

Case-Based Passage:

The Power of Fiction

- (1) Every night before bed, Ria reads a chapter from a novel. “It’s my escape and my therapy,” she says. “But I’ve also noticed I sleep better and handle stress more calmly ever since I made reading fiction a habit.” This isn’t just coincidence — scientists agree.
- (2) A recent study in the journal *Brain Connectivity* reveals that reading fiction increases activity in the brain’s language centres and areas associated with emotional intelligence. Participants who read engaging stories showed heightened connectivity in the left temporal cortex — the part of the brain linked to empathy and narrative comprehension.
- (3) Reading a novel doesn’t just entertain. It immerses readers in the lives and thoughts of characters, which forces the brain to imagine, interpret, and empathise. As a result, neural pathways are strengthened. The more you read, the more deeply you understand others. This is especially critical in today’s fast-paced, individualistic world.
- (4) According to neuroscientists, reading fiction regularly can improve theory of mind — the ability to understand others’ mental states. This means a person who reads frequently can better grasp different viewpoints, making social interactions smoother and more thoughtful.
- (5) Interestingly, brain scans of long-time fiction readers show increased grey matter in areas responsible for decision-making, language, and emotional processing. “It’s as though the brain is flexing muscles it wouldn’t otherwise use,” says Dr. Sheila Kumar, a cognitive psychologist.
- (6) Of course, not all reading has the same effect. While non-fiction strengthens knowledge and logic, fiction nurtures imagination and feeling. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of daily reading to keep the brain sharp and the heart soft.

Answer the following questions :

1.The reason behind Ria’s improved sleep and stress levels relates to:

- A. Entertainment during sleepless nights
- B. Learning new vocabulary
- C. Relaxation through nightly reading
- D. Studying psychological terms

2.The main finding from the Brain Connectivity study connects fiction reading with:

- A. Better eyesight
- B. Stronger empathy-related brain functions
- C. Creative thinking in non-fiction readers
- D. Improved poetry memorisation

3.The brain region linked to empathy and language is:

- A. Frontal lobe
- B. Right cortex
- C. Left temporal cortex
- D. Cerebellum

4.The meaning of “theory of mind” centres on:

- A. Guessing facts correctly
- B. Recognising personal thoughts
- C. Understanding the thoughts of others
- D. Predicting future events

5.The comparison of reading fiction to “flexing muscles” highlights:

- A. Physical effort in turning pages
- B. Strengthening of brain pathways

- C. Growth of muscle tissue
- D. Memorisation of science topics

6.The idea presented in paragraph 3 connects fiction reading to:

- A. Sleep improvement
- B. Deep emotional and imaginative engagement
- C. Better history knowledge
- D. Equal value of all books

7.The meaning closest to “immerses” in paragraph 3 relates to:

- A. Drowning accidentally
- B. Deep mental engagement
- C. Splashing briefly
- D. Escaping danger

8.The word “nurtures” from paragraph 6 can best be replaced by:

- A. Starves completely
- B. Destroys slowly
- C. Encourages healthy growth
- D. Disturbs frequently

9.The overall tone of the passage suggests an approach that is:

- A. Sarcastic in manner
- B. Analytical in style
- C. Humorous in intent
- D. Indifferent in nature

10.The recommended daily reading time for mental and emotional benefits equals:

- A. One full hour
- B. Five short minutes
- C. Thirty focused minutes
- D. Two whole hours