**READING**

**READING 1**

**Choose the correct answer for the following questions.**

**Water and Health**

Water is part of our everyday lives, so we may not always appreciate its importance or even think much about it. But water is not only a part of our lives; it is part of us—about 60 percent of us. Every organ in the human body is made partly of water. Water makes up 83 percent of our blood, 75 percent of our muscles, and 72 percent of our skin. Even our bones are almost one-quarter water.

Every system in our body requires water in order to function. The blood needs water to transport oxygen and nutrients to the cells and to carry away waste. Water helps maintain stable blood pressure and body temperature. When we get hot, we perspire. Perspiration contains mostly water, which cools the skin as it evaporates. Water is also essential for the smooth and efficient digestion of food. Without water, our organs and systems would quickly collapse. We would not survive very long.

Water is vital to our existence, yet we lose water all the time—more than 2.5 liters every day. Some of the water that we drink passes right through our bodies. In general, however, perspiration represents the greatest loss of water. We also lose water when we breathe. In fact, every day we breathe out air that contains about 400 ml of water. When we lose all of this water, we also lose the essential salts and minerals that are dissolved in the water. The water, salts, and minerals that we lose all need to be constantly replaced.

We experience the loss of too much water as thirst, but our cells get thirsty too. Our cells need to maintain a delicate balance of water and various minerals, like sodium and potassium, which are found in many foods. This balance is critical for the control of blood pressure, muscle movement, kidney function, and the body’s ability to send signals between nerves.

Some health experts advise that we should drink eight glasses of liquid a day. This is good advice but may not always be necessary. For most people, under normal circumstances, the thirst signal is adequate. In general, when we feel thirsty, we drink enough water to quench our thirst, and as a result, the balance in our bodies is restored.

However, under some circumstances, for example, during vigorous exercise or very hot weather, water loss can become a real danger. This is when the body needs water the most, in order stay cool and keep oxygen flowing to the cells. Yet when you exercise during hot weather, you may not realize how much water you need and how much you are losing. In this case, the thirst signal may not be adequate. So it is especially important to drink before and during exercise in order to maintain that delicate balance. If you don’t drink enough, you could become dehydrated; that is, suffer from extreme loss of water. You may begin to feel very tired or get a bad headache. However, if you drink water immediately, you can quickly relieve the symptoms of dehydration.

Any kind of liquid can keep your body and cells in balance, but experts agree that water is the healthiest choice. Make sure you drink enough water every day.

**1.What is the main purpose of the reading?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | To demonstrate the consequences of dehydration |
| B. | To help athletes exercise more effectively |
| C. | To show the importance of water for our health |
| D. | To explain the scientific basis of thirst |

**2. How much of the human body is made of water?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | More than half |
| B. | About three quarters |
| C. | A little over 80 percent |
| D. | A little less than half |

**3. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | Perspiration has an important function. |
| B. | Water helps us from becoming too hot. |
| C. | Water is important for our cells. |
| D. | Water is essential for all body functions. |

**4.What happens when cells lose too much water?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | They lose salts and minerals. |
| B. | The balance between salts and water is upset. |
| C. | There is a balance of salts and minerals. |
| D. | They become much smaller. |

**5.What does the reading imply about drinking eight glasses of water a day?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | It is very important for your health. |
| B. | Doctors do not advise it but some people do it anyway. |
| C. | We are not really sure if it is a good idea. |
| D. | It is probably good for you but usually not essential. |

**6.What is a symptom of dehydration?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | A bad headache |
| B. | A bad stomachache |
| C. | Strange sounds in your ears |
| D. | Difficulty breathing |

**7.What is the purpose of the sixth paragraph?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | To suggest that people stop exercising during hot weather |
| B. | To warn about the importance of drinking when you exercise |
| C. | To discuss the symptoms of dehydration |
| D. | To explain the science of dehydration |

**8.What is the healthiest thing to drink when you exercise?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. | Any liquid |
| B. | Any cold liquid |
| C. | Plain water |
| D. | Water with salts and minerals |

**READING TWO**

**I. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (63-69). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use. (7 pts)**

**Downhill Racer**

*Anna Jones tells of her move from skiing to downhill mountain biking and her rapid rise up the ranks to her current position as one of the top five downhill racers in the country.*

At the age of seven I had learnt to ski and by fourteen I was competing internationally. When I was eighteen a close friend was injured in a ski race, and as a result, I gave up competitive skiing. To fill the gap that skiing had left, I decided to swap two planks of wood for two wheels with big tyres.

My first race was a cross-country race in 1995. It wasn’t an amazing success. **9.** \_\_\_\_\_. After entering a few more cross-country races, a local bike shop gave me a downhill bike to try. I entered a downhill race, fell off, but did reasonably well in the end, so I switched to downhill racing.

I think my skiing helped a lot as I was able to transfer several skills such as cornering and weight-balance to mountain biking. This year I am riding for a famous British team and there are races almost every weekend from March through to September. **10.** \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, there is quite a lot of people putting up tents in muddy fields.

Last season I was selected to represent Great Britain at both the European and World Championships. Both events were completely different from the UK race scene. **11.** \_\_\_\_\_.I was totally in awe, racing with the riders I had been following in magazines. The atmosphere was eclectic and I finished about mid-pack.

Mountain biking is a great sport to be in. people ask me if downhill racing is really scary. I say, “Yes, it is, and I love it.” Every time I race I scare myself silly and then say, “yeah, lets do it again.” When you are riding well, you are right on the edge, as close as you can be to being out of control. **12.** \_\_\_\_\_.However, you quickly learn how to do it so as not to injure yourself. And it’s part of the learning process as you have to push yourself and try new skills to improve.

Initially, downhill racing wasn’t taken seriously as a mountain-biking discipline. **13.** \_\_\_\_\_.But things are changing and riders are now realizing that they need to train just as hard for downhill racing as they would do for cross-country. The races are run over ground which is generally closer to vertical than horizontal, with jumps, drop-offs, holes, corners and nasty rocks and trees to test your nerves as well as technical skill. At the end of a run, which is between two and three minutes in this country, your legs hurt so much they burn. **14.** \_\_\_\_\_.But in a race, you’re so excited that you switch off to the pain until you have finished.

A lot of people think that you need to spend thousands of pounds to give downhill mountain biking a go. **15.** \_\_\_\_\_.A reasonable beginner’s downhill bike will cost you around $400 and the basic equipment, of a cycle helmet, cycle shorts and gloves, around $ 150. Later on you may want to upgrade your bike and get a full-face crash helmet, since riders are now achieving speeds of up to 80 kilometers per hour.

**A.** I’ve fallen off more times than I care to remember.

**B.** I usually have to stop during practice sessions.

**C.** The courses were twice as long and the crowds were twice as big.

**D.** I’m not strong enough in my arms, so I’ve been doing a lot of upper-body training this year.

**E.** The attitude was: how much skill do you need to sit on a saddle and point a bike in the same direction for a few minutes?

**F.** I finished last, but it didn’t matter as I really enjoyed it.

**G.** Nothing could be further from the truth.

**H.** It is not all stardom and glamour, though.