

## Part One: Reading Comprehension

(Score: 11/20)

Read the following selection in which the writer reports health concerns in relation to the socioeconomic status of people. When you are through with the reading, answer the questions that follow.

### Social Status and Stress

1 Although professionals may complain about their long work hours and high-pressure careers, their main problem is the stress they have. It is Stress with a capital “S”. The long work hours, even if unpleasant, can be considered manageable. Furthermore, they may even strengthen one’s ability. However, stress kills. Scientists have settled on an oddly subjective explanation: the more helpless one feels when facing a given stressor, they argue, the more toxic that stressor’s effects are.

2 That sense of control tends to decline as one descends the socioeconomic ladder, with potentially grave consequences. **Those** at the bottom are more than three times as likely to die prematurely as those at the top. They are also more likely to suffer from depression, heart diseases and diabetes. The most devastating is perhaps the stress of poverty early in life that can have consequences which last into adulthood.

3 Even those who later ascend economically may show persistent effects of early-life hardships. Scientists find **them** more prone to illness than those who were never poor. Becoming more affluent may lower the risk of disease by lessening the sense of helplessness and allowing greater access to healthful resources like exercise, more nutritious foods and greater social support. People are not absolutely condemned by their upbringing, but the effects of early-life stress also seem to linger, unfavorably molding their nervous systems and possibly even accelerating the rate at which they age. Consequently, even those who become rich are more likely to be ill if they suffered hardship early on.

4 There is a direct relationship among health, well-being and one’s place in the greater scheme. The British epidemiologist Michael Marmot says, “The higher you are in the social hierarchy, the better your health is.” He calls the phenomenon “status syndrome”. Dr. Marmot has studied British civil servants who work in a rigid hierarchy for decades and found that accounting for the usual suspects — smoking, diet and access to health care — will not completely abolish the syndrome’s effect.

5 Dr. Marmot blames a particular type of stress. It is not necessarily the strain of a chief executive facing a lengthy to-do list or a well-to-do parent’s agonizing over a child’s prospects of acceptance to an elite school. Unlike those of a lower rank, both the chief executive officer and the anxious parent have financial resources with which to address the problem. By definition, the poor have far fewer.

6 Thus, the stress that kills, Dr. Marmot argues, is characterized by a lack of a sense of control over one’s fate. Psychologists who study animals call one result of this type of strain “learned helplessness”. How they induce it is instructive. Indiscriminate electric shocks will send an animal into a kind of depression, blunting its ability to learn and remember. However, if the animal has some control over how long the shocks last, it remains resilient. Pain and unpleasantness matter less than having some control over their duration.

7 Scientists can, in fact, see the imprint of early-life stress decades later; there are more markers of inflammation in those who have experienced such hardships. Chronic inflammation increases the risk of degenerative diseases like heart diseases and diabetes. Indeed, telomeres — the tips of our chromosomes — appear to be shorter among those who have experienced early-life adversity, which might be an indicator of accelerated aging. In addition, scientists have found links, independent of current income, between early-life poverty and a higher risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and arthritis in adulthood.

8 Peter Gianaros, a neuroscientist at the University of Pittsburgh, is interested in heart diseases. He found that college students who viewed their parents as having low social status reacted more strongly to images of angry faces, as measured by the reactivity of the amygdala — an almond-shaped area of the brain that

coordinates the fear response. Over a lifetime, he suspects that a harder, faster response to threats may contribute to the formation of arterial plaques. Dr. Gianaros also found, among a group of 48 women followed for about 20 years, higher reports of stress correlated with a reduction in the volume of the hippocampus, a brain region important for learning and memory.

9 “Early-life stress and the scar tissue that **it** leaves, with every passing bit of aging, gets harder and harder to reverse,” says Robert Sapolsky, a neurobiologist at Stanford. “You are never out of luck in terms of interventions, but the longer you wait to deal with stress, the more work you have got on your hands.”

### Questions

#### A. Answer each of the following questions in 1-4 complete sentences of your own words.

1. State the main difference between long work hours and stress. (Score: 01)
2. Identify two reasons that make people at the top of the socioeconomic ladder luckier than those at the bottom. (Score: 01)
3. What is the purpose of Dr. Marmot’s study and how does the choice of “civil servants” serve this purpose? (Score: 01)
4. Infer how the findings of the psychologists’ studies, mentioned in the selection above, are complementary to those of the biologists’. (Score: 01)

#### B. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Identify the cohesive device/link between Paragraphs 5 and 6 and between Paragraphs 7 and 8. (Score: 01)
2. Explain the metaphor used in Paragraph 9, and show the purpose it serves. (Score: 01)
3. State three types of evidence, with examples on each, the writer uses to achieve credibility in the selection above. (Score: 1.5)

#### C. Scan Paragraphs 2, 8, and 9 to provide a suitable justification for each of the attitudes given in the table below, using phrases. Copy the table in your answer booklet. (Score: 1.5)

Paragraph	Attitude	Justification
2	<i>Sympathetic</i>	
8	<i>Uncertain</i>	
9	<i>Promising</i>	

