

Britons most afraid of heights and snakes

28th March, 2014



A new survey from an internet-based market research company shows the things British people are most afraid of. Top of the list is heights. Over

half of the people who took the survey said they had acrophobia – the medical name for the fear of heights. In second place was a fear of snakes, with 21 per cent of people saying they were "very afraid" of the slippery creatures. The third biggest fear was public speaking, with 20 per cent being "very afraid" and 36 per cent being "a little afraid" of speaking in public. Other things that frighten people most include spiders, mice, needles and injections, the sight of blood, flying, and being in small spaces. Number 10 on the list was *coulrophobia* – the fear of clowns.

The market research company asked over 2,000 people what they were afraid of. They had to rate 13 common phobias from "not at all afraid" to "very afraid". The researchers found that there were big differences between what men and women were afraid of, and what frightened old and young people. The researchers said: "All are not created equal when it comes to fears." The survey showed that more women than men were afraid of things, especially spiders. These scare a third of men and about half of women. Age differences showed young people were more likely to be afraid of public speaking. Those in the older age groups were more likely than younger people to be afraid of heights.

Sources: *IB Times* / *The Guardian* / *YouGov.co.uk*

Writing

Snakes are scarier than spiders. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

survey / research / afraid / heights / snakes / public speaking / the sight of blood / list / phobias / differences / young people / equal / a third / age differences / older

True / False

- The British government conducted a survey on people's fears. T / F
- British people are most afraid of heights. T / F
- The medical name for the fear of heights is acrophobia. T / F
- The tenth biggest fear was clowns. T / F
- More than 20,000 people answered questions about their fears. T / F
- There were big differences between the fears of women and men. T / F
- Women are less afraid of spiders than men are. T / F
- Older people are less afraid of public speaking than young people are. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. survey | a. the same |
| 2. afraid | b. position |
| 3. place | c. areas |
| 4. creatures | d. assess |
| 5. spaces | e. scared |
| 6. rate | f. probable |
| 7. big | g. particularly |
| 8. equal | h. animals |
| 9. especially | i. large |
| 10. likely | j. study |

Discussion – Student A

- What different things are men and women afraid of?
- How could someone get over his or her fear of spiders?
- Some people are afraid of cheese. Why?
- What do people do who are afraid of technology?
- Are you afraid of public speaking?
- Are you afraid of making mistakes in English?
- Do you know anyone who is not scared of anything?
- What questions would you like to ask a phobia expert?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. market | a. rate 13 common phobias |
| 2. the things British people are | b. all afraid |
| 3. Over half of the people who | c. on the list |
| 4. slippery | d. took the survey |
| 5. Number 10 | e. equal |
| 6. They had to | f. research |
| 7. not at | g. speaking |
| 8. created | h. of men |
| 9. These scare a third | i. most afraid of |
| 10. afraid of public | j. creatures |

Discussion – Student B

- What are you most afraid of and why?
- Why are we afraid of things that are not dangerous?
- What was your biggest fear when you were a child?
- Have you ever overcome a fear?
- Are people in different countries afraid of different things?
- What do you do when you are really scared?
- How could you get over one of your fears?
- Is fear healthy?

Spelling

- A new vsryue
- the emdacli name for the fear of heights
- afraid of the slippery urstacree
- Other things that ngerithf people
- needles and tcniiojens
- the sight of lodob
- The market ahrsrcee company
- rate 13 common phsabio
- there were big fcinesdeerf
- men were afraid of things, ceelpasily spiders
- more lkilye to be afraid of public speaking
- the older age rupogs

Answers – Synonym Match

1. j	2. e	3. b	4. h	5. c
6. d	7. i	8. a	9. g	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Horror movies

You think horror movies are the scariest things. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so scary about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): rollercoasters, public speaking or ghosts.

Role B – Rollercoasters

You think rollercoasters is the scariest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so scary about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): horror movies, public speaking or ghosts.

Role C – Public speaking

You think public speaking is the scariest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so scary about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): rollercoasters, horror movies or ghosts.

Role D – Ghosts

You think ghosts the scariest things. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so scary about their things. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): rollercoasters, public speaking or horror movies.

Speaking – Scary Things

Rank these with your partner. Put the scariest at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| • horror movies | • rollercoasters |
| • the dark | • exams |
| • cyber-stalkers | • public speaking in English |
| • ghosts | • health checks |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.