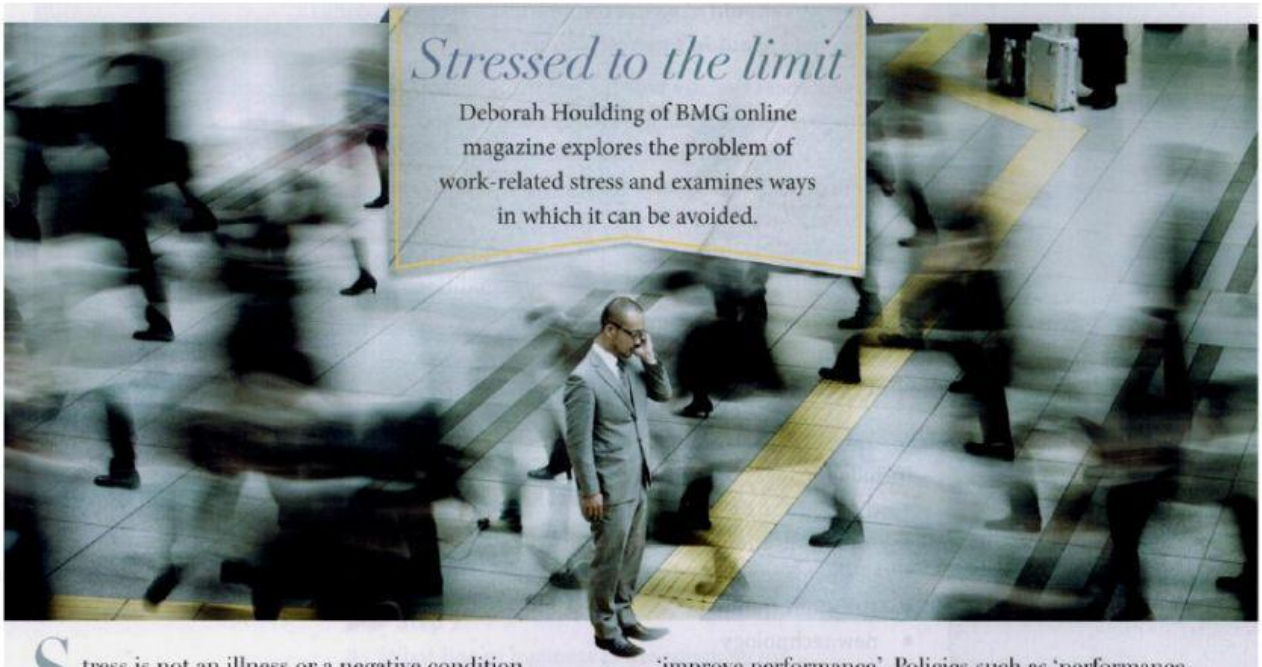
LISTENING & READING PRACTICE

Name: _____

1) Read the text and then work on the activities below:



Stressed to the limit

Deborah Houlding of BMG online magazine explores the problem of work-related stress and examines ways in which it can be avoided.

Stress is not an illness or a negative condition. A certain amount of pressure brings out the best in our work. In the initial stages of stress, there is a sensation of excitement and increased mental concentration.

However, too much stress is negative. It is bad for the individual. It is also bad for the employing organization. In the UK, for example, stress-related illness is the cause of half of lost working days.

The negative impact of stress is linked to heart disease, alcoholism, nervous breakdowns, job dissatisfaction, certain forms of cancer, migraines, asthma, hay fever, insomnia, depression, eczema and many other medical and social problems.

Many surveys confirm the root cause of work-related stress to be bad management and overwork. Too much pressure, long hours and poor communication are the main factors. Reports and studies have identified the principal cause of stress as 'new management techniques' designed to 'improve performance'. Policies such as 'performance-related pay' increase stress and demotivate a workforce.

Many legal and medical experts are advising companies to consider the costs and legal implications of stress-related illness. They emphasize the benefits of reducing stress as:

- better health
- reduced sickness absence
- increased performance and output
- better relationships with clients and colleagues
- lower staff turnover.

Taking the decision to reduce stress makes sound business sense. It's better for profits and better for staff morale.

Managers should learn to motivate but not exhaust employees. There is a balance between obtaining maximum efficiency, and a worker's need to rest and recuperate their creative energies.

a. Match the phrases (a-g) with the definitions (1 -7), look at the example:

a	linked to	1	doing too much work
b	root cause of	2	is good for the company
c	overwork	3	principal reason for
d	performance-related pay	4	connected to
e	staff turnover	5	money for getting better results
f	makes business sense	6	people joining and leaving a company
g	morale	7	positive or negative attitude

a [4] b [ ] c [ ] d [ ] e [ ] f [ ] g [ ]

b. Read the text again and decide if these sentences are TRUE or FALSE. Tick the correct option:

a	Stress is always a bad thing.	true ☐	false ☐
b	Work-related stress can cause health problems.	true ☐	false ☐
c	Bad management is the main cause of stress.	true ☐	false ☐
d	Reducing stress costs companies money.	true ☐	false ☐
e	It's easy for companies to reduce stress.	true ☐	false ☐

1. **Listen to an interview or a radio programme WORK TODAY. Four people in the street were interviewed about stress. Match their answers to the following questions:**

		Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
a	What does the speaker do?				
b	Does the speaker suffer from stress?			YES	
c	What causes the stress, according to the speaker?				
d	Does the speaker mention any of the reasons in 1? Which?				

