

# Answers

## Reader's digest CLASSROOM MAY



## RD Classroom May 2016 Beginner

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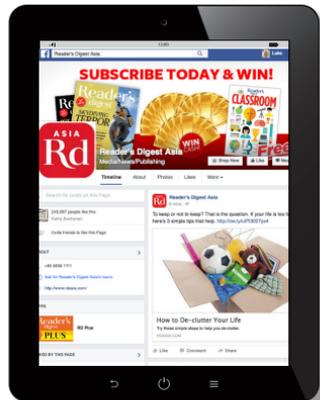
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**ANSWERS FOR 'MEDITATION & ME' (PAGE 54)****1. According to the poster mentioned in the article, what does mindfulness meditation help you to gain?**

Mindfulness meditation helps you to gain new coping skills for everyday life.

**2. The article states that meditation can offer many positive rewards. What are four of them and are they easy to achieve?**

The article provides a list of positive rewards. Give full points for any four from the list: peace of mind; less stress, anxiety and pain; help in dealing with depression, substance abuse or smoking; better job performance; changes in the brain – especially those areas dealing with emotional control, learning and memory. The author says that even though meditation sounds easy to do, in actual practice it is not, and he had to practice a lot to benefit from it.

**3. At the start of the article did the writer think meditation would work for him? Why not? Did his feelings towards meditation change?**

The writer has a negative attitude towards meditation at the start of the article and is very sceptical that it will help him in any way. This feeling is reflected in sentences such as “Think this ‘mindfulness’ craze has a strong whiff of weirdness? So did I – at first”; “It had the aura of a fad about it”; and “My Hogwash Detector went off immediately in my head – bells ringing, lights flashing, beep! beep! beep!” But after attending classes and seeing the benefits in his life, his feelings towards meditation did change and he was very positive towards it by the end of the article.

**4. What did the writer learn about himself? How did his life improve as a result of doing meditation on a regular basis?**

The writer learns that it was not the events of his life that were stressing him out, but rather his reaction to them. His life improved when he started approaching everyday events and

situations more positively. He finishes the article by saying, "I am less likely to question my ability. I am less apprehensive about the future. I eat much more slowly and therefore I eat less. I am happier and more peaceful." Give a bonus point for any other appropriate examples to support your answer.

**ACTIVITY** What do you think about meditation? Have you tried meditation or do you know somebody who has? If so, did meditation help? If you haven't tried meditation before, do you think it is something you would try now that you have read the article? Maybe give it a go and share your experience with someone else!

There are no wrong answers to this question! This activity offers the chance to reflect on the article, the writer's journey and your own personal experiences. Answers should describe opinions, explanations of these feelings and, hopefully, a recount of a meditation experience.

## **ANSWERS FOR 'INSTANT ANSWERS: STEM' (PAGE 72)**

### **1. What does STEM stand for?**

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

### **2. Why have STEM skills become such a focus in education?**

The focus on STEM is a response to worldwide concerns that governments and corporations haven't been putting enough effort into developing this kind of expertise, which many see as vital to future success.

### **3. What is a possible reason, mentioned in the article, for students being put off studying these subjects?**

Too few high school and university students are interested in studying these subjects, as they are seen as 'nerdy'. Give an extra point to students who mention that STEM subjects tend not to attract female students.

#### **4. What has United States President Barack Obama done to help develop STEM?**

In 2009, Barack Obama created a programme called Educate to Innovate, which links public and private organisations to build interest in these subjects. He said at the launch, 'We're going to show young people how cool science can be'. He also hosts yearly students' Science Fairs at the White House.

**ACTIVITY Many people, including educators and world leaders, feel that STEM subjects should be given more of a focus, particularly in schools. What do you think? Do you agree with the points made in the article? Or do you think that STEM subjects are receiving unfair attention? Are STEM skills something you would like to develop further? Why?**

To achieve full marks, all parts of the activity should be addressed. Students are free to agree or disagree with the article, but answers should reflect their opinion and show an understanding of the topic and the article. Opinions should be supported by evidence, which can include personal experiences.

#### **ANSWERS FOR 'HAVANA AT 96' (PAGE 74)**

##### **1. Why was Francine carrying so much money?**

Credit cards are not yet accepted in Havana, so Francine carries the money for her holiday in the form of a large wad of banknotes in a money belt.

##### **2. What is a 'bicitaxi' and who uses them? Why do you think it is called that?**

A bicitaxi is a pedal-powered taxi and locals and tourists use them. The word is a mix of the words bike or bicycle and taxi.

##### **3. Why does Francine feel she is witnessing a 'historic moment' in Cuba? You may need to do some research into Cuba's history to answer this question.**

The article mentions that the US severed relations with Cuba in 1961 after the Cuban Revolution, in which Fidel Castro came

to power and made Cuba a Socialist state. The US Government also imposed a travel ban on US citizens visiting Cuba. The two nations restored diplomatic relations on July 20, 2015. With relations between the US and Cuba thawing for the first time in more than fifty years, Francine knows she is witnessing a historic moment, particularly as she would have witnessed the Cuban Revolution, and its effects, in her lifetime.

Answers may give a more in-depth explanation based on further research. Examples as to what the US and Cuban leaders are doing to help restore relations may be provided, such as President Obama's recent visit to Cuba. Such examples should be rewarded with a bonus point.

**4. Francine makes a visit to the workshop of Kcho - a contemporary artist. What is special about this workshop? Why does it attract a particularly young crowd of people?**

Kcho's workshop may be the only place in Havana where Wi-Fi is free. Most Cubans don't have access to the Internet due to the high cost and the island's poor connectivity; therefore Kcho's workshop attracts a crowd of people using their smartphones and laptops.

**5. Why does the tour guide give Francine a kiss?**

The tour guide kisses Francine when he finds out her age - she was born near the beginning of the previous century. Most likely he kisses her as a compliment and as a sign of respect.

**ACTIVITY Francine seemed to enjoy her trip and had fun exploring Havana. Imagine you are Francine writing about the trip - what would you tell people? Write a diary entry or a postcard telling others about your trip. What is Havana like? Do you like it there? What did you see and what are the people like? Feel free to do some of your own research on Cuba to answer this question. Share your writing with someone else who has read the article.**

This activity offers the chance to get creative and imaginative, using the article and any research that has been done to help.

Answers should include the activities Francine carried out while she was away and her possible thoughts and feelings. Maybe her physical conditions could be mentioned, such as her poor eyesight and how she still manages to see Havana's bright colours or her bad back. For full points, good answers should also include a description of Havana and capture Francine's positive experiences and personality.