

Tattoo: Teachers' Notes and Tips - Upper Intermediate

1 Pre-reading Tasks

- a Give the task sheet to each student and ask them to match the word with the definition (task number 1). Get them to check with another student before providing feedback.
*(Key: scar - a mark that is left on the skin after a wound has healed
birthmark - a red or brown mark on a person's skin that has been there since they were born
tattoo - a picture or design that is marked permanently on a person's skin by making small holes in the skin with a needle and filling them with coloured ink
mole - a small dark brown mark on the skin, sometimes slightly higher than the skin around it
freckle - a small, pale brown spot on a person's skin, especially on their face, caused by the sun)*
- b Most students in the class will have a mole, freckles, a scar, etc. Ask them to work in pairs and tell each other how they feel about these marks (task number 2).

Tip: Be Sensitive to Students' Feelings

Some students may be embarrassed about obvious scars or birthmarks especially on the face so bear this in mind.

- c If someone has a tattoo, ask him/her whether they want to tell everyone why they chose to have a tattoo and the reason for the design. Otherwise ask someone, if they don't mind, to talk about their scar.
- d Tell students they're going to read about tattooing. In pairs get them to look at the statements to decide if they are true or false (task number 3). Make sure they're working together and using the task as a speaking activity.
- e Open class feedback: do students agree with each other's opinions?

Tip: Encourage Speculation

Getting students involved in the subject beforehand (and preparing true / false statements like these is very easy) means that when reading they'll focus more on the content rather than understanding every word or sentence.

2 First Reading Tasks

- a Now give each student the reading. Ask them to read the article and to confirm whether they were right about the true / false sentences.
- b Do students agree with Mark's comment that tattooing shouldn't be taken too seriously?

Tip: Encourage Students to React to the Text

Reading isn't just about answering comprehension questions. Don't let students be passive readers!

3 Second Reading Tasks

- a Point out that there are 13 words written in **bold**. Refer to the first one *So when did **this** start?* which appears in the second paragraph. Elicit that **this** is a pronoun which is used instead of a noun or noun phrase. What noun does it refer to? (*Mark's tattoos*).
- b Students continue with the other 12 words. Get them to do the task individually and then to check or get help from another student.

Tip: Raise Awareness of the Use of Pronouns

Understanding their use, especially at upper intermediate level, helps students to have more confidence in using them. Refer to this exercise when they next do a writing task.

- c Feedback:

Key

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| (1) it | a leaping dolphin |
| (2) this | people's view of tattoos |
| (3) there | the US |
| (4) this | now |
| (5) this | being covered in images of plants and creatures |
| (6) this | tattoos being outlawed |
| (7) that | having the shark tattooed |
| (8) them | the person (note use of plural as gender isn't referred to) who fell asleep |
| (9) that | being tattooed over a bone |
| (10) that | death after being tattooed |
| (11) that | Mark's advice |
| (12) those | the people who regret having had a tattoo |

4 Post-reading Tasks

- a So how do your students feel about tattoos? Write or project the following statements on the board:
- *Some of us are tempted to get a tattoo.*
 - *Half of us think people with tattoos look attractive.*
 - *Nobody thinks tattoos are sexy.*
 - *Two of us think getting a tattoo is stupid.*
 - *Most of us think tattoos are a waste of money.*
- b Elicit the questions needed to get the information, e.g. *Are you tempted to get a tattoo? Do you think people with tattoos look attractive?* etc.
- c Students then mingle and ask each other the questions.
- d Feedback: any surprise answers? Are any of the statements true about the class?

Tip: Link the Reading Task to the Speaking Task

Make sure that nobody is writing - this is a speaking task and an opportunity for students to voice their personal opinion. Encourage students to react to the information they hear: *Really? So do !!* etc

- e If your students seem interested in the topic, there is a lot of fascinating information about tattoos and tattooing on the Internet. Why not give the following questions for them to do in your school's computer room, or at home. Answers can be shared in the next class.

Internet Task Questions

Using the Internet find the answers to these questions about tattoos.

- a Is a tattoo permanent or can it be removed?
- b Who is Stalking Cat Dennis Avner?
- c How many tattoos does Bernie Moeller have?
- d How old is Otzi the Iceman, and where are his tattoos?
- e What is different about Japanese tattooing compared to Western designs?
- f What's the most amazing fact you can find about tattooing?