

Select Readings, Second Edition

Intermediate, Chapter 12 Test

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Power of Napping

Many people feel a mid-afternoon slump in mood and alertness. Many people believe that this slump is caused by eating a heavy lunch, or by getting a poor night's sleep the night before. In fact, this slump occurs naturally because humans were meant to have a mid-afternoon nap.

Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, and Bill Clinton are all famous fans of napping—and with good reason. Various evidence, including the universal tendency of toddlers¹ and the elderly to nap in the afternoon, and the afternoon nap of siesta cultures, have led many scientists to the same conclusion: nature tells us to take a nap in the middle of the day. Short periods of sleep have been shown to improve alertness, memory and motor skills, decision-making, and mood—all while cutting down on stress, carelessness, and even heart disease.

Our biological urge to sleep in the middle of the afternoon coincides with a slight drop in body temperature. This drop occurs whether we have lunch or not. A midday nap is a part of the daily routine of many cultures, especially those near the equator. This all seems to suggest that napping may have been part of an ancient biological signal to get us out of the hot midday sun.

Whatever the reason, if you have an opportunity for an afternoon nap, take one. Studies show that 20 minutes of sleep in the afternoon provides more rest than getting 20 minutes more sleep in the morning. A 20-minute power nap provides the energy for a fresh burst of new ideas and energy. Naps seem to eliminate the need for more caffeine during the workday, and this lowers stress.

The do's and don'ts of napping

The early afternoon seems to be the best time to nap—approximately eight hours after you have woken up in the morning. Twenty to thirty minutes is all you need to get the full rewards of a midday nap. There is no proof that sleeping longer than this is any better; in fact, the opposite may be true.

In the dark, our brains produce more of the sleep-inducing hormone *melatonin*, so close the blinds, turn off the lights, and consider using a sleeping mask. Keep the temperature on the warmer side. Don't forget to turn off your cell phone. And avoid caffeine for a few hours before a nap. Give it a try for yourself, and see if you aren't amazed at the results!

1. The reading is primarily about _____.
 - A. why our bodies get tired in the afternoon
 - B. how much sleep is ideal for people
 - C. why afternoon naps are good for us
 - D. which famous people are known for napping

¹ **toddlers** children aged 1–3

2. The main idea in paragraph 2 is that _____.
 - A. the desire to nap is part of our human nature
 - B. scientists have studied both young and old people napping
 - C. a lot of famous people nap
 - D. many cultures enjoy a midday nap
3. All of the following are mentioned as things that are improved by napping except _____.
 - A. alertness
 - B. decision-making
 - C. food digestion
 - D. memory
4. According to the reading, napping can help reduce _____.
 - A. our body temperature
 - B. stress and carelessness
 - C. motor skills
 - D. weight and heart disease
5. In paragraph 3, the word “coincides” is closest in meaning to _____.
 - A. warns us
 - B. is accidental
 - C. is unnoticeable
 - D. happens together
6. We can infer that cultures where people usually take midday naps are _____.
 - A. mostly found in warm places
 - B. known for their stress
 - C. ancient cultures
 - D. in the sun most of the day
7. Studies show that 20 minutes of sleep in the afternoon _____.
 - A. is difficult to do if you drink caffeine
 - B. is not as good as an additional 20 minutes of sleep in the morning
 - C. can provide enough energy that you won't need additional caffeine
 - D. can lower stress, even if you have caffeine in the afternoon
8. The ideal nap seems to be best when _____.
 - A. it's 20 to 30 minutes long
 - B. it's longer than 30 minutes
 - C. it starts 8 hours before nighttime
 - D. it starts in the late morning
9. In order to get a good nap, you should do all of the following except _____.
 - A. turn off your cell phone
 - B. make the room dark
 - C. make sure the room isn't too warm
 - D. avoid caffeine before sleeping
10. The overall tone of this reading is _____.
 - A. serious and academic
 - B. light and silly
 - C. light and informative
 - D. scientific and technical