last month.



## Your Body on Stress

Stress can affect your body from head to toe. People who are very sensitive to stress can feel several **symptoms** all at once. Others **might** feel only one or two. The **symptoms** can come and go, or **they** can last until the stressful event has passed.

Some of these pesky red flags your body raises can feel like a cold or the flu. But it is a good idea to ask yourself: "Could I be stressed, rather than sick?" Talk to a parent or guardian about whether you should see a doctor.

## Stress Signals

Here are some things to look out for when you are stressed.



headache  
dizziness  
difficulty focusing

blushing  
sweating

clenching teeth  
dry mouth

tight muscles

trouble breathing

sweaty palms

nausea

weak legs  
leg pain

# Reader's Guide

1. In what ways is stress good and bad?
2. Do you remember how old you were when you first felt stressed? Explain.
3. Name five stressful things in your life.
4. What are some methods you can use to control your stress when it gets out of hand?

