Moving Muscles

There are about 600 muscles in your body. Muscles have many functions. For example, they keep your heart beating, pull your mouth into a smile, and move the bones of your skeleton. The heart and diaphragm (the muscle that keeps you breathing) are both muscles we have no control over. These types of muscles are called involuntary muscles. Muscles that we control are called voluntary muscles. The muscles that move your bones are voluntary muscles.

Your bones are moved by the muscular system. Muscles move only in one direction — they pull bones together. They cannot push bones apart. Muscles that move bones work in pairs. One muscle contracts and pulls the bones together. This causes the second muscle to relax. Then the opposite muscle contracts and pulls the same bones apart causing the first muscle to relax.

Observe the picture and answer the questions.

- Opposing Muscle Pairs



