

Directions: In this section, you are going to read a passage with ten statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter. Answer the questions by marking the corresponding letter on *Answer Sheet 2*.

The American Workplace Is Broken. Here's How We Can Start Fixing It.

- A) Americans are working longer and harder hours than ever before. 83% of workers say they're stressed about their jobs, nearly 50% say work-related stress is interfering with their sleep, and 60% use their smartphones to check in with work outside of normal working hours. No wonder only 13% of employees worldwide feel engaged in their occupation.
- B) Glimmers(少许) of hope, however, are beginning to emerge in this bruising environment: Americans are becoming aware of the toll their jobs take on them, and employers are exploring ways to alleviate the harmful effects of stress and overwork. Yet much more work remains to be done. To call stress an epidemic isn't an exaggeration. The 83% of American employees who are stressed about their jobs—up from 73% just a year before—say that poor compensation and an unreasonable workload are their number-one sources of stress. And if you suspected that the workplace had gotten more stressful than it was just a few decades ago, you're right. Stress levels increased 18% for women and 24% for men from 1983 to 2009. Stress is also starting earlier in life, with some data suggesting that today's teens are even more stressed than adults.
- C) Stress is taking a significant toll on our health, and the collective public health cost may be enormous. Occupational stress increases the risk of heart attack and diabetes, accelerates the aging process, decreases longevity, and contributes to depression and anxiety, among numerous other negative health outcomes. Overall, stress-related health problems account for up to 90% of hospital visits, many of them preventable. Your job is "literally killing you," as The Washington Post put it. It's also hurting our relationships. Working parents say they feel stressed, tired, rushed and short on quality time with their children, friends and partners.
- D) Seven in 10 workers say they struggle to maintain work-life balance. As technology (and with it, work emails) seeps(渗入) into every aspect of our lives, work-life balance has become an almost meaningless term. Add a rapidly changing economy and an uncertain future to this 24/7 connectivity, and you've got a recipe for overwork, according to Phyllis Moen. "There's rising work demand coupled with the insecurity of mergers, takeovers, downsizing and other factors," Moen said. "Part of the work-life issue has to talk about uncertainty about the future."
- E) These factors have converged to create an increasingly impossible situation with many employees overworking to the point of burnout. It's not only unsustainable for workers, but also for the companies that employ them. Science has shown a clear correlation between high stress levels in workers and absenteeism(旷工), reduced productivity, disengagement and high turnover. Too many workplace policies effectively prohibit employees from developing a healthy work-life balance by barring them from taking time off, even when they need it most.
- F) The U.S. trails far behind every wealthy nation and many developing ones that have family-friendly work policies including paid parental leave, paid sick days and breast-feeding support, according to a 2007 study. The U.S. is also the only advanced economy that does not guarantee workers paid vacation time, and it's one of only two countries in the world that does not offer guaranteed paid maternity leave. But even when

employees are given paid time off, workplace norms and expectations that pressure them to overwork often prevent them from taking it. Fulltime employees who do have paid vacation days only use half of them on average.

- G) Our modern workplaces also operate based on outdated time constraints. The practice of clocking in for an eight-hour workday is a leftover from the days of the Industrial Revolution, as reflected in the then-popular saying, "Eight hours labor, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest."
- H) We've held on to this workday structure—but thanks to our digital devices, many employees never really clock out. Today, the average American spends 8.8 hours at work daily, and the majority of working professionals spend additional hours checking in with work during evenings, weekends and even vacations. The problem isn't the technology itself, but that the technology is being used to create more flexibility for the employer rather than the employee. In a competitive work environment, employers are able to use technology to demand more from their employees rather than motivating workers with flexibility that benefits them.
- I) In a study published last year, psychologists coined the term "workplace telepressure" to describe an employee's urge to immediately respond to emails and engage in obsessive thoughts about returning an email to one's boss, colleagues or clients. The researchers found that telepressure is a major cause of stress at work, which over time contributes to physical and mental burnout. Of the 300 employees participating in the study, those who experienced high levels of telepressure were more likely to agree with statements assessing burnout, like "I've no energy for going to work in the morning," and to report feeling fatigued and unfocused. Telepressure was also correlated with sleeping poorly and missing work.
- J) Harvard Business School professor Leslie Perlow explains that when people feel the pressure to be always "on," they find ways to accommodate that pressure, including altering their schedules, work habits and interactions with family and friends. Perlow calls this vicious cycle the "cycle of responsiveness": Once bosses and colleagues experience an employee's increased responsiveness, they increase their demands on the employee's time. And because a failure to accept these increased demands indicates a lack of commitment to one's work, the employee complies.
- K) To address skyrocketing employee stress levels, many companies have implemented workplace wellness programs, partnering with health care providers that have created programs to promote employee health and well-being. Some research does suggest that these programs hold promise. A study of employees at health insurance provider Aetna revealed that roughly one quarter of those taking in-office yoga and mindfulness classes reported a 28% reduction in their stress levels and a 20% improvement in sleep quality. These less-stressed workers gained an average of 62 minutes per week of productivity. While yoga and meditation(静思) are scientifically proven to reduce stress levels, these programs do little to target the root causes of burnout and disengagement. The conditions creating the stress are long hours, unrealistic demands and deadlines, and work-life conflict.
- L) Moen and her colleagues may have found the solution. In a 2011 study, she investigated the effects of implementing a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE) on the productivity and well-being of employees at Best Buy's corporate headquarters.
- M) For the study, 325 employees spent six months taking part in ROWE, while a control group of 334 employees continued with their normal workflow. The ROWE participants were allowed to freely determine when, where and how they worked—the only thing that mattered was that they got the job done. The results were striking. After six months, the employees who participated in ROWE reported reduced work-family

conflict and a better sense of control of their time, and they were getting a full hour of extra sleep each night. The employees were less likely to leave their jobs, resulting in reduced turnover. It's important to note that the increased flexibility didn't encourage them to work around the clock. "They didn't work anywhere and all the time—they were better able to manage their work," Moen said. "Flexibility and control is key," she continued.

36. Workplace norms pressure employees to overwork, deterring them from taking paid time off.
37. The overwhelming majority of employees attribute their stress mainly to low pay and an excessive workload.
38. According to Moen, flexibility gives employees better control over their work and time.
39. Flexibility resulting from the use of digital devices benefits employers instead of employees.
40. Research finds that if employees suffer from high stress, they will be less motivated, less productive and more likely to quit.
41. In-office wellness programs may help reduce stress levels, but they are hardly an ultimate solution to the problem.
42. Health problems caused by stress in the workplace result in huge public health expenses.
43. If employees respond quickly to their job assignments, the employer is likely to demand more from them.
44. With technology everywhere in our life, it has become virtually impossible for most workers to keep a balance between work and life.
45. In America today, even teenagers suffer from stress, and their problem is even more serious than grown-ups'.