When Stress Strikes

Compare ways to respond to stress

SS24.P.18b "Explain physiological, cognitive, and behavioral strategies to deal with stress, and contrast positive and negative ways of coping with stress."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that address the body, circle actions that change a thought, and number actions that change behavior. Put a plus sign beside choices that help in the long run and a minus sign beside choices that could make the problem worse.

The Night Before the Presentation

1. The night before a class presentation, Lena sees the clock and imagines forgetting every word. Her heart beats faster, and her shoulders tense. Stress can activate the body's alarm system, which prepares a person to respond to a challenge. Lena slows her breathing, exhaling longer than she inhales, and then takes a short walk. These physiological strategies work with her body's stress response: steady breathing may help slow her racing heart, and movement can ease muscle tension. Neither step makes the presentation disappear, but each may help her feel calm enough to prepare.

2. Back at her desk, Lena thinks, "If I pause, everyone will think I know nothing." She checks that prediction against her experience: classmates usually wait when a speaker pauses. She replaces it with a more balanced thought: "A pause is normal, and I can use my notes." This cognitive strategy changes how she interprets the challenge, not the challenge itself. Telling herself that nothing matters might briefly feel comforting, but it would ignore her goal. Reframing a thought is more useful when it is realistic and leaves room to act. Lena still needs to prepare her talk.

3. Lena practices the opening aloud twice and asks a friend to listen. These behavioral strategies turn worry into specific actions: practice builds familiarity, and feedback helps her spot an unclear sentence. A different choice would be to avoid preparing and scroll on her phone until midnight. Scrolling might distract her for an hour, but lost sleep and unfinished preparation could make tomorrow harder. Coping is not simply anything that brings quick relief. A positive strategy supports health or helps address the problem, while a negative one may create new problems or keep the original problem in place.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Lena's breathing and short walk address stress differently from practicing her opening?

2. Why is Lena's balanced thought more useful than telling herself that nothing matters?

3. Compare Lena's practice and request for feedback with scrolling until midnight. What might each choice lead to?

4. Lena feels calmer after her walk, and scrolling might also bring quick relief. Why does the passage treat these choices differently?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you have an important exam on the same day as a family commitment. In four or five sentences, propose one physiological, one cognitive, and one behavioral way to cope, then contrast your plan with one tempting negative choice.

ANSWER KEY

When Stress Strikes

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.P.18b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that address the body, circle actions that change a thought, and number actions that change behavior. Put a plus sign beside choices that help in the long run and a minus sign beside choices that could make the problem worse. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Lena's breathing and short walk address stress differently from practicing her opening?	**Breathing and walking address physical signs of stress, such as a racing heart and tense muscles. Practicing addresses the presentation by making it more familiar.**
2	Why is Lena's balanced thought more useful than telling herself that nothing matters?	**Her balanced thought is realistic and lets her keep preparing. Saying nothing matters would ignore her goal.**
3	Compare Lena's practice and request for feedback with scrolling until midnight. What might each choice lead to?	**Practice and feedback can improve her preparation. Scrolling may briefly distract her, but it could cost her sleep and leave her unprepared.**
4	Lena feels calmer after her walk, and scrolling might also bring quick relief. Why does the passage treat these choices differently?	**The walk may ease tension so Lena can prepare. Scrolling until midnight may create new problems by cutting into sleep and preparation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I will take a short walk to ease my physical tension. I will remind myself that limited time does not mean I cannot prepare. I will make a study schedule and tell my family when I need quiet time. I might be tempted to drink several energy drinks instead of sleeping. That might keep me awake briefly, but sleep and a study plan are more likely to help me focus and prepare.

Accept other accurate examples from the passage in the short answers. For Your Turn, look for three distinct strategies and a clear explanation of why the negative choice could cause problems.