#### D. Scan Paragraphs 2, 4 and 6 for words that almost have the following meanings. (Score: 01)

1. *seriously bad*
2. *too early*
3. *to put an end to*
4. *excessive effort or tension*

#### E. What does each of the pronouns, **bold-typed** in the selection above, refer to? (Score: 01)

1. **Those** (Paragraph 2)
2. **them** (Paragraph 3)
3. **it** (Paragraph 6)
4. **it** (Paragraph 9)

### Part Two: Writing

(Score: 09/20)

*Depression, heart diseases, diabetes and stress are physical and mental health issues, which result from a variety of factors (biological, social, chemical, emotional, etc.), may lead to severe complications in one’s life. In an essay of 250-300 words, develop the causes of any health issue that people experience, and suggest possible solutions that help reducing its consequences.* See that, in your introduction, you put your reader in the general atmosphere of your topic and clearly provide a thesis statement, and that each of your body paragraphs starts with a topic sentence which you back up with relevant supporting details. Draft, revise, and proofread your essay. Your writing will be assessed for ideas, language, style, and tidiness. [Score: 05 for ideas, 03 for language and style, and 01 for tidiness and legible handwriting]

Part of the Q	Answer Key	Mark
I-A-1	Long work hours can be dealt with, and sometimes they help people improve/reinforce their abilities. On the other hand, stress might lead to devastating consequences. <b>(0.5 for each)</b>	01
I-A-2	People at the top of the socioeconomic ladder are three times less vulnerable to early death than those at the bottom. In addition, they suffer less from health issues such as depression, heart diseases, diabetes, and mostly stress. <b>(0.5 for each reason)</b>	01
I-A-3	Dr. Marmot's main purpose is to study the effects of the person's social status on one's health and ability to control hardships or stress. Choosing people experiencing severe life conditions has provided him with clear evidence that poverty results in health issues, lack of ability to control one's fate (problems), and the stress one suffers from. <b>(0.25 for the purpose and 0.75 for the choice of the sample)</b>	01
I-A-4	The findings of psychologists' studies correlate the inability to control and manage stress with early-life hardships of the person. That matches with the findings of the biologists'/scientific studies that confirm a direct relationship between early-life poverty and one's biological structure (chronic inflammation, shorter chromosomes/telomeres, and brain functions) which in turn reduces the ability of stress control. <b>(0.5 for each)</b>	01
I-B-1	First, Paragraphs 5 and 6 are linked with the transition signal "Thus", which is a direct link. Second, Paragraphs 7 and 8 are linked with the repetition of the key term "heart disease", which is an indirect link. <b>(0.5 for each device)</b>	01
I-B-2	In the first sentence, "Early-life stress and the <b>scar tissue</b> that it leaves", the writer compares stress to a weapon (sharp tool, knife, etc.) that causes a wound, leaving a scar. Its purpose is to show how devastating/harmful the effects of stress are. <b>(0.5 explanation and 0.5 for the purpose)</b>	01
I-B-3	First, he uses experts' opinion such as in Paragraphs 4 and 5: the opinion of Dr. Marmot about the relationship between stress and the person's social status. Second, he uses results/findings of studies such as in Paragraph 8 about college students and a group of women,	

	concerning their brain functions. In addition, he uses specific names of diseases/organs and biological terms such as in Paragraphs 7 and 8: “telomeres”, “amygdala”, “arterial plaques”, etc. <b>(0.5 for each evidence with its examples; other appropriate types of evidence with examples are acceptable)</b>	<b>1.5</b>												
<b>I-C</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Paragraph</th> <th>Attitude</th> <th>Justification</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td> <td><i>Sympathetic</i></td> <td>Highlighting the grave consequences poor people suffer from Or Listing the devastating health effects of poverty</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td><i>Uncertain</i></td> <td>Presenting doubtful results about the threats on the formation of arterial plaques</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td><i>Promising</i></td> <td>Hinting at the possibility of having better life opportunities</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>(0.5 for each justification)</b></p>	Paragraph	Attitude	Justification	2	<i>Sympathetic</i>	Highlighting the grave consequences poor people suffer from Or Listing the devastating health effects of poverty	8	<i>Uncertain</i>	Presenting doubtful results about the threats on the formation of arterial plaques	9	<i>Promising</i>	Hinting at the possibility of having better life opportunities	<b>1.5</b>
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<b>I-D-1</b>	grave	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-D-2</b>	prematurely	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-D-3</b>	abolish	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-D-4</b>	strain	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-E-1</b>	“ <b>Those</b> ” refers to people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-E-2</b>	“ <b>them</b> ” refers to people who later ascend economically	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-E-3</b>	“ <b>it</b> ” refers to animal	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>I-E-4</b>	“ <b>it</b> ” refers to early-life stress / stress	<b>0.25</b>												
<b>II-A</b>	Ideas and organization	<b>05</b>												
<b>II-B</b>	Language and Style	<b>03</b>												
<b>II-C</b>	Tidiness and legible handwriting	<b>01</b>												