

So you know about your Guard Dog (amygdala) your Wise Owl (prefrontal cortex) your Sifting Sooty (reticular activating system) and your Elephant who tries to remember (hippocampus).



These are NOT the only key parts of your brain. For instance, have you heard about the insular cortex? Neuroscientists believe this part of our brain may be crucial to understanding what it feels like to be human. They see the insular cortex as vital to reading other people's emotions and picking up on social cues.

Read the below description of what it does. Then come up with an animal to represent this part of the brain. Email us with your suggested animal character and answers to these questions at [alice@growyourmind.life](mailto:alice@growyourmind.life)

Justify your choice in the email by answering these questions:

**Which animal did you choose?**

---

---

**Why did you choose this animal?**

---

---

**What will you name this animal? E.g. Sifting Sooty, Guard Dog, Elephant who tries to remember...**

---

**How will this animal help others remember the function of the Insular Cortex?**

---

---

---

*The insular cortex plays a number of roles. It is believed to help us establish a sense of ourselves in the world. One of its roles is to make us aware of our bodily states. It is like a receiving zone in our brain that reads our body and then creates feelings that can bring about actions.*

*For example, it reads that we are hungry, so we start to eat. It also reads other people's states and situations and helps us behave with empathy and compassion.*

*The insular cortex notices a quickened heartbeat, slow breathing or a flushed face and gets you to act in certain ways. Our insular cortex also gets us ready for things that are about to happen. For example, we are about to go outside in the cold air. Our insular cortex will start pumping blood to where we need it to keep us warm.*

*Perhaps you could think of your insular cortex as the part of the brain that helps you be aware of yourself and your surroundings.*

