



Extra training

Use of English Task 174

Read the text. Fill in the gaps (1-8) in the text with the correct item.



You're studying hard for your A-levels*, you've got a part time job, your parents are in the middle of 1) a divorce and you're worried that your best friend is mad at you. Basically, you feel like you're losing control!

Sound familiar? Well, you're not 2) because 92% of British teens feel stressed. So, as the pressure mounts in the run-up to exams, we thought we'd give you the lowdown on what stress is and does and, most importantly, what we can do about it!

The lowdown on stress

In a nutshell, "stress" is the 3) our bodies and minds react to life's changes. Not all stress is bad! In stressful situations, the nervous system causes muscles to tense, breathing to become shallow and adrenaline to be released into your bloodstream as your body gets ready to 4) challenges with focus and strength. So, a little stress can keep you on your toes! But, in the long term, it can put too much strain on your heart and cause other physical and emotional symptoms such as headaches, depression, forgetfulness and low self-esteem. The good news, however, is that you CAN deal with stress before it gets out of hand! So, take control and REMEMBER YOUR A-B-Cs...

A is for ACTION

You can take action when stress is created by something you can control! If you have too many things to do, for example, try to break tasks down into smaller 'chunks', and deal with one thing at a time in order of priority. Perhaps it's just that you've taken on too much! If so, give 5) an after-school activity for a while, for example, or ask a friend or family member to help you lighten the load.

B is for BEAR IT

If there's nothing you can do, you'll just have to 'grin and bear it'! If, at first, you can't change your feelings, learn how to control your thoughts. When you feel overwhelmed, take slow, 6) breaths and count to ten. Later, once you've calmed down, analyse the problem rationally. Perhaps you could repeat a saying to help you accept your situation, such as "One day I'll laugh about this". Also, try to keep things in perspective and don't be too dramatic! Saying that you're 'pulling your hair out' or that your workload 'is killing you' will only make you feel worse!

C is for COPE

Find ways to handle your stress! For a start, doing something relaxing, such as going for a walk or for a coffee with a friend, will help take your 7) off the things that are bugging you. Or perhaps writing poetry or keeping a diary will help you to 8) with your negative emotions. Last but not least, getting enough sleep, exercising and eating regular, nutritious meals are all essential for coping with stress! Above all, try to keep a sense of humour and a positive attitude! You don't have to let your problems rule your life!

*Advanced Levels: Exams that pupils in the UK take at age 16

1.	1. having	2. doing	3. making	4. getting
2.	1. separated	2. lonely	3. alone	4. isolated
3.	1. method	2. way	3. style	4. manner
4.	1. beat	2. do	3. meet	4. visit
5.	1. back	2. up	3. away	4. over
6.	1. big	2. heavy	3. strong	4. deep
7.	1. mind	2. thought	3. brain	4. head
8.	1. face	2. deal	3. manage	4. handle