

Tattoos

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you have a tattoo?
If yes, what is it and where is it? If no, why not?
2. Do people with tattoos get treated differently in your country?
3. Name some reasons why people get tattoos.
4. Do you like tattoos? Why or why not?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. ponder | a) a small establishment that is not well known |
| ___ 2. rite of passage | b) lasting forever, not temporary |
| ___ 3. grief | c) to represent an idea or meaning |
| ___ 4. symbolize | d) asking for something or allowing something |
| ___ 5. permanent | e) deep sadness related to loss (especially after death) |
| ___ 6. permission | f) to think about for a while |
| ___ 7. consequences | g) how something or someone is viewed or described by others |
| ___ 8. discreet | h) a tradition that marks an achievement or point in life |
| ___ 9. plaster | i) not very noticeable |
| ___ 10. reputation | j) to cover all over |
| ___ 11. hygiene | k) the things or changes that could happen as a result |
| ___ 12. hole in the wall | l) cleanliness related to the body |

Reading

TATTOOS

To tattoo or not to tattoo?

1. Should I get a tattoo? This is a question many people **ponder** at some point in their lives.
2. In some cultures, a tattoo marks a **rite of passage**. Many people get a tattoo after a loved one dies. The pain of the needle is nothing in comparison to their **grief**.
3. Lovers often get tattooed at the same time. These matching tattoos sometimes outlast the relationships they **symbolize**. A person's beliefs are not always as **permanent** as their religious tattoos either.
4. In some countries, young people require parental **permission** to get a tattoo. Youth don't always consider the **consequences** of tattooing.
5. Would you hire someone with a large tattoo? Would you marry someone with a tattoo? What if the tattoo was of an ex-girlfriend or boyfriend?
6. Some people prefer **discreet** tattoos on an ankle or hip. Others **plaster** their entire bodies with tattoos. People even get tattoos on their faces and tongues.
7. Some tattoo parlors have a good **reputation**. Their tattoo artists care about **hygiene**. It's not wise to get a tattoo at a **hole in the wall**.

“Tattoos fulfill a need to inscribe the self as an individual.”

—Margo DeMello, anthropologist

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What question do many people ask at some point in their lives?
2. Why does the passage mention grief?
3. What does the passage say about tattoos that symbolize religion?
4. Which body parts are mentioned as places for tattoos?
5. What is another word for a respectable tattoo shop?

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. The tattoo parlor downtown has a good _____ for careful hygiene.
2. The hearts that are _____ all over his arms _____ the love he has for his children.
3. The fifteen-year-old asked for _____ to get a _____ tattoo on her foot.
4. *Tattoo Corner* is a _____ that hires artists with little experience.
5. One of the _____ of getting a large tattoo is that the color will fade over time.

B. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>1. The manager is <u>pondering</u> whether or not to hire someone new.</p> <p>a) asking about
b) talking about
c) thinking about
d) walking about</p> | <p>3. If you don't want a <u>permanent</u> tattoo, you can always get a temporary one.</p> <p>a) respected
b) painful
c) proper
d) lasting</p> | <p>5. Proper <u>hygiene</u> is one of the things young children need to learn before going to school.</p> <p>a) cleanliness
b) speech
c) drawing
d) behavior</p> |
| <p>2. A baby's baptism is an important <u>rite of passage</u> in some religions.</p> <p>a) tattoo
b) culture
c) ceremony
d) outfit</p> | <p>4. Robert's initial disbelief was followed by a period of <u>grief</u>.</p> <p>a) caring
b) belief
c) fear
d) sadness</p> | |

Discussion

1. What steps must be taken to ensure proper hygiene in a tattoo parlor?
2. Do you think older people regret the tattoos of their youth? Why or why not?
3. Would you watch (or have you watched) a reality show about a tattoo parlor? Why is this a popular subject?
4. Do large tattoos affect a person's chance of being hired? Explain your opinion.

Class Opinion

Walk around the class and ask your classmates questions. Write their answers in the chart below.

Classmate's name:	Should tattoos be seen or hidden?	Do you think getting a tattoo is worth the pain?	Would your friends and family approve of you having a tattoo?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

TATTOOS

To tattoo or not to tattoo?

1. Should I get a tattoo? This is a question many people _____ at some point in their lives.
2. In some cultures, a tattoo marks a _____. Many people get a tattoo after a loved one dies. The pain of the _____ is nothing in comparison to their _____.
3. Lovers often get tattooed at the same time. These matching tattoos sometimes outlast the relationships they _____. A person's beliefs are not always as _____ as their religious tattoos either.
4. In some countries, young people require parental _____ to get a tattoo. _____ don't always consider the _____ of tattooing.
5. Would you _____ someone with a large tattoo? Would you marry someone with a tattoo? What if the tattoo was of an ex-girlfriend or boyfriend?
6. Some people prefer _____ tattoos on an ankle or hip. Others _____ their entire bodies with tattoos. People even get tattoos on their faces and tongues.
7. Some tattoo parlors have a good _____. Their tattoo artists care about _____. It's not wise to get a tattoo at a _____.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about various reasons why people get tattoos. They learn related vocabulary and discuss topics such as hygiene in tattoo parlors and getting hired with a tattoo.

TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: tattoos, tattoo, body image, body, appearance, culture, identity, controversial

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 3. e | 5. b | 7. k | 9. j | 11. l |
| 2. h | 4. c | 6. d | 8. i | 10. g | 12. a |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote and make sure students know what an anthropologist is. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- Many people wonder if they should get a tattoo or not.
- People who have lost a loved one often get a tattoo.
- Sometimes people with religious tattoos change their beliefs.
- The ankle, hip, face and tongue are mentioned as places people get tattoos.
- A tattoo parlor is another word for a respectable tattoo shop.

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. reputation | 4. hole in the wall |
| 2. plastered, symbolize | 5. consequences |
| 3. permission, discreet | |

B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. c | 2. c | 3. d | 4. d | 5. a |
|------|------|------|------|------|

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Class Opinion

Have students walk around the class and ask their classmates questions. They should record their answers in the chart.

Listening

1. ponder
2. rite of passage, needle, grief
3. symbolize, permanent
4. permission, Youth, consequences
5. hire
6. discreet, plaster
7. reputation, hygiene, hole in the wall

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Parlor*, *Color*, and *Behavior*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Parlour*, *Colour*, and *Behaviour*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.