

For all questions: Read each passage. Then answer each question carefully by choosing the best answer. Happiness may be the primary goal of human existence. Philosophers have wrestled with the concept of happiness. Legislators create laws to support citizens' rights to pursue happiness. Television, radio, and print advertisers assure consumers that various products will guarantee happiness. Interestingly, people have a tendency to believe they are happier than their neighbors, and they are optimistic about their happiness in the future. Most people assume that they will be happier a decade from now than they are today.

Clearly, everyone from writers and philosophers to legislators and the average person on the street thinks a great deal about happiness. What makes happiness so important to human existence?

Why Be Happy?

Not only does happiness feel good, but it appears to provide a variety of psychological and physical benefits. Happiness plays a significant role in enhancing good health, strengthening the immune system, promoting longevity, improving productivity and performance, and increasing resilience. Happy people work hard, play hard, have an active social life (and a social conscience), experience good health, and live longer. A happy person lives an average of nine years longer than a miserable one.

1. In the section Why Be Happy?, why does the author include parentheses around “and a social conscience”?

A. to point out that social conscience leads to good health

B. to emphasize the importance of playing and working hard

C. to point out that having a social conscience can promote longevity

D. to emphasize the importance of social conscience as a part of an active social life

The Opposite of Happiness

When studying happiness, it makes sense that its opposite condition would also be a topic of examination. Scientists have observed that there are two unfortunate life events that induce profound unhappiness, perhaps over the course of many years: the loss of a spouse and the loss of a job.

Q 2. What change occurs as a result of adding the prefix **un- to **fortunate** in the above paragraph?**

A. the word becomes more intense

B. the word becomes less intense

C. the word takes on the opposite meaning

D. the word takes on a different part of speech

What Causes Happiness?

However, good news abounds in the study of happiness. Fortunately, humans experience happiness from a wide range of stimuli, from traveling to an exotic destination to redecorating one's home or from winning a game of soccer to eating a delicious meal. Simply watching a favorite television show or laughing at a funny joke can boost a depressed mood. While the happiness produced by such experiences tends to be short lived, certain conditions do promote a more long-lasting and durable state of happiness as a lifestyle: a wide social network, believing in a meaningful reason for one's existence, and establishing goals and working to achieve them.

Q 3. Which statement summarizes the heading **What Causes Happiness?**

A. A wide social network is the key to happiness.

B. Laughing at funny jokes helps to lift a gloomy mood.

C. Scientists conclude that good news leads to long-lasting happiness.

D. Both short- and long-term happiness are caused by a variety of experiences.

With a Little Help from My Friends

Surprisingly, income is not a primary factor in determining a person’s level of happiness once the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter have been met. More important is one’s social network. Being socially active may be more effective in increasing one’s immunity to illness than a vaccine. Misery may love company, but so does happiness, and having close friends and family is vital to one’s overall level of happiness. (If friends and family are crucial, so is a loving partner. Research suggests that being married increases one’s potential for happiness.) Even sharing one’s home with an animal companion can make a person happier.

Q 3. In the section **With a Little Help from My Friends**, why does the author use the phrase “misery may love company”?

A. to convince people that pets are better company than a loving partner

B. to encourage people to find mates for their friends who are unhappy

C. to point out that people will be happier with positive relationships

D. to recommend that people try to influence negative people in a positive way

Why Am I Here?

Scientists report that believing in some kind of meaning for one’s life is necessary to living a happy life. This may be a religion, a code of ethics, a particular value system, a philosophy, or any other reason for being that lifts people out of the mundane routine of daily existence and gives their life meaning beyond a weekly paycheck.

The Habit of Happiness

Happiness is not an innate characteristic but may actually be developed as a habit. Scientists suggest that incorporating new habits and practices can go a long way in increasing one’s state of happiness. While people generally do not transform their basic temperaments, people can learn to become happier by participating in a variety of activities, including socializing, watching funny movies or reading funny books, keeping a gratitude journal (writing a daily list of three to five things for which one is grateful), involving oneself in pleasurable activities, such as sports, hobbies, or the arts, focusing on positive outcomes, and performing acts of kindness for others. Apparently, doing something to make someone else happy will make you happy, too.

Reasons to Smile

Smiling...
is contagious.
relieves stress.
improves your mood.
helps you stay positive.
lowers your blood pressure.
attracts other people to you.
makes you appear confident.
boosts your immune system.

Q 4. What is one assumption the author makes about attaining happiness?

A. Some people find comfort in mundane routines

B. A person needs a social network to attain happiness.

C. Reading and writing about your problems will produce happiness.

D. Convincing negative people to become positive is a life goal.

Q 5. In the section *The Habit of Happiness*, what does the word **innate mean?**

A. natural and existing

B. incomplete and building

C. absent and unfamiliar

D. learned and habitual

Q 6. Which statement is an opinion?

A. Happiness is not a physical characteristic.

B. Legislators create laws to support happiness.

C. Happiness may be the primary goal of human existence.

D. Advertisers use happiness to promote their products.

Answer Key Link : [Reading Practice Test – 4 : Question Answers \(PDF\)](#)