

READING WITH UNDERSTANDING (Stress Before Examination)



Notes

Understanding stress is the first step towards conquering it. Stress is not inherently negative; it's our body's natural response to demanding situations. However, when left unmanaged, it can hinder our ability to think clearly and perform at our best. In this session, we will delve into practical strategies to cope with pre-exam stress, equipping you with tools to maintain composure and focus during this critical time.

From effective time management and study techniques to relaxation methods and mindfulness practices, we will explore a holistic approach to tackle stress. Remember, exams are not just assessments of knowledge; they are opportunities for growth and learning how to navigate challenges.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, the learner:

- Analyses and evaluates different passages written in English;
- Interprets short theme-based passages by close reading, and answers questions on those passages.

16.1 SECTION I

Before examinations, many students are under tremendous stress. But it is not just the students who are stressed, teachers and parents too face the same situation.

Why do people get stressed? Adolescents are faced with the demands of their developmental tasks and that of a complex society. They need to acquire skills of adjustment to emerge into adulthood unaffected by these demands. If they lack these skills or if too many demands are made on them, they fail. Students are anxious, as

Reading With Understanding



Notes

they are worried about whether they would be able to live up to the expectations of their peers, parents and teachers. Optimal anxiety motivates and keeps them ahead while over-anxiety is disabling.

Anxiety is contagious and passes onto other students, teachers and parents. Adolescents, when stressed out, tend to perceive everything as an emergency. Some of the reasons for increase in stress level are identity crisis, the need to make career-oriented decisions, teachers' and parents' attitude and peer pressure. The inability to communicate with parents also plays a major role.

Good memory depends upon a good brain. The brain needs a good supply of oxygen, glucose, calcium, phosphorus and iron. So make sure you sit in a well-ventilated place when studying. Your diet should include milk, cheese, walnuts, wheat germ, green leafy vegetables, ragi and dates. Do not forget that "breakfast is the brain food". Fatty meals, sugar and acids take away calcium from the system. Diets rich in fibre like fruits and vegetables help to reduce stress.

Good concentration is important to improve the memory. Learning and memorising by understanding and recalling what one has learnt is helpful. Organising and framing a logical relationship is important. Mastery not just of the content of the subject, but also the process of answering is equally important.

Anxiety and fear hamper recall and result in a mental block during examination. Watching television for a long time could lower academic performance. It 'steals' away the reading time. Time management is about self-discipline. Time must be managed between filled and unfilled time. Filled time is the time spent sleeping, bathing, eating, dressing and attending school. A student has 10 hours of unfilled time. How best is the student going to utilise this? Make a timetable for the 10 hours.

Seven to eight hours of sleep is necessary for optimal physical rest and brain functioning. A positive thought is the seed of a positive result. Always feel positive.

This will help to lessen stress.

If a student has symptoms of anxiety or depression, seek medical help immediately.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1**

1. Say whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false statements:

- a) Only students get stressed before examinations.
 - b) Failure to cope with developmental tasks is one of the sources of stress for adolescents.
 - c) A person should lead a totally stress-free life.
 - d) You can reduce stress by sharing your feelings with parents and friends.
 - e) Adopting good study habits can help reduce examination fever.
2. Read the passage again and fill in the blanks with the most appropriate word:

Almost everyone in society today suffers from _____ (i) Perhaps the worst affected are _____ (ii) This is because adolescents have to cope with two sets of problems at the same time :- the _____ (iii) tasks that they need to do as a part of their growing up; and _____ (iv) into a complex society.

Furthermore, young people have to live up to the _____ (v) of their peers, _____ (vi) and teachers. They have to make difficult _____ (vii) oriented decisions. Sometimes they suffer from _____ (viii) crisis.

However, all stress is not bad. An _____ (ix) level of stress is motivating. One can keep anxiety and fear away by good _____ (x) skills, good eating and study habits.

3. Select a suitable title for the passage from the options given-
- i) Examination Fever
 - ii) Stress in Modern Life
 - iii) Today's Youth

16.2 SECTION II

You have just read about stress. Below you will read stress preventive measures:

- A. To avoid or reduce stress, you must manage your time properly. You must prepare a 'TO DO' task list. However these tasks are not static. They undergo change over a period of time. It is useful to divide tasks into three categories: Important – A; less important-B; and routine-C. Intersperse A and B tasks with C tasks such as ironing clothes, reading newspaper etc. This would provide



Notes

Reading With
Understanding

Notes

relief from constant pressure of important tasks.

It is also very important to allocate a realistic amount of time for each task. You may maintain a diary to monitor tasks done/still to be done.

- B. Exercise is beneficial in reducing anxiety and improving sleep. So you must build a habit of regular exercise. Brisk walking, swimming, jogging, aerobics are effective in keeping the heart healthy. Whenever possible, you should walk or cycle to cover short distances.

Travelling is very stressful. There are few simple exercises that you can do while travelling in a bus. You can strengthen your wrist by rolling your hands backwards and forwards while gripping the rod over-head.

You can also place your fingertips on the bar and push hard so that the fingers bend back, then relax. Repeat this ten times to increase flexibility of your fingers.

- C. Hobbies help to reduce stress. Hobbies can become as refreshing as sleep. They help boost self-image and forget the tensions and failures that one faces in life. Very often the work one does may not give the person any pleasure. However, since one chooses one's hobbies according to one's own temperament and aptitude, they give great pleasure. They are healthy mood enhancers.
- D. In order to remain calm and at peace, you need to train yourself to think positively. Every year students who are unable to cope with the disappointment caused by failure or performance lower than expected, take the extreme step of committing suicide. This is of course a very negative step and shows lack of positive thinking. Failing in the examination is not the end of the world. Furthermore, many geniuses like Ramanujan and Einstein failed examinations. Failure is never final and success is never an end. Talk about your problems.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2**

1. Here are some headings. Match the headings with the four texts – A, B, C and D.
- What is Stress
 - Taking Exercises
 - Causes of Stress
 - Thinking Positively
 - Increasing Flexibility
 - Managing Time

- Developing Hobbies
 - Removing stress
2. Here are a number of people who suffer from stress for a variety of reasons. Which of the four measures discussed in the texts will you refer to each. Also briefly state your reasons for making the choice.
- i. Hema is a quiet woman who lives alone in Delhi. Her family is in Indore. She works for 10 hours daily in an export company at a sewing machine. She is depressed and sad.
 - ii. Rohan travels for three hours daily. He works at a computer and is becoming so fat that people laugh at him.
 - iii. Rita is busy running around all day but her work is never over. She looks stressed and overworked.
 - iv. Rima has already failed twice. She is sure she will fail yet again. She tries to study for her exams but is so worried that she cannot concentrate.

*Notes*

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

16.1

1.
 - a) False, students, teachers and parents are stressed.
 - b) True
 - c) False, life can never be totally stress free.
 - d) True
 - e) True
2.
 - i) stress
 - ii) students/adolescents
 - iii) developmental
 - iv) adjusting
 - v) expectations
 - vi) parents

Reading With
Understanding

Notes

- vii) career
- viii) identity
- ix) optimal
- x) communication

3. Examination Fever

16.2

1. A – Managing Time

B – Taking Exercise

C – Developing Hobbies

D – Thinking Positively

- 2. i) She must develop hobbies. She has no one to talk to reduce stress. Hobbies will give her pleasure.
- ii) He must do exercises. He can do spot walking, bending exercises. Also he can cycle or walk part of the distance.
- iii) She must manage time better. She must divide her work into A, B and C type tasks.
- iv) She must think positively. Communicating her feelings with parents, teachers or friends will help her.