

ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 12**Meeting Life Challenges**

Psychology · Chapter 3 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

HOW TO USE

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER**Section A — VSA (1 mark × 4)****Q1. Name the three stages of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome in order. [1 mark]****Ans:** Alarm reaction → Resistance → Exhaustion.**Q2. What is the difference between eustress and distress? [1 mark]****Ans:** Eustress is positive, motivating stress; distress is negative, harmful stress.**Q3. Name the two types of coping identified by Lazarus and Folkman. [1 mark]****Ans:** Problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.**Q4. What does psychoneuroimmunology study? [1 mark]****Ans:** How psychological states affect the immune system via the nervous and endocrine systems.**Section B — SA-I (3 marks × 2)****Q5. Explain the types and sources of stress. [3 marks]****Ans:** TYPES of stress: (1) PHYSICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL — noise, pollution, crowding, illness, fatigue. (2) PSYCHOLOGICAL — internal, arising from interpretation: FRUSTRATION (blocked goal), CONFLICT (incompatible goals), PRESSURE (demands/expectations), and internal conflicts. (3) SOCIAL — from relationships and social events: bereavement, divorce, job loss, isolation. SOURCES of stress: (a) LIFE EVENTS — major changes (marriage, death, new job); (b) HASSLES — small daily irritants that accumulate (traffic, deadlines); (c) TRAUMATIC EVENTS — catastrophes (accidents, disasters) that can have delayed effects like PTSD.**Q6. What are life skills? How do they help in meeting life challenges? [3 marks]****Ans:** LIFE SKILLS are adaptive, positive abilities that enable a person to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life — and they can be LEARNED and improved. Key life skills include: ASSERTIVENESS (expressing needs honestly without aggression), TIME MANAGEMENT (prioritising and organising), RATIONAL THINKING (challenging irrational, stress-producing beliefs), IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (listening, sharing, co-operation), SELF-CARE, and overcoming unhelpful habits (perfectionism, procrastination). They help by reducing the experienced threat of stressors, improving coping, and building resilience — enabling a person to handle pressure, solve problems, and maintain well-being.

Section C — SA-II (5 marks × 2)

Q7. Explain Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome with its three stages. [5 marks]

Ans: Hans Selye (1936) proposed the GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME (GAS) — a three-stage physiological response to prolonged stress that occurs REGARDLESS of the specific stressor (a 'non-specific' response). STAGE 1 — ALARM REACTION: the body perceives the threat; the sympathetic nervous system and adrenal glands trigger 'fight-or-flight' — adrenaline and cortisol surge, heart rate and blood pressure rise, energy is mobilised; resistance is temporarily lowered. STAGE 2 — RESISTANCE: if the stressor continues, the body ADAPTS and copes; arousal stays high but stabilises as the body uses its resources to resist; outwardly the person may seem to be managing while resources drain. STAGE 3 — EXHAUSTION: if the stressor persists too long, adaptive resources DEplete; immune function collapses, vulnerability to the 'diseases of adaptation' (ulcers, hypertension, heart disease) rises, and burnout, breakdown, or even death may follow. SIGNIFICANCE: GAS established the biological reality of the stress-illness link and the central role of the endocrine system, explaining why CHRONIC stress — a long time in resistance leading inevitably to exhaustion — is the most damaging to health.

Q8. Describe the strategies and styles of coping with stress. [5 marks]

Ans: COPING is the dynamic, conscious effort to manage demands appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources (Lazarus & Folkman). LAZARUS & FOLKMAN identified TWO strategies: (1) PROBLEM-FOCUSED coping acts on the STRESSOR itself — gathering information, making a plan, taking direct action — used when the situation is CONTROLLABLE. (2) EMOTION-FOCUSED coping manages the EMOTIONAL DISTRESS — reappraisal, acceptance, seeking support, relaxation — used when the situation CANNOT be changed (e.g. bereavement). ENDLER & PARKER identified THREE coping styles: (a) TASK-ORIENTED — seeking information and acting to solve the problem; (b) EMOTION-ORIENTED — venting feelings, self-preoccupation, fantasising; (c) AVOIDANCE-ORIENTED — denying/minimising the problem, distracting oneself, or seeking out others (social diversion). NO single style is best in all situations — problem-focused/task-oriented coping suits controllable stressors, emotion-focused coping suits uncontrollable ones, and avoidance gives short-term relief but is maladaptive if habitual. The healthiest copers flexibly MATCH the strategy to whether the stressor can be changed.

Section D — LA (6 marks × 1)

Q9. Explain any five techniques of stress management. [6 marks]

Ans: STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES reduce stress by lowering physiological arousal, changing cognitions, or both. (1) RELAXATION TECHNIQUES — e.g. progressive muscle relaxation (tensing and releasing muscle groups in sequence) — lower heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension by activating the parasympathetic system. (2) MEDITATION — including mindfulness — trains focused, non-judgemental attention, quietening stressful thoughts and improving emotional regulation. (3) BIOFEEDBACK — instruments monitor involuntary processes (heart rate, muscle tension, skin temperature) and feed back the readings, training the person to gain VOLUNTARY control over them and deliberately lower arousal. (4) CREATIVE VISUALISATION — deliberate mental imagery of calm or successful scenarios reduces anxiety and prepares for stressful events. (5) COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES — e.g. Meichenbaum's Stress Inoculation Training (three phases: assessment, stress-reduction skills, application and follow-through) — restructure stress-producing thoughts and build coping self-statements. (6) EXERCISE — regular physical activity (swimming, running, brisk walking) releases endorphins, improves mood, lowers resting heart rate and blood pressure, improves sleep, and builds physical resistance to stress. Used together with life skills and social support, these techniques build long-term stress resistance and promote positive health.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Explain Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome.'

