

### **Instructions the essay**

Read the text below from the article “**Opinion: Simone Biles, mental health, and the pressure to be perfect**” and write a single response that addresses both questions. Use full sentences and paragraphs and respond to the questions directly. You have 60 minutes to complete this essay. Your essay should be between 250-400 words. Please stay within the word limit.

### **Reading Text**

I love the Olympics and was especially looking forward to this year's games. I was particularly looking forward to the women's gymnastics events in large part because I am in awe of Simone Biles. She might be the best athlete on the planet, in any sport, male or female.

Like many, I woke up to the news on July 27 that Biles had pulled out of the team competition. Initial reports said she had injured herself when she landed awkwardly after a vault. Later in the day, she made clear that she decided not to compete because she wanted to put her mental health first. The stress and pressure that she (and the world) was putting on herself had finally taken its toll. She was making unexpected mistakes, and she didn't want to seriously injure herself or hurt her team's chances of winning a medal.

While so many have applauded her courage, others have attacked her decision. Two radio hosts questioned why people said her decision to withdraw was brave. Mental health is invisible. We can't see the struggle in someone's mind the way we can see a broken bone. Because it's invisible, we feel we can judge it. We expect Olympic athletes to simply suck it up and drive on. I work with professionals who are under pressure to be perfect, and whether this pressure is real or imaginary, it eventually takes its toll.

### **Sample Questions for IP2 Transfer**

- How is “the pressure to be perfect” bad for our mental health? Refer to the text.
- What strategies do you have to maintain good mental health?