Teacher's Key

Anxiety Attacks: What Happens and What Actually Helps (Level C1)

Vocabulary Matching

1 unnerving = **N**
2 lingering = **A**
3 dread = **H**
4 spiral = **L**
5 hypervigilant = **G**
6 disproportionate = **M**
7 reassurance = **I**
8 ingrained = **E**
9 ride it out = **D**
10 grounding = **O**
11 subside = **J**
12 tentatively = **K**
13 counterproductive = **B**
14 setback = **C**
15 braced = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 unnerving
2 lingering
3 dread
4 spiral
5 hypervigilant
6 disproportionate
7 reassurance
8 ingrained
9 ride it out
10 grounding
11 subside
12 tentatively
13 counterproductive
14 setback

True or False

1 **False.** Paragraph 1 says the first one often comes out of nowhere.
2 **True.** The reading describes a burst of intense fear that peaks within minutes.
3 **True.** Paragraph 2 gives this range.
4 **False.** For many people the first attack is also the last.
5 **True.** The worry releases adrenaline, and the adrenaline makes the heart beat faster still.
6 **False.** It teaches the mind that the danger was real.
7 **False.** None of these tricks makes the fear disappear; they stop a second layer of fear.
8 **True.** Spinning on an office chair is one of the examples in paragraph 6.
9 **False.** The reading says a setback does not mean the effort was wasted.
10 **True.** It is sensible to see a doctor to check for heart or other physical problems.

Language Focus: Defining Relative Clauses

Example answer: Some people avoid places **(that) they fear**. Many people have friends **who always tell them to breathe deeply**. The pronoun can be left out only in the first answer, because there it is the object of the clause; in the second, who is the subject, so it must stay.

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 The heart races, the throat tightens, and the fingers go numb, and a voice says, quite calmly, that the person is about to die. Afterward many people feel almost embarrassed, as if they should have been able to stop it.

2 Doctors prefer panic attack; anxiety attack is the everyday phrase. Surveys around the world suggest that more than one adult in ten will have at least one attack.

3 Most attacks last only 5 to 20 minutes, and for many people the first is also the last. The fear of another attack, however, can change how a person lives for months, so it causes more lasting trouble.

4 A person notices a harmless sensation, such as a slightly fast heartbeat, and has a worried thought. The worry releases adrenaline, which makes the heart beat faster, which seems to confirm the worry, and the cycle continues.

5 They bring short-term relief, so the mind concludes that the danger was real and only narrowly avoided. The person never learns that nothing bad would have happened, and avoidance can become ingrained until life shrinks around it.

6 Name the sensations as panic, remind yourself that attacks end, ride it out, breathe slowly and gently, and perhaps use a grounding exercise. The aim is not to stop the fear but to avoid adding a second layer of fear, so the attack can subside.

7 Therapists ask clients to bring on feared sensations on purpose, for example by spinning on a chair, running up stairs, or breathing through a straw, and to return to avoided places without escape routes. It seems counterproductive because it means walking toward fear, but it teaches that the sensations are harmless.

8 A person should see a doctor after a first attack, to check for heart or other physical problems. They should look for professional help if attacks keep returning or if they find themselves braced for the next one wherever they go.

9 The strategies in paragraph 5 are for getting through an attack as it happens, and their aim is to avoid adding extra fear. The treatment in paragraph 6 is planned practice over weeks, in which people deliberately bring on sensations and return to avoided places to learn that they are harmless.

10 Not Given. The reading says more than one adult in ten will have an attack, but it says nothing about differences between women and men.

11 No. The writer says avoidance can become ingrained and make a life shrink, and that walking toward what frightens you is one of the most reliable ways to loosen panic's grip.

12 Best answer: to end on a practical, encouraging point that makes getting help seem manageable. The writer tells readers that effective treatment exists and often takes weeks, not years. The sentence does not advertise a service or promise that therapy works for everyone.

Notes on the Evidence

- Rebuild, September 30, 2026. The earlier reading named DSM-5, a 25-country survey team, several researchers and their universities, and the sample sizes of individual trials. Jeff found it too academic. This version is a magazine-style feature with practical guidance; the evidence behind each claim is recorded here and, where suitable for learners, in Online Resources. All 15 vocabulary items, the Language Focus (now defining relative clauses), and every exercise were replaced.
- Terminology and course: panic attack is defined in DSM-5 (APA, 2013; DSM-5-TR, 2022) as an abrupt surge of intense fear or discomfort that peaks within minutes. Anxiety attack is not a DSM term. The Mental Health Foundation says symptoms usually peak within 10 minutes. Duration: the NHS panic disorder page says most attacks last between 5 and 20 minutes, and some have been reported to last up to an hour (checked September 2026).
- Prevalence: de Jonge and colleagues (2016), Depression and Anxiety 33(12):1155-1177; 142,949 adults in 25 countries; lifetime prevalence of panic attacks 13.2 percent, lifetime panic disorder 1.7 percent. The reading's “more than one adult in ten will have at least one” rounds the lifetime figure; strictly, it is the share who reported an attack at the time of interview. That many people have one or few attacks is consistent with only about 1 in 8 of those with attacks meeting panic disorder criteria; the reading's “for many people the first attack is also the last” is a general statement, not a figure from this study.
- The fear cycle (paragraph 3) follows Clark's cognitive model (1986). Safety behaviors and reassurance seeking (paragraph 4): Salkovskis (1991) and Salkovskis, Clark, and colleagues (1999), Behaviour Research and Therapy 37:559-574, found that patients who dropped safety behaviors during brief exposure showed a greater fall in catastrophic beliefs. Rachman and colleagues (2008) argue that some safety behaviors can help people begin treatment.
- During an attack (paragraph 5): the NHS advises not fighting an attack and breathing slowly and deeply; some researchers (Meuret and colleagues, 2010) argue that deep breathing can worsen hyperventilation, so the reading says “slowly and gently rather than gulping air.” Hyperventilation is a recognized cause of dizziness and tingling. Grounding (for example 5-4-3-2-1) is widely taught but has little direct trial evidence for panic, so the reading says only that some people find it useful. Some clinicians treat distraction during panic as a possible safety behavior; the reading presents grounding as a way to avoid adding fear, not as a cure.
- Treatment (paragraphs 6 and 7): Pompoli, Furukawa, and colleagues (2018), Psychological Medicine 48(12):1945-1953, 72 trials: interoceptive exposure and face-to-face therapy were linked to better outcomes; muscle relaxation to lower efficacy. Spinning, stair running, and straw breathing are standard interoceptive exercises (Craske and Barlow's protocol). Course length: NICE CG113 recommends 7 to 14 hours of CBT in total, usually weekly, completed within 4 months, which supports “weeks rather than years.” The reading's health guidance is general, not a substitute for medical advice; chest pain and palpitations can have medical causes, which is why paragraph 7 advises a check-up.
- Links: the NHS, Mental Health Foundation, Simply Psychology, Pompoli (PMC), and NICE pages appeared in search results in September 2026; none was fetched in full. Hindi and Arabic translations need a native speaker's check, as in all units; the least certain are ride it out (Arabic, Hindi), braced (Russian, Korean), and grounding (Chinese, Arabic, Spanish).