

## READING WB- 12/13

*A-maze-ing Laughter* is a bronze sculpture by Yue Minjun. The Chinese artist hopes that the art inspires laughter and playfulness in everyone who sees it.



Norman Cousins was a famous American magazine editor. In 1964, he returned from an overseas trip and became very sick. He was in terrible pain and couldn't move his body, so he went to a hospital. Doctors told him he had a serious disease called *ankylosing spondylitis*. As nobody knew the cause of the disease, there was no **cure** for it, and because there was no cure, the doctors said he had only a short time to live. (a) \_\_\_\_\_

Cousins researched the connection between emotions and chemical reactions in the body. He believed that negative emotions could **harm** your health and that positive emotions were the key to good health, so he decided to try an experiment: he was going to fill his days with good feelings and laughter and see if that might improve his condition.

He left the hospital and moved into a hotel room. There, he got a large supply of comedy TV shows, movies, and cartoons. (b) \_\_\_\_\_. He planned to spend the whole day laughing and thinking about happy things.

On his first night in the hotel, for the first time in weeks, Cousins slept comfortably for a few hours. This seemed to prove his belief was correct: laughing at the movies might have helped his body produce

chemicals that reduced pain, and as a result, he was able to rest, and his condition improved. Every time the pain came back, he watched another funny movie and laughed until he felt better.

Over time, Cousins managed to measure changes in his body with blood tests. He found that the harmful chemicals in his body decreased at least five percent every time he watched a funny movie. Therefore, after a short time, he was able to stop taking all of his medications. (c) \_\_\_\_\_

Cousins later wrote a book about how laughter and happiness helped him survive a deadly illness. As the idea of an emotional cure for a physical illness was so new, many people didn't believe his story. Many said that his doctors were wrong about his disease from the beginning. But since then, research has found that emotions affect physical health. Now everybody knows that we can become ill after long periods of stress because stress reduces our defenses. (d) \_\_\_\_\_. And Norman Cousins lived another 26 years after he cured himself from an incurable disease.

**cure** something that makes you healthy again  
**harm** cause injury or hurt

**A** Skim the article about Norman Cousins and check the best title.

- ☐ 1. Medicines Can be Useless
- ☐ 2. The Mind-Body Connection
- ☐ 3. Movies are Good for You

**B** Read the article. Four sentences are missing. Match the sentences to the spaces.

*Go back to the text and write the numbers 1-4 next to the corresponding letters.*

1. Finally, his condition improved so much that he could go back to work.
2. More experiments found that laughter can help to reduce pain.
3. They gave him powerful drugs, but his condition only got worse.
4. He also hired a nurse to read funny stories to him.

**C** Read the sentences and circle *T* (true), *F* (false), or *NI* (no information).

- |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Norman Cousins got sick while he was traveling in another country. | T | F | NI |
| 2. Doctors told Cousins that he would probably die from his disease.  | T | F | NI |
| 3. Drugs helped to stop the pain of Cousins' disease.                 | T | F | NI |
| 4. Cousins started watching movies because he was bored.              | T | F | NI |
| 5. Cousins spent a lot of time laughing every day.                    | T | F | NI |
| 6. Movies were better than funny stories for stopping pain.           | T | F | NI |