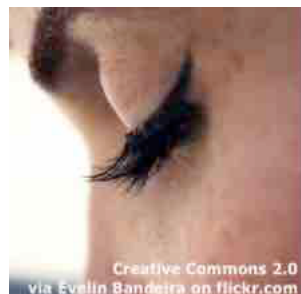


Less blinking may mean more active listening

18th December 2025



Blinking is something we do automatically, without thinking. We blink 15–20 times a minute. There are several reasons why we blink. One is to stop our eyes from becoming dry. This helps our vision. Another reason is to protect

our eyes from dust or sudden insect attacks. Scientists in Canada think they have found another function of blinking. The researchers are from Concordia University in Montreal. They found that we blink less when we are listening to someone speak. This happens more when there is background noise. Lead researcher Penelope Coupal said blinking less means our brain has a little more energy. This allows us to focus on what another person is saying.

The research team conducted two experiments on 49 participants. All of the test participants listened to sentences being read aloud. In one experiment, there was no background noise. In the other test, there was background noise, which made it harder for the people to hear the sentences. The scientists said that people in the test with background noise blinked a lot less. When the background noise increased, blink rates dropped even further. Study co-author Dr Mickael Deroche said we automatically blink less "when important information is coming". Ms Coupal agreed. She said: "We don't just blink randomly. In fact, we blink systematically less when important information is presented."

Sources: sciencealert.com / earth.com / eurekaalert.com

Writing

We all need to listen more to everyone we talk to. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

blinking / eyes / vision / dust / insect attacks / scientist / listening / background noise / experiments / sentences / reading aloud / hearing / important information / author

True / False

- 1) Scientists say we think about blinking before we blink. T / F
- 2) The article says blinking can protect us against insect attacks. T / F
- 3) We blink less often when we are trying to listen to someone. T / F
- 4) Blinking less means our brain has a little more energy to use. T / F
- 5) Researchers conducted tests on nearly 500 people. T / F
- 6) When there is background noise, we blink more. T / F
- 7) We blink more when we want to understand important information. T / F
- 8) Another doctor said people do not simply blink randomly. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. automatically | a. purpose |
| 2. several | b. valuable |
| 3. vision | c. a number of |
| 4. function | d. did |
| 5. focus | e. went up |
| 6. conducted | f. without thinking |
| 7. experiment | g. concentrate |
| 8. increased | h. more |
| 9. further | i. eyesight |
| 10. important | j. test |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Do you ever think about blinking?
- c) What kinds of background noises do you think are annoying?
- d) What things make it hard to listen to people?
- e) Are there any people you don't want to listen to?
- f) What was the last piece of important information you heard?
- g) What does the phrase "in the blink of an eye" mean?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. Blinking is something we do automatically,
 2. There are several reasons
 3. This helps our
 4. we blink less when we are listening
 5. focus on what another
 6. The research team conducted two
 7. harder for the people to
 8. people in the test with background noise
 9. We don't just blink
 10. when important information is
- a. blinked a lot less
 - b. to someone speak
 - c. why we blink
 - d. experiments
 - e. randomly
 - f. person is saying
 - g. without thinking
 - h. presented
 - i. hear the sentences
 - j. vision

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of blinking?
- b) Why do we blink?
- c) What do you do if your eyes are dry?
- d) For how long can you not blink?
- e) Do you think you blink less when you listen to people?
- f) What can we do to listen more actively?
- g) What can we do to give our brain more energy?
- h) What does the phrase "Blink and you'll miss it" mean?

Spelling

1. something we do aaolmcyttailu
2. There are varslee reasons why we blink
3. This helps our ivosin
4. otcrtep our eyes from dust
5. another niocftnu of blinking
6. kbangrudoc noise
7. cdduotcne two experiments
8. test stptraicapn
9. eenetcssn being read aloud
10. blink rates dropped even hurterf
11. Study co-tahrou Dr Mickael Deroche
12. We don't just blink donmalyr

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	How many times a minute do people blink?
2.	What does blinking prevent happening to our eyes?
3.	What might suddenly attack our eyes?
4.	When do we blink less?
5.	What does our brain have more of when we blink less?
6.	How many people took part in the blinking experiments?
7.	What did the test participants listen to being read aloud?
8.	What increased that made people blink even less?
9.	Who is Mickael Deroche?
10.	What kind of information makes us blink less?

Speaking – Listen to...

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important people to listen to at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Parents
- Teachers
- Religious leaders
- Police officers
- Elders
- Friends
- Doctors
- Yourself

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.