

# Example Problem-Solution Essay

## Exercise: Analyze an essay

1. Does the introduction provide the general information a reader needs in order to understand the topic?
2. Does the introduction end with an effective thesis? Does it match the style of the essay?
3. Do each of the body paragraphs begin with an effective topic sentence?
4. Are the body paragraphs sequenced in a logical order?
5. Look at each body paragraph. Do the supporting sentences support the topic sentence?
6. Look at each body paragraph. Are the supporting sentences sequenced in a logical order?
7. Look at each body paragraph. Is there enough development? Are there more details or examples that would help the reader?
8. Look at each body paragraph. Does the concluding sentence close the paragraph logically?
9. Does the conclusion paragraph start by restating the thesis?
10. Does the conclusion paragraph have a suggestion, prediction, or opinion at the end?

## Taking Steps to Deal with Stress

Stress isn't bad; stress is normal. Everyone faces things that are stressful: deadlines for school assignments, new work responsibilities, asking someone on a date, and bills that have to be paid. These stressors are not necessarily negative things; deadlines keep classes organized, new work responsibilities help employees gain new skills, asking someone on a date can lead to a rewarding relationship, and paid bills keep the lights on. While these stressors should not be avoided, and frequently cannot be avoided, they still activate the body's stress response. This stress response, if stressors are prolonged, can lead negative consequences. In situations of chronic stress, the body gets worn down and weakened. What can be done to strengthen ourselves against these problems? The key is not avoiding stress; it is managing stress. Managing stress can keep our bodies and minds functioning at full capacity. If stress is not properly managed, it can cause long-term problems. The best ways to manage stress are by learning about it, exercising, and strengthening social ties.

The failure to manage stress is a huge problem facing society that has very harmful effects. Remember that stress itself is not the enemy; rather our reaction to stress can become the enemy if it is not controlled. This uncontrolled reaction can lead to serious health problems that can increase our stress and jeopardize our health. Some of the problems that can be exacerbated by a failure to manage our stress include depression, anxiety, heart attacks, infections, hypertension, and insomnia (American Institute of Stress, 2017; Carr, 2014). Stress can cause headaches and increase the risk of obesity and diabetes (Scholastic, 2017). Our general health is affected by stress because chronic stress can lower our immune system and make it easier for us to get sick. In fact, according to the American Institute of Stress, "...it's hard to think of any disease in which stress cannot play an aggravating role or any part of the body that is not affected" (para. 1). It is important to understand

these effects of prolonged, unmanaged stress. Stress, if left unmanaged, can wreak havoc on our well-being.

In the face of this challenging opponent, there are many excellent ways to deal with stress and avoid these negative consequences. Generally speaking, eliminating stressors is a good way to start if you are feeling overburdened. Look for anything that is causing undue stress that is unnecessary and eliminate it. According to Carr (2014), this strategy is very common when people feel like it is possible to improve their situation. This can include altering or canceling plans (e.g., choosing to prepare a simpler meal for a party) and declining things we don't have the time or energy for. According to Carr (2014) and the Harvard School of Medicine (2011), having fewer obligations is one of the best ways to reduce stress. When extra opportunities present themselves and we are already spread too thin, turning down a new opportunity will reduce the amount of stressors, and thus reduce our stress. Even still, we will need to learn other ways of managing stress because some stressors can't be eliminated. For those stressors, there are some specific actions that can lead to better stress management.

First, learning about your reaction to stress is a good way to start managing it. Learning about your individual reaction to stress is essential because if you are unable to recognize your body's reaction to stress, you won't be able to take action (Mayo Clinic, 2017; National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.). Recognizing your symptoms may take practice, but the importance of this step cannot be overstated. Common stress symptoms include difficulty sleeping, irritability, depression, and fatigue (NIMH, n.d.), but they can vary. To start, pay attention to how you feel in stressful situations when the stressor is easy to identify. For example, if you have a test coming up and you notice yourself craving unhealthy foods, getting distracted more easily, and becoming more irritable, watch out for those tendencies when you are in other situations. They may be signaling a stressor that you would not have otherwise identified. By identifying your reactions, you may be able to start managing stress while it is still manageable instead of waiting until the effects are out of control. Learn where your boundaries are and take time to rejuvenate yourself when you are feeling pushed too far. Choosing to manage stress is a conscious decision, and being familiar with your stress symptoms can help you know when to put your plan into action.

