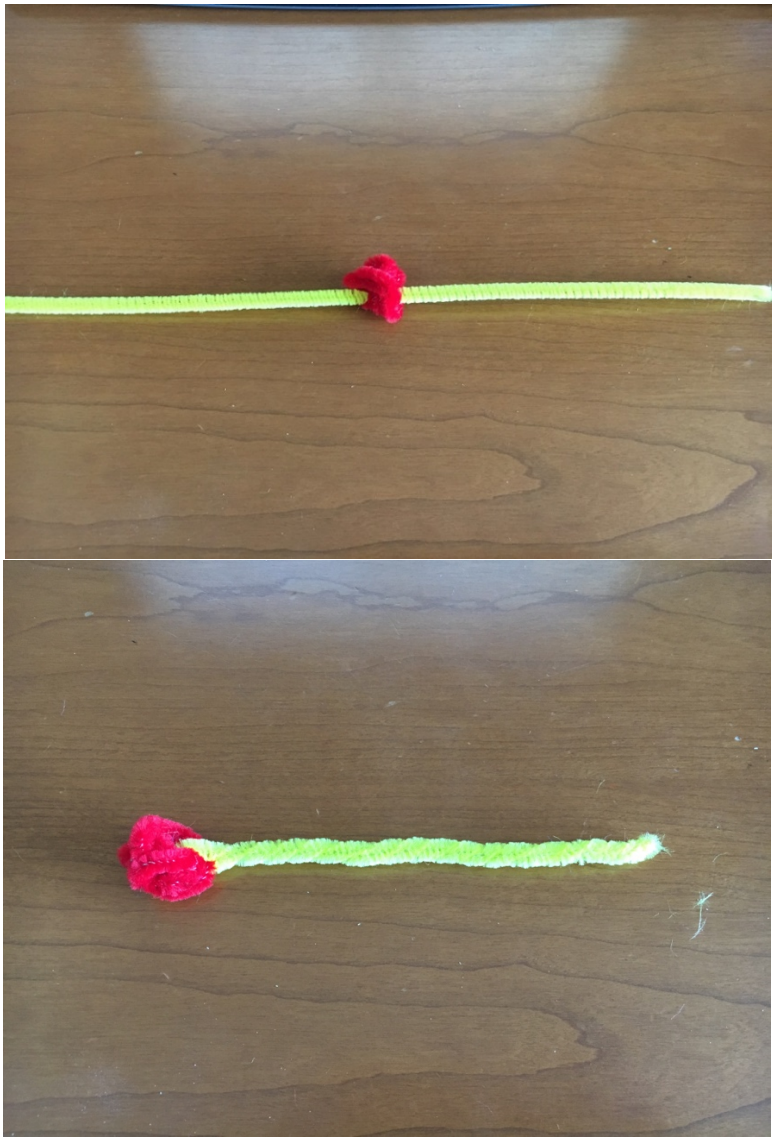
Pipe Cleaner Neuron Activity

Get out those pipe cleaners and make a neuron! You'll need pipe cleaners of 5 different colors: one color for each of the dendrites, cell body, axon, myelin sheath and synaptic terminal. Any colors will do.

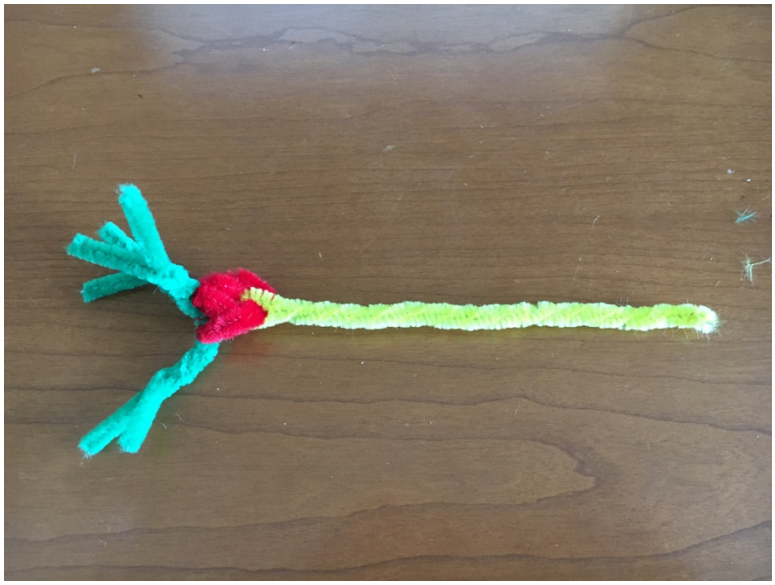
Materials: colored pipe cleaners

1. Take one pipe cleaner and roll it into a ball. This is will be the cell body.

2.Take another pipe cleaner and attach it to the new "cell body" by pushing it through the ball so there are two halves sticking out. Take the two halves and twist them together into a single extension. This will be the axon.