Annual

Step 1 [1 mark]	Setup	Hans Selye (1936) studied the body's response to PROLONGED stress and proposed the GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME (GAS) — a three-stage physiological pattern that occurs REGARDLESS of the specific stressor (the 'non-specific' response). 'General' = same reaction to many stressors; 'Adaptation' = the body tries to cope.
Step 2 [1 mark]	Stage 1 — Alarm Reaction	ALARM REACTION: the first response. The body perceives the threat; the sympathetic nervous system and the adrenal glands activate 'fight-or-flight' — adrenaline + cortisol surge, heart rate and blood pressure rise, energy is mobilised. Resistance to the stressor is temporarily LOWERED.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Stage 2 — Resistance	RESISTANCE: if the stressor continues, the body ADAPTS and tries to cope. Physiological arousal stays high but stabilises; the body uses resources to resist the stressor. Outwardly the person may seem to be managing, but resources are being steadily drained.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Stage 3 — Exhaustion	EXHAUSTION: if the stressor persists too long, the body's adaptive resources are DEPLETED. Immune function collapses, vulnerability to illness rises (the 'diseases of adaptation' — ulcers, hypertension, heart disease), and burnout, breakdown, or even death can follow.
Step 5 [1 mark]	Significance	GAS established the biological reality of the stress-illness link and the role of the endocrine system in stress. It explains why CHRONIC stress (not acute) is most damaging to health — prolonged time in resistance leads inevitably to exhaustion.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Reversing the stage order (alarm must come first).
- Not naming Selye.
- Omitting the exhaustion-stage illness link.
- Confusing GAS with Lazarus's cognitive appraisal.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Explain the strategies / styles of coping with stress.'

Annual

Step 1 [1 mark]	Define coping	COPING is the dynamic, conscious effort to manage the demands (internal or external) appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources (Lazarus & Folkman). It does not always mean 'solving' the problem — sometimes it means managing the distress the problem causes.
Step 2 [1.5 marks]	Lazarus & Folkman — 2 types	PROBLEM-FOCUSED coping acts on the STRESSOR itself — gathering information, making a plan, taking direct action to change the situation. Used when the situation is controllable. EMOTION-FOCUSED coping manages the EMOTIONAL response — reappraisal, acceptance, seeking emotional support, relaxation, denial. Used when the situation cannot be changed.
Step 3 [1.5 marks]	Endler & Parker — 3 styles	Endler & Parker identified THREE coping styles: (1) TASK-ORIENTED — obtaining information about the problem and acting to solve it (≈ problem-focused). (2) EMOTION-ORIENTED — venting feelings, self-preoccupation, fantasising (≈ emotion-focused). (3) AVOIDANCE-ORIENTED — denying or minimising the problem, distracting oneself, seeking out other people or activities to avoid thinking about it.
Step 4 [0.5 mark]	Adaptive judgement	No single style is 'best' in all cases — problem-focused/task-oriented coping suits controllable stressors; emotion-focused coping suits uncontrollable ones (e.g. grief). Avoidance can give short-term relief but is maladaptive if it becomes habitual.
Step 5 [0.5 mark]	Conclusion	Effective coping flexibly matches the strategy to the situation. The healthiest copers can switch between problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches depending on whether the stressor can be changed.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Confusing the two taxonomies (Lazarus & Folkman's 2-way vs Endler & Parker's 3-way).
- Treating emotion-focused coping as 'failure'.
- Not naming the theorists.
- Omitting avoidance-oriented from Endler & Parker.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Explain the techniques of stress management.'**

Most years

Step 1 [1 mark]	Relaxation + meditation	RELAXATION TECHNIQUES (e.g. progressive muscle relaxation) reduce physiological arousal — lowering heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension. MEDITATION (including mindfulness) trains focused attention and a calm awareness, reducing the stress response and improving emotional regulation.
Step 2 [1 mark]	Biofeedback	BIOFEEDBACK monitors and feeds back physiological signals (heart rate, muscle tension, skin temperature) via instruments, training the person to gain VOLUNTARY control over normally involuntary bodily processes, thereby reducing arousal.
Step 3 [1 mark]	Creative visualisation + CBT	CREATIVE VISUALISATION uses mental imagery of calm, successful scenarios to reduce anxiety. COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUES (e.g. Meichenbaum's Stress Inoculation Training — the 3 phases: assessment, stress-reduction techniques, application & follow-through) restructure stress-producing thoughts and build coping self-statements.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Exercise	EXERCISE (regular physical activity — swimming, running, cycling, brisk walking) reduces stress, improves cardiovascular fitness, releases endorphins, improves mood and sleep, and builds physical resistance to the effects of stress.
Step 5 [1 mark]	Integration / significance	These techniques work by either reducing physiological arousal (relaxation, biofeedback, exercise), changing cognitions (CBT, visualisation), or both. Used together with life skills and social support, they build long-term stress resistance and promote positive health.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Listing only 2-3 techniques (need 4-5).
- Not explaining HOW each technique works.
- Confusing biofeedback with relaxation.
- Omitting the CBT/Stress Inoculation Training mention.

MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES

- Theorist names mandatory (Selye, Lazarus & Folkman, Endler & Parker, Kobasa, Meichenbaum, Friedman & Rosenman).
- GAS stages must be in the correct order — reversing the order loses marks.
- Coping answer must distinguish the two taxonomies (Lazarus & Folkman's 2-way vs Endler & Parker's 3-way) and name both sets of authors.
- Stress management 5-6 mark answer needs at least five techniques, each with HOW it works.
- Examples (controllable vs uncontrollable stressors; named stressors; Type A/B/C/D health correlates) carry marks.
- Concluding statement on 5-mark answers earns a mark.