## THEME 1 SCHOOL LIFE READING SKILL

#### A. Read the text and answer the questions

#### **Icebreaker Activities**

Most students are worried and nervous about their first days at a new school as a freshman. Fortunately, most teachers are aware of this and they do activities to make their students less worried and more relaxed. These are called icebreakers. They include talking about oneself, hobbies, interests, fun games, walking around and asking questions to learn about others, etc. The aim is to create a friendly and less stressed atmosphere because students can get to know each other and discover their things in common during these activities.

According to experts, icebreakers may play an important psychological role in a good academic year. Laila Hudson, a psychologist of Washington State University, asks 'Can you expect an optimum performance from a footballer if he doesn't do any warm-up?' and adds 'Icebreakers are the same for students. If students feel self-confident in their new classes, they will not suffer from fear of failure and start to display a better performance. Icebreakers are always nice for a good start.'

**1.** Why do teachers use ice-breakers?

2. What are some ice-breaker activities?

**3.** Why are ice-breakers important?

## **B. Read the text and circle the correct choice.**

## Everyday Life Habits Matter: Small Changes Make a Big Difference

According to a recent study, bad habits such as smoking, not exercising, not eating enough fruit and vegetables can age you by more than 10 years and even steal from your life quality. Fortunately, you are not desperate. Making just a few changes in your everyday life can help you live longer. Here are some of these changes and how applicable they are according to 100 interviewees.

**Read to cope with stress**: Reading does not only help you learn more and achieve better scores but also helps to cope with stress. While you are reading something in a motivated way, you will be away from the stress of everyday life, and being away from stress will be of great help for a healthier life because stress is one of the worst enemies of human health. 82 % of the interviewees believe that this is easily applicable.

**Stay out of the sun:** Remember that it is never too early or too late to start to use sunscreen. Rays of the sun cause skin cancer or, at least, wrinkles and fine lines. Hats and sunglasses are also of great help. When you have the choice, stay in shade. This is easily applicable for 85 interviewees out of 100.

**Avoid loneliness, reach out:** You are at greater risk of heart disease without a strong network of friends and family Loneliness can be as dangerous as having high cholesterol or even smoking. Hang around with friends, share problems with them, and socialize whenever possible. One way of achieving this at school is to join extracurricular activities. Visiting your elderly relatives as often as possible is another way. 56% of the interviewees think that this is not easy to do due to everyday rush while it is OK for the other 44%.

**Eat fruit and vegetables:** You should see fruit and vegetables as nutritional powerhouses because they are full of fiber and vitamins. Take time to get at least three servings of fruit and vegetables in your everyday life. It will lower your risk of heart disease by 76%. According to 70% of our interviewees, this is applicable.

**Focus on fitness:** Daily exercise, especially with running, can add up to four years to your life. It has positive effects on your heart, mind and metabolism. Do not waste much of your time in front of the TV or surfing the Net. Do them in moderation. Instead, move around. If you cannot run, a quick 30 minute walk will be OK. Walk to school and work if possible. If not,

take as many steps as you can in or around the building. 41% of the interviewees say they have already tried to focus on fitness and it is a challenging everyday life task. The rest think this is applicable.

**Consult and Cooperate:** When you try to cope with all the difficulties on your own, a more stressful life or period is unavoidable. Remember that you are not a super hero and consulting and cooperating with others is a strength. At school, friends, teachers, and school counselors are all there to share. You will see that things will get better when you consult or cooperate. However, 30% of our interviewees find it applicable.

**Get enough sleep:** Sleep plays an important role in your physical health. It is a part of healing and repairing your heart and blood vessels. Ongoing sleep deficiency, not getting enough sleep, is linked to an increased risk of heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke. Learn how much sleep you need by age and improve your sleeping habits. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Avoid heavy or large meals before bed time. It seems to be the most applicable everyday habit as 95% of the interviewees find it so.

1. The text is about...

a. common health problems. b. importance of some everyday habits for health.

2. Interviewees believe that most of the everyday habits in the text are...

a. applicable.

b. not applicable

## C. Read the text and answer the questions

## VOCATIONAL and ACADEMIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Kings Vocational & Technical High School is one of the thousands of vocational high schools in the US. It offers a wide range of programs unlike most regular academic high schools. "Academic high schools have a lot of requirements for admission and they raise students for academic purposes. Yet, we also need technical staff members, experts with better skills and backgrounds. Vocational high schools have a key role here. These schools are becoming more important day by day. We even offer programs for sports. The education sector has to respect the strengths of students and their learning styles." says John Hamilton, the principal of the school.

In an interview with a local TV station last month, Christa Bolt, a student in the sports department of Kings Vocational & Technical High School, said "Our rules are similar to the ones in an academic high school. We have to stick to a timetable and obey the disciplinary rules. We are not allowed to skip courses or play truant for example. Academic high school students study in the classroom, we practise in the gym. They sit exams and their teachers evaluate them, our instructors evaluate us as well. They mark us according to our performances. They should do a lot of revision. Similarly, we should practise regularly to remain fit. The details are similar but the main difference is in the purpose of schools. Vocational & technical high schools focus on improving students' skills in their programs, in practice. Academic high schools focus on academic skills and theory. The society needs both."

1. What is the purpose of academic high schools?

2. Why are vocational & technical high schools important according to John?

**3.** What are some of the similarities between vocational & technical high schools and academic high schools according to Christa?

4. Do you think vocational & technical high schools are as important as John and Christa claim?

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