READING CHALLENGE WEEK 4

How Did Those Get in There?

A young actress is about to go onto the stage. As she waits by the side of the stage, she looks **nervous**. You might hear her whisper to her friend, "I've got butterflies in my stomach." Butterflies in her stomach? How did those get in there? The feeling of butterflies comes from **chemicals** produced by the body in **stressful situations**.

One chemical that the body makes under stress is cortisol. This chemical benefits the body in normal situations. In fact, it helps the body start normal activities in the morning after waking up. It also plays a role in helping the body and mind **respond** well to healthy exercise. However, when the body is under stress, extra cortisol begins to affect the stomach. For some people, cortisol shuts down the stomach, producing the funny feeling of butterflies. For others, cortisol **speeds up** the way the stomach works, which makes these people feel sick.

All you need to do to get rid of a few butterflies in the stomach is just relax. Laughing with, or talking to, others about your stress can help reduce it. Stepping out onto the stage will also help those butterflies fly away.



Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds 197 words

2 *nervous*: a little afraid or worried
4 *chemical*: a thing that can cause an effect in our body
5 *stressful*: full of, or causing, worry or pressure from work, studying, etc.
5 *situation*: a condition; a circumstance
10 *respond*: to do something because of something else; to react
14 *speed up*: to make faster

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Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of this reading?
   a. A new kind of medicine called cortisol
   b. An illness that nervous people get
   c. The cause of butterflies in the stomach
   d. The stress that actors have

2. According to the reading, what is NOT true about cortisol?
   a. In small amounts, it benefits the body.
   b. It can shut down the stomach.
   c. It is found in many kinds of food.
   d. It is produced by the body.

3. What helps a body respond well to exercise?
   a. Butterflies
   b. Cortisol
   c. Stomach acid
   d. Stress

4. According to the passage, what makes some people feel sick?
   a. When situations return to normal
   b. When the stomach shuts down
   c. When the stomach works too fast
   d. When there is too little cortisol

5. Which may help a person get over butterflies in the stomach?
   a. Doing the thing that makes him or her nervous
   b. Not talking while the butterflies are there
   c. Shutting down his or her stomach for some time
   d. Taking a small amount of cortisol

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **play a role in** [to have some part in]
  The big storm probably played a role in last night's blackout.
- **shut down** [to stop]
  The company shut down the factory because they were losing a lot of money.
- **get rid of** [to throw away; to put out of use]
  I didn't like my bag, so I got rid of it.

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. That coat is old and torn. Why don't you _____ it?
2. How much does luck _____ the success of an artist's career?
3. When you are finished working, please _____ the computer.

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Summary

Fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases.

butterflies	**normal**	**produces**
respond	**shut down**	

When a person is under some stress, his or her body may 1 _____ to the stress by making too much cortisol. This chemical benefits the body in many ways in 2 _____ situations. However, if the body 3 _____ a lot of extra cortisol, the cortisol may 4 _____ the person's stomach. This can make people feel like they have 5 _____ in their stomachs.



Listening

Another Reason for Butterflies

Track 8

Listen to the dialog and choose the best answer.

1. What are the speakers talking about?

a. A situation that makes them nervous
b. People who have too much stress
c. Something that affects the stomach
d. The way cortisol works with other chemicals

2. Which effect has he read about?

a. Feeling very large butterflies
b. Less blood flowing to the stomach
c. Reducing the level of cortisol
d. Shutting down different muscles

3. What does the woman say about his explanation?

a. It does not sound correct.
b. It seems easier to understand.
c. Some parts are confusing.
d. The result is the same.

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Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. He had to take some time off from work because all of the _____ was making him sick.
   a. activity b. chemical c. exercise d. stress

2. In some cultures, you should not ask _____ questions such as a person's age.
   a. international b. normal c. personal d. tropical

3. Many patients will _____ from the new treatment.
   a. benefit b. decide c. occur d. produce

4. Sometimes it takes several months or even a year before new technology really _____.
   a. catches on b. finds out c. shuts down d. speeds up

5. The company plans to _____ a new diet cola early next year.
   a. detect b. introduce c. relax d. respond to

6. We should try to _____ the amount of electricity we use every month.
   a. create b. include c. reduce d. taste

7. Your cheeks are red, and you're sweating. Are you _____?
   a. fantastic b. nervous c. unique d. wealthy

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. The jar says that this skin _____ can help reduce lines around your eyes.
   a. relaxation b. relaxer c. relaxing

9. Next weekend, the store will sell all of its furniture at _____ prices.
   a. reduction b. reduces c. reduced

10. The new program has a lot of _____ over the old program.
    a. benefits b. benefitted c. beneficial

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