

Hair: reading tasks

- 1 Look at the list of people below. Which do you associate with long or short hair? Write **L** or **S** next to the name.

monks	prisoners	prophets e.g. Jesus,
skinheads	Buddha	Moses, Mohammed
young women	footballer players	Rastafarians
young men	Sikhs	hippies
American Indians	older women	police officers
soldiers	older men	rock stars



- 2 The reading claims that the length of our hair represents our religious, political and cultural beliefs. Write three ideas you think the writer will say about hair. Read the text quickly. Are your ideas mentioned?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

- 3 Read the text a second time and answer the following questions. The number in brackets refers to the paragraph.

- Underline the words/phrases that show that the writer is guessing who the person is. (1)
- The writer was mistaken about 4 things - what are they? (2)
- What is the first symbolism associated with shaving the writer refers to? (3)
- What is the second symbolism associated with shaving the writer refers to? (4)
- What other symbolisms associated with shaving does the writer refer to? (5)
- Why is the word *ironically* used? (6)
- In what way is the seventh paragraph ironic too? (7)
- Do you think the last paragraph explains why hair is so symbolic? (8)

- 4 Discuss the following questions:

- The writer made the wrong assumption about the man in the film. Have you ever formed an opinion about someone you first met based on their hairstyle, and then later changed your mind about them?
- Would you ever consider drastically changing the length of your hair, and if you did, what would be the reaction of friends and family?
- Are there any other groups of people who are not mentioned in the text who have symbolically long or short hair? What about in your culture?
- Does having or not having a beard have similar religious, political or cultural significance in your culture? A moustache?