

Should I worry about how much sun I get?

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. In pairs or groups, answer these questions.

- What is your idea of a perfect sunny day?
- How do you protect your skin from the sun?
- Are you worried about the effects of the sun on your skin?

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

absorbs
protective

apply
reflects

concern
risk

effective
sunburn

exposed
sunscreen

1. A feeling of worry about something, especially one that many people have about an important issue, is a _____.
2. Something that provides safety against something harmful or dangerous is _____.
3. A _____ is the possibility that something unpleasant or dangerous might happen.
4. Something that works well and produces the intended result is _____.
5. If you are _____ to the weather, you are not protected from it.
6. _____ is a cream you can rub onto your skin to stop it from burning in the sun.
7. When you put a layer of something, such as cream, onto a surface, you _____ it.
8. If something takes in a gas, liquid, or other substance from its surface or the space around, it _____ it.
9. _____ is when you have red sore skin from staying in the sun too long.
10. When light shines back off something, it _____.

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b. Use some of the key words from the previous activity to complete these sentences. You may have to change the form of the word.

1. At a nail salon, they usually _____ two coats of nail polish.
2. Be sure to tell the doctor if you have any _____ about your health.
3. What's the most _____ argument to win the debate?
4. Black objects _____ light, which changes into heat.
5. White objects _____ light, so they feel cooler.
6. There is always some _____ when you invest in the stock market.

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- 1 'I can't help myself; I'm in love with the summertime,' Divine Comedy singer Neil Hannon once sang – and though other people may agree, it's probably fair to say that sunny afternoons come with some concerns these days. We're all aware that we probably should use SPF 50 more often, but is the sun somehow ... hotter now?
- 2 Dr Derrick Phillips, who works for the British Skin Foundation, says that being in the sun "without the use of high-factor sunscreen or protective clothing" is dangerous for people's health. He also says that the amount of sun we get over a lifetime can have adverse effects on the skin and increases the risk of skin cancers. Also, the skin becomes less effective at repairing itself over time, so past sun exposure is linked to your present risk of skin cancer.
- 3 We're exposed to two forms of ultraviolet rays from the sun: UVA and UVB. UVA can go through clouds and window glass, so it's still a concern if you're in the office, or there's a break in the direct sun on a hot day. UVB is highest during the summer months and is especially dangerous when the sun is high in the sky around midday or in areas where the ozone layer is thin, like Australia.
- 4 UVA is present all year round, goes deeper into the skin and damages what keeps it looking youthful. "UVA is responsible for 80% of the signs of skin ageing," says Phillips. Both can cause cancer, but UVB is worse. Short exposure can lead to the development of melanoma, a type of skin cancer, while long-term exposure over time is associated with other skin cancers that usually start later on in life.
- 5 So, what's the solution? "Sunscreen protects the skin from the harmful effects of UV radiation," says Phillips. "Studies have shown that most people do not apply enough sunscreen to get the level of protection on the label. To keep your family safe, we recommend using sunscreen with at least SPF30 and five-star UVA protection. It should be applied every two hours and more frequently if you are swimming or doing any activities that will cause you to sweat." In other words, follow the instructions on the bottle, and do it before you go out, as it can take 15 minutes to be absorbed into the skin.
- 6 For your clothes to protect you, consider what you're wearing. An average cotton shirt provides poor protection – with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) level of about 5 – compared to sun-protective clothing that can offer more protection, from UPF 30 to 50+. Long-sleeved, loose-fitting clothes with a high neck are a good idea, as are a broad-brimmed UPF-rated hat and sunglasses. The Skin Cancer Foundation advises that brighter and darker-coloured clothes offer better protection as they prevent more rays from getting to you. If you're caught without sunscreen in the beer garden, consider having a fruity drink instead: one small study suggests that alcohol increases the risk of sunburn while vitamins C and E together may offer some protection from it.
- 7 Finally, there is a good reason to pack a good old-fashioned book in your suitcase rather than bringing a tablet to read on holiday: tablets can reflect the sun's UV rays back into you. Oh, and you probably shouldn't be going to tanning salons at all. But the Divine Comedy never wrote a song about those anyway.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What does Dr Phillips say is dangerous for people's health?
2. What are the two types of radiation from the sun?
3. Which type of radiation is responsible for 80% of the signs of ageing?
4. Which type of radiation is more likely to cause cancer?
5. What can protect people from UV radiation?
6. How frequently should you reapply sunscreen?
7. What kinds of clothing give the best protection against UV?
8. How does alcohol affect your risk of sunburn?
9. Which vitamins may help protect the skin from sunburn?

4 Key language

a. Match the two parts of each adjective from the article.

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. high- | a. term |
| 2. long- | b. fashioned |
| 3. five- | c. fitting |
| 4. long- | d. brimmed |
| 5. loose- | e. star |
| 6. broad- | f. sleeved |
| 7. old- | g. factor |

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b. Write the adjective from task a that matches each definition.

1. top quality _____
2. clothing which is comfortable and not tight _____
3. something from the past that still exists today _____
4. a hat with a wide edge to protect the face and neck well _____
5. continuing to exist or have an effect for a long time in the future _____
6. used with UPF clothing to refer to the degree of protection it gives _____
7. covering your arms to the wrist _____

c. Choose three of the adjectives above and write personalised sentences using them.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Some UV exposure from the sun is OK because we get Vitamin D.”
- “You only need to wear sunscreen and protective clothing at midday.”
- “Wearing protective clothing is more effective than sunscreen.”

6 In your own words

a. Use an internet search engine to find more information about the effects of sun exposure.

- What are some ways the sun can damage the skin?
- What are some warning signs of skin cancer?
- What are some other ways people can protect themselves in the sun?

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinion about the issue.