

## Tattoo: Teachers' Notes and Tips - Elementary

### 1 Pre-reading Tasks

- a Write or project the following definition on the board:  
*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.*
- b Go through the definition explaining / showing / miming the words students are having problems with and try to elicit *tattoo*.
- c It would be great to then have some pictures of (famous) people with different tattoos to interest the students, David Beckham is an obvious choice.
- d Get the students to ask each other:
- Do you have a tattoo?
  - Do you like tattoos? Why / why not?
  - Would you like a tattoo? Why / why not?

**Tip: Always Try to Personalize the Subject**

If some students have a tattoo, that's great – if possible they can show the others. If nobody has a tattoo, then get everyone to react to the idea of having one. How do they feel about tattoos?

- d Don't give out the reading yet but slowly read out the opening paragraph:  
*I have a friend called Mark ... and again mime the vocabulary: rolled up his sleeves, chest.* Repeat if necessary.
- e Then, working in pairs, ask students to think about the questions. They should write these down in their notebooks. Monitor and help, making sure the questions aren't too complicated.

**Tip: Help with the Grammar**

Question forms are always difficult. Elicit the fact that these questions can be about the past or the present. They can be about Mark and his tattoos or about tattoos in general. Remind students that questions can use *wh*-words, or be *yes/no* forms. Write a few examples on the board.

- f Once there's a good range of questions ask students to come up and write them on the board. Encourage self-correction.

### 2 First Reading Tasks

- a Now give each student the reading. Ask them to read the answers and to work out how many tattoos Mark has. (*seven*)

**Tip: Try and Give an Interesting Reason for Reading a Text**

Working out how many tattoos Mark has is a more interesting task than counting how many tattoos are mentioned in the text. The students can imagine what Mark's body looks like. Also, make sure students are just reading at this stage.

### 3 Second Reading Tasks

- a Students read through again and match their questions on the board with the answers Mark gives. They write these on the reading sheet.
- b Feedback: some of the students' questions may need to be modified a bit.

**Tip: Do the Task Yourself First**

Make a note of the different options for the questions. For example, the first question could be: *When did you start?* or *What was your first tattoo?* Likewise the third question could be *What's your last / latest tattoo?* or *What's your biggest tattoo?* or *What's your favourite tattoo?* Make sure students realise that there isn't just one correct answer.

**Tip: Avoid Mechanical Reading Comprehension Questions**

Students won't be motivated to read if they are always tested with questions afterwards. Writing these questions prepares students for what they are going to read. The matching task then helps them to understand the text better.

### 4 Post-reading Tasks

- a There will probably be some of Mark's answers that don't have a question. Students work out the questions and write these on the worksheet.
- b There may also be questions on the board that Mark hasn't answered. As a class, students can consider what the answers could be.
- c Ask students what the theme of all Mark's tattoos is (*the sea*). Can they remember what the designs were? (*Dolphin, fish, shark, etc*) Now tell students they are all going to be tattooed! Individually they have to
  - i choose a theme
  - ii decide what the designs will be
  - iii decide where they will have these designs on their body
- d **Speaking:** When they have some ideas put the students into groups of about four and get them to tell each other their chosen theme and designs. If a group thinks one of them has a crazy / interesting idea, they can share it with the class.

**Tip: Link the Reading to a Writing Task**

With their ideas from the speaking above, and using Mark's answers as a guide, students could write a short article about a person with lots of tattoos. What designs do they have and where? Why did they start? These articles could then be shared with the other students in a later lesson. A drawing of the tattoos, or the tattooed person, would be great!