

Preparing For the GEP Screening Test

Managing Inferential Questions

Let's See How Good You Are!

Comprehension

20 marks

Read this passage carefully and answer the questions which follow.

- 1 In 1964, a teenager in San Diego named Randy Gardner hatched an idea for a science fair project: he would see how long he could stay awake. By the end of the experiment, he had been up for 264 hours. That is eleven days!
- 2 Gardner had set a record for the longest period without sleep. But along the way, he was not quite himself. He became moody, forgetful, and paranoid. At one point, he mistook a street sign for a person.
- 3 You probably do not have plans to stay up for eleven days straight, but if you are like most kids, you will pull an occasional late-nighter to finish your history essay. More often than not, you are staying up for less industrious reasons – to reach the next level on a video game or catch the latest episode of a television show. Teenagers need about nine hours of sleep a night. Yet a recent survey found that on weeknights, as few as 14 per cent of teens get enough zzz's. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention¹, one-third of adults are chronically sleep deprived too.
- 4 You know the effects of a crummy night's sleep: you feel groggy, forgetful, and clumsy. It is no wonder – 24 hours without sleep leaves you as impaired as if you were legally drunk. In fact, lack of sleep can cause brain cells to *die*.
- 5 Adolescence² is a bad time to put that kind of stress on your brain. During your teenage years, your brain changes rapidly, creating new pathways and pruning old ones. In fact, a sleep deficit has been shown to cause permanent damage over time. It also puts teenagers at risk for depression³, anxiety⁴, obesity⁵, bad grades, sports injuries, low self-esteem⁶, and serious diseases. In adults, it affects concentration, health, job performance, and mood.

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- 1 **Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:** the national public health institute of the US. Its main goal is to protect public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability.
 - 2 **adolescence:** the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult.
 - 3 **depression:** a mental condition characterised by feelings of severe despondency and dejection.
 - 4 **anxiety:** a nervous disorder marked by excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behaviour or panic attacks.
 - 5 **obesity:** the state of being grossly fat or overweight
 - 6 **self-esteem:** confidence in one's own worth or abilities; self-respect

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- 6 Consider this: the police and military sometimes use sleep deprivation to get information out of suspects. After hours or days of being kept awake, suspects often break down and tell an interrogator⁷ anything he or she wants to know.
- 7 Unfortunately, getting more sleep can feel like an uphill battle, as if your body – and the world – is working against you. This is why: sleep is regulated by two systems. The first system tells your body that the longer you are awake, the more you need to sleep. The second is what is known as a circadian rhythm – a 24-hour cycle. This rhythm is controlled by an internal body clock that tells you when it is time to be awake and asleep.
- 8 As you move towards adulthood, that clock shifts. Suddenly you feel like going to bed one to three hours later. However, since school starts the same time it always has, getting enough sleep becomes difficult. An irregular schedule – such as sleeping until noon on Saturdays and going to bed at different times during the week – can also disrupt your circadian rhythm and make you feel exhausted.
- 9 Another culprit contributing to your grogginess is technology. In a recent study, a group of 100 teenagers did an average of four tech-related activities after 9 pm. They went online, watched television, played video games, and used mobile phones. The more tech they used, the harder it was for them to fall asleep. Part of the problem is that tech-related activities get your mind all revved up, making it difficult to relax. The other problem is that light – particularly blue-wave light that many gadgets produce – tells your body it is daytime. This prevents the release of melatonin, a hormone⁸ triggered by darkness that makes you drowsy.
- 10 While a night of sleeplessness will not kill you, consider this: flies and rats die sooner without sleep than they do without food.

Adapted from *Scholastic Scope*

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7 **interrogator:** a person who asks questions of (someone) closely, aggressively, or formally

8 **hormone:** a regulatory substance produced in an organism and transported in tissue fluids such as blood or sap to stimulate specific cells or tissues into action.

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- 1 What motivated Randy Gardner to go without sleep for 264 hours? 1m
- a He wanted to set a world record for the longest period of time without sleep.
 - b He wanted to have the most innovative science fair project.
 - c He wanted to determine the maximum amount of time that he could go without sleep.
 - d He wanted to investigate the effects of prolonged sleep deprivation for his science fair project. c
- 2 Which is not a symptom of sleep deprivation that Gardner experienced? 1m
- a Hallucinations
 - b Temperamental behaviour
 - c Clumsiness
 - d Anxiety and suspiciousness c
- 3 What is the most common reason for children to pull late-nighters? 1m
- a They cannot finish their homework.
 - b They do not want to sleep.
 - c They have insomnia.
 - d They want to watch late-night television. d
- 4 Based on the passage, which one of the statements below is false? 1m
- a Teenagers need more than eight hours of sleep.
 - b 86% of teenagers get insufficient sleep.
 - c 14% of teenagers get enough sleep on weekends.
 - d Most children have pulled a late-nighter. c

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- 5 Which word in the passage suggests that going without sleep has become a habit for adults? 1m
- a chronically
b deprived
c one-third
d disease a
- 6 According to paragraph 5, which of the following is not a similarity shared by both teenagers and adults? 1m
- a Some negative effects of sleep deprivation cannot be reversed.
b Health declines as a result of sleep deprivation.
c Mood is affected due to lack of sleep.
d Confidence can decline with prolonged sleep deprivation. d
- 7 Why do you think suspects often "break down" (paragraph 6, line 2) and confess their crimes to their interrogators after sleep deprivation? 1m
- a They are afraid of going to jail.
b They lose control of their emotions and need to share their feelings.
c Their resolve to conceal their crime crumbles due to exhaustion.
d They fall apart from exhaustion and forget to keep their crimes a secret from their interrogators. c
- 8 Why do you think the author says that "your body...is working against you" (paragraph 7, lines 1 – 2)? 1m
- a Your internal body clock goes haywire during adolescence.
b Your brain cannot turn off by itself.
c Your mind is never asleep.
d Your two bodily systems that regulate sleep are working against each other. a

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9 What does "this" (paragraph 9, line 6) refer to? 1m

- a Daytime
- b Your body
- c Light
- d Gadgets

c

10 According to paragraph 9, why is technology a culprit with regard to sleep deprivation? 1m

- a The use of technology is very stimulating.
- b Technological gadgets produces daylight.
- c Technological gadgets trigger the production of melatonin.
- d Technology requires the lights to be switched on, which makes it difficult to fall asleep.

a



Photo: Billy/Daniel Stockman