

Tattoos

Task 1 – Tattoo talk

- Are tattoos popular in your country?
- Do you know anyone who has a tattoo? If so, what is it?
- Do you think it's dangerous to have a tattoo?
- In the UK, you have to be over 18 to have a tattoo. How old do you have to be to have a tattoo in your country?
- Would you like to have a tattoo one day? Why/ not?
- Which famous people do you know that have tattoos?

Task 2 – Whose tattoo?

Can you match these famous people with the descriptions of their tattoos?

1) David Beckham	a. Five stars on her back to represent the members of her family.
2) Victoria Beckham	b. A butterfly in the middle of his chest and two birds on shoulders
3) Angelina Jolie	c. A colourful fairy, a daisy chain and a butterfly.
4) Britney Spears	d. The word 'Love' on the inside of her right ear.
5) Kate Moss	e. A tribal dragon on her left arm, Thai writing on her shoulder and a cross on her stomach.
6) Harry Styles	f. A small crown on her shoulder
7) Miley Cyrus	g. Crucifixion scene on back and his sons' names. His wife's name in Hindi.

Task 3 – Tattooing: Art of the people?

Before reading the text, answer these questions:

- Do you consider tattooing to be 'the art of the people'?
- In which situations do you think somebody may decide to remove a tattoo?
- What do you think the most popular designs are for tattoos in the UK ?

Now read the text.

Tattooing Trends Today

Tattooing today is more popular than ever before, with a large number of British under-35's sporting skin ink. Japanese and Chinese characters and loved one's names are among the most popular designs.

A long list of UK celebrities are gaining fame and recognition due to quirky tattoos, some with meaning and others none! Robbie Williams was traditionally decorated by a famous Maori artist, and David Beckham sports his children's names. An influx of tattooed celebrities have also announced decisions to have partners' names removed when their relationships turn out to be less permanent.

Personal art

Kirstie, 28 from Nottingham, explains what her tattoos mean to her, '...They are as much a part of me as anything else on my body.'

Ian, 35 from Essex, had been interested in China and the martial arts for a long time, '...it seemed almost inevitable that I'd choose a dragon... I'm also a huge fan of Bruce Lee – he was born in the year of the dragon. I have been thinking about a third... I love the work of Shige – a Japanese tattooist who works in Yokohama, Japan.'

Historical reminder

'I was living in Brazil spending a lot of time wearing bikinis, so having tattoos on your body becomes less important, almost just like wearing jewellery with clothes.'

I wouldn't choose the design now but I still like it because it was a present to me from friends and it is permanent reminder of that time of my life, and how much fun it was!' (Joanna, 24 from Glasgow)

'At the time it [the tattoo] represented freedom and excitement, a fantastic year in USA... I wouldn't have any more, in fact I am getting rid of the one I have. I am getting it lasered off. (ouch!!) It's expensive, very painful and a long process. It will probably take 18 months to get rid of it.' (Rebecca, 29 from Bristol)

Street art

Whether it is the most glamorous celebrity, or the likes of you and me, the people of the UK and the world have suffered the pain of the needle for the aesthetic pleasure of their tattoos for generations. No matter what the significance, those who get tattoos are expressing their tastes using their skin as the creative canvas. Love them or loathe them, tattooing is still very much the art of the people.

Discuss these questions with a partner:

- Is Kirstie happy that she had tattoos?
- Do you think that Ian has made a good decision to reflect his hobbies by having a tattoo connected to his interests?

- Do you think Joanna will keep her tattoo forever?
- How do you think Rebecca feels about removing her tattoo?

Task 4 – Design a tattoo

You are going to design a tattoo. First of all, decide who it is for. Then draw the tattoo in the box.

My tattoo is for _____ . I chose this design because.....

Task 5 – Tattoo trouble role play**A – The parent**

Your son / daughter has just arrived home with a tattoo on his / her lower neck. You have old fashioned views and believe that tattoos are ridiculous! You can't believe that your son / daughter has done such a crazy thing without asking your permission. You think that in a few years they will regret having the tattoo and you also think it will destroy their chances of finding work in the future.

B – The son/ daughter

You love tattoos and have wanted to have one for a long time. Finally you have done it and you think it is the most amazing tattoo you have ever seen. You are really happy with it. You didn't ask your parents for permission because you know they hate tattoos. The tattoo is on your lower neck so it will always be visible. (You decide what the design of the tattoo is.)