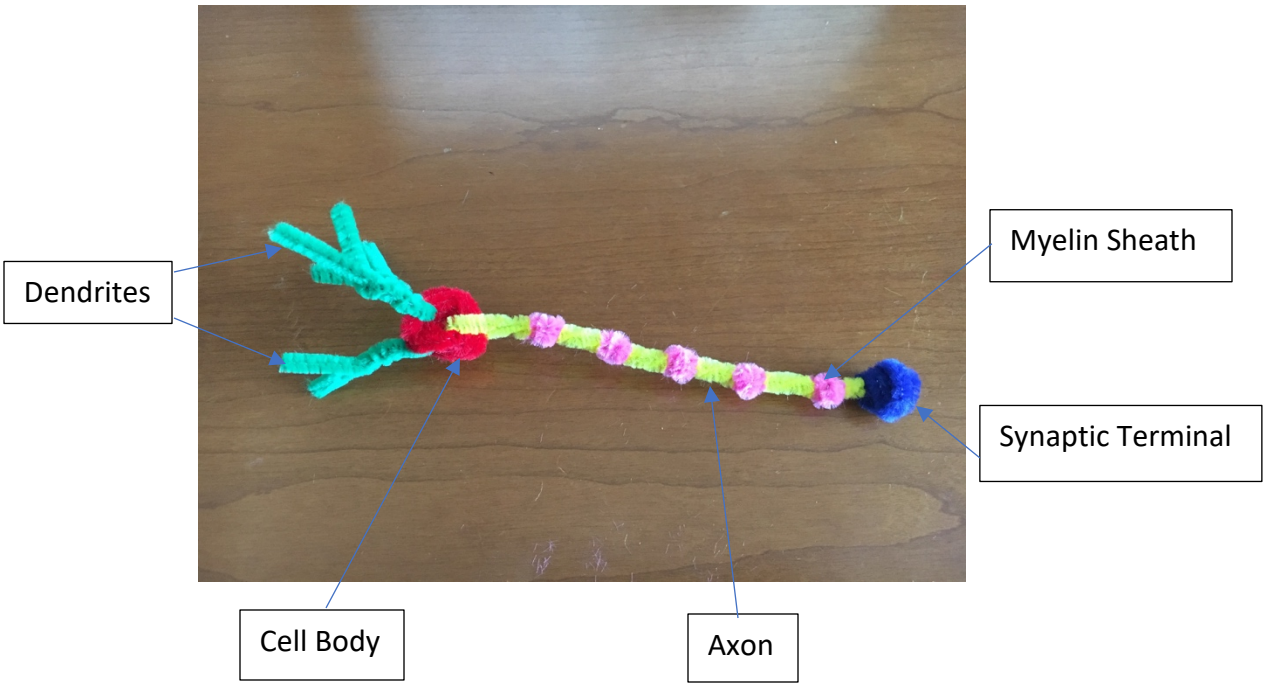


3.Take other pipe cleaners and push them through the "cell body" on the side opposite the axon. These are dendrites. These can be shorter than your axon and you can twist more pipe cleaners to make more dendrites.



4.Wrap small individual pipe cleaners along the length of the axon. These will represent the myelin sheath.

5. Wrap another pipe cleaner on the end of the axon. This will be the synaptic terminal.



Discussion Prompts

Now that students have learned a bit about the parts of a neuron, students are encouraged to brainstorm questions to ask our neuroscience faculty. Below are some different categories they can think about, along with example questions to spark their own ideas. These questions can be submitted through the link located in the event description.

I. Researcher's path to science
   a. Example: When did you first become interested in neuroscience?
II. Student's life
   a. Example: Where is a good place for a student like me to learn more about neuroscience?
III. Research
   a. Example: What part of the neuron does your research focus on?
IV. Career
   a. Example: What is the hardest part of being a researcher?
V. Neuroscience
   a. Example: What are the different areas of neuroscience and which do you focus on?