Laughter – The More the Better

Pre-reading
Questions:
• What do you think you may learn in this reading?

Definitions:
• Arousal – the condition of being stimulated or excited
• Resolution – the reduction or subsiding of a condition within the body
• Endorphin – a chemical/hormone of the brain that affects emotions

Reading
A laugh a day may keep the doctor away. Humor is good medicine. Research has shown many benefits of laughter. It helps keep our mind and body healthy. It relaxes our muscles and increases circulation. Laughter increases the oxygen level in our blood and lowers blood pressure. It also boosts the immune system. Infections are less likely to strike if we are laughing.

Laughter is a form of release. It rids our body of stressful emotions and reduces the level of stress hormones. Think of a time when you had a good belly laugh. Was your whole body engaged? Laughter can be a total body experience, much like exercise.

According to Doctor Pam Schiller, laughter has two stages. One is the arousal phase that increases the heart rate. The other is the resolution phase that allows the heart to rest. She says that, “Laughing gives the diaphragm, abdomen, respiratory system and facial muscles a complete work-out.”

The benefits of laughter can also been seen in the brain. Research tells us that humor stimulates parts of the brain known as reward centers. These reward centers release endorphins that combat pain and create a natural high. The brain feels rewarded by finding something funny.

Laughter and humor are two powerful tools. Learn to laugh at yourself. Don’t worry or analyze why people laugh – just join in! Think funny thoughts. Sing silly songs. Read some funny jokes such as, “Why are basketball players sloppy eaters? Because they always dribble.”

“What has more lives than a cat? A frog – it croaks every night!”

A smile is the first step toward laughter. Smile often. Look in the mirror and smile at yourself. Smile at your co-workers. Smile at your spouse, or with your children. Smile at strangers on the street. Smile at friends that you meet. Remember, “The day goes, the way your mouth turns!”

Level 5.0
Understanding

1. What does the phrase “The day goes, the way your mouth turns,” mean? ______________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

2. How does laughter affect stress? _______________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

3. What does the word benefit mean? _____________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

4. What does laughter do to the brain? ____________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

5. What are some ways to get more humor in your life? _________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

6. How does laughter help fight-off infections? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

7. Why should we laugh more? (List at least three reasons.) ______________________________
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   __________________________________________________________________________________
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Writing

Choice A:     Summarize the reading in your own words.
Choice B:     Research suggests that children laugh 400 times per day and adults only laugh 15 times per day. What does this mean? What can we learn from it?