



I. READING COMPREHENSION (12 marks)

Stan Burridge, 44, who lived on benefits for 15 years, tells how getting a job a year ago was worth much more than just money.

1. "I came through the care system as a kid, lived rough on the streets for five years and had issues including one major mental breakdown. When I came off the streets it was far easier to stay on benefits and do nothing. It almost became a dependency. I have spent about 15 years claiming benefits and there seemed to be a fear factor attached to letting that go and stepping in the big unknown.
2. I kept turning down jobs because my life meant I had never stuck at anything. What if the job didn't work out ? That would leave me with nothing. It was easier to stay on handouts.
3. Getting a job in a call centre has done a lot more for me than just giving me more money. I can now plan for the future. Since starting work I have a new carpet for my flat. I went on a holiday to Egypt – my first real holiday – paid for out of what I had earned. For the first time this Christmas I can afford some nice things for myself.
4. All these things were alien to me before. I had never taken so much control of my life. Now I'm proud to pay my own rent and cover all my bills and enjoy a decent social life. In some ways I was lucky there were people around me who gave me a little push in the right direction. Others may need the incentives the government will give them.
5. Getting up to work got me into a healthy routine. Mine is not the best-paid job, but it's not the worst-and it's one hundred times better than being on benefits. I still get a small amount from the government, but it's £100 a week less than the government would be paying me on full benefits.
6. Having the self-esteem and personal satisfaction of having a job ? Absolutely priceless !"

The Sun, Nov. 13, 2010 (Adapted)



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Tick (✓) the most suitable title to the text (1 mark)

- a) Staying on benefits helped save my life ☐
- b) Getting off benefits gave me my life back ☐
- c) Living on the streets made me turn into a criminal ☐

2. Focus on the first part of the text and pick out two (2) details showing that Stan's life as a child was extremely hard. (2 marks)

- a)
- b)

3. Answer the following question.

For 15 years, Stan refused to have a steady job. What was he afraid of ? (1 mark)

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.....

4. Tick (✓) the right alternative. (2 marks)

a) "Priceless" (paragraph 6) means almost the same as:

- i. worthless ☐
- ii. valuable ☐
- iii. free ☐

b) "... who gave me a little push in the right direction" (paragraph 4) means they

- i. helped and encouraged me ☐
- ii. threatened and bullied me ☐
- iii. obliged me to follow them ☐

5. Getting a job gave Stan both financial and psychological gains in addition to a decent life.

Complete the lists below with reference to the text. (4 marks)

| Financial gains | Psychological gains |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new carpet• Nice things for Christmas• Cover all his bills•• | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take control of his life• Pride• Healthy routine• Personal satisfaction•• |

6. Say what the words underlined in the text refer to. (2 marks)

- a) "that" (paragraph 1) refers to
- b) "That" (paragraph 2) refers to