Neuroscience

University Medicine · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
neuroscience	**Neuroscience** studies the brain and nerves.
synapse /ˈsɪnæps/	A **synapse** is a small gap between two nerve cells.
voltage-gated Ca^{2+} channels	**Voltage-gated Ca^{2+} channels** open and let calcium into the nerve ending.
reuptake /riːˈʌpteɪk/	**Reuptake** takes the chemical messenger back into the nerve cell.
ionotropic receptor	An **ionotropic receptor** opens a channel very quickly.
metabotropic receptor	A **metabotropic receptor** works more slowly, through G proteins.
dorsal column	The **dorsal column** carries touch signals up the spinal cord.
spinothalamic tract	The **spinothalamic tract** carries pain and temperature signals to the brain.
gate control	**Gate control** explains why rubbing a knock makes it hurt less.
referred pain	In **referred pain**, a problem in an organ is felt in the skin somewhere else.
upper motor neuron	Damage to an **upper motor neuron** makes muscles stiff.

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Word	Example
lower motor neuron	Damage to a **lower motor neuron** makes muscles weak and thin.
corticospinal tract	The **corticospinal tract** carries movement signals from the brain to the spinal cord.
pyramidal decussation	At the **pyramidal decussation**, movement pathways cross to the other side.
Babinski sign	A **Babinski sign** is when the big toe goes up when the foot is stroked.
intention tremor	An **intention tremor** gets worse as the hand reaches for something.
optic nerve /ˈɒptɪk nɜːv/	The **optic nerve** carries messages from the eye to the brain.
optic chiasm	At the **optic chiasm**, some nerve fibres from each eye cross over.
hemianopia	In **hemianopia**, a person loses half of their field of vision.
Rinne test	The **Rinne test** uses a tuning fork to check hearing.
tonotopy	**Tonotopy** means each part of the ear responds to a different pitch.
sympathetic nervous system /ˌsɪmpəˈθetɪk ˈnɜːvəs ˈsɪstəm/	The **sympathetic nervous system** prepares the body for "fight or flight".
parasympathetic nervous system /ˌpærəˌsɪmpəˈθetɪk ˈnɜːvəs ˈsɪstəm/	The **parasympathetic nervous system** calms the body after stress.

Word	Example
Horner syndrome	**Horner syndrome** gives a drooping eyelid and a small pupil.
slow-wave sleep	**Slow-wave sleep** is the deepest sleep, mostly early in the night.
Broca's area /ˈbrəʊkəz ˈeərɪə/	Damage to **Broca's area** makes speaking difficult.
Wernicke's area /ˈwɜːnɪks ˈeərɪə/	Damage to **Wernicke's area** makes understanding language difficult.
arcuate fasciculus	The **arcuate fasciculus** links the two main language areas of the brain.
conduction aphasia	In **conduction aphasia**, a person can speak but cannot repeat words.

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