In addition to learning how you react to stress, physical exercise is another excellent tool for stress management. Exercise is excellent for stress management for both chemical and behavior reasons. Chemically, exercise can boost your mood (NIMH, n.d.) and help you cope with psychological stress (Scholastic, 2017) because exercise "reduces levels of the body's stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. It also stimulates the production of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are the body's natural painkillers and mood-elevators" (Harvard Medical School, 2011, para. 6). As exercise eliminates stress hormones and replaces them with endorphins, the negative effects of stress on the body are naturally reversed. The behavior itself is also beneficial; with exercise comes increased stamina and health (Harvard Medical School, 2011, para. 7). A healthy body will obviously make it easier to keep up with your demands, which will help reduce stress. It will also make you feel better about yourself, and that added confidence and life satisfaction won't hurt. While it may seem counterintuitive to go for a walk when you are feeling fatigued, the benefits of exercise on both your mind and body make it an excellent way to work through daily stressors.

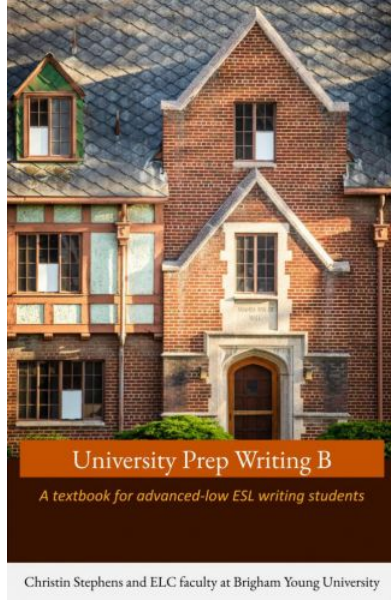
Finally, stress can be managed by strengthening social ties. Carr (2014) argued that one of our most important tools for dealing with stress may be a network of social support, and others have recommended that you get support if you are feeling stressed (Scholastic, 2017; NIMH, n.d.). There are many reasons that having strong relationships can help with stress. Some of these reasons

account for having greater access to solve problems that trigger the stress response. For example, if you are stressed because your car has a flat tire, a trusted friend or family member can give you a ride to work. This built-in network of people who care about you enable you to find solutions to problems that cause stress. Other reasons include having someone to talk to about stressful situations that cannot be changed. Having a strong social network is key to properly managing stress because it opens up resources that would be impossible to have on your own. However, simply having social ties is not enough to manage stress. Many social relationships can result in greater stress (Fuller-Iglesias, 2015), especially if the relationship is poor. For example, if spouses are in conflict, their strained relationship can be a stressor in and of itself. In order to have relationships that reduce stress, instead of adding to it, those relationships need to be strengthened. Reach out to trusted friends when you need to, and be there for others when they need someone. Building networks of good relationships can take time, but the investment will be worth it. These strong relationships can become an effective tool to help manage stress.

In sum, it is clear to see that learning about your reaction to stress, exercising, and strengthening social ties are the best ways to manage stress, and thus avoid the harmful effects of not managing it properly. Our overall well-being depends on our ability to cultivate healthy habits for managing the inevitable stressors we will face every day. The sooner people learn how to manage stress, the better off they will be, because stress is a normal part of life, and it isn't going to disappear anytime soon. Stress should not be feared, but it should be understood. Our reaction to stress should not be suppressed, but it should be guided to become healthier.

## References

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