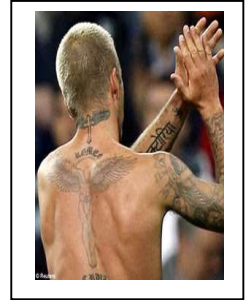


## Tattoo torment<sup>1</sup>

What do David Beckham, Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp have in common? Not much you might think... apart from the fact that they're all the proud owners of tattoos. So, what's the appeal?



### Before you listen

#### Pre-listening activity

**Read over these questions and discuss them with a partner. Then listen once and compare your answers.**

1. What are the pros and cons of tattoos?
2. What are some of the most popular tattoos in your country?
3. Which famous people in Spain have tattoos?

### After you listen

#### Comprehension task

**Answer the following questions to check your comprehension.**

1. How many tattoos did the mummy have on it?
2. What did Native Americans use tattoos for?
3. What can a butterfly symbolise?
4. What can the sun be used to represent?
5. What can happen to the ink from a tattoo over time?
6. Why did Angelina Jolie get rid of her "Billy Bob" tattoo?
7. Why is David Beckham's Hindi tattoo the subject of debate?

#### Language task

**Sentence completion/Fill in the gaps.**

**The following sentences have been taken from the recording. Complete the sentences with the suitable word or words.**

1. In 1991, a \_\_\_\_\_-year-old mummy was discovered in the Alps.
2. The first written record of tattooing was found in a Japanese book \_\_\_\_\_.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.hotenglishmagazine.com](http://www.hotenglishmagazine.com).

3. In Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, Buddhist monks have used tattoos to ward off \_\_\_\_\_ for centuries.
4. Maori tribes use tattoos to mark children's rites of passage \_\_\_\_\_.
5. For many, it's a form of personal expression – a way of making a statement about your personality, an \_\_\_\_\_ of yourself.
6. Some of the most popular tattoos include roses, \_\_\_\_\_, dragons, lions, butterflies and \_\_\_\_\_, and each one represents something special.
7. Others get tattoos as a \_\_\_\_\_ against society.
8. Some do it because they think it's attractive, or to draw attention to a particular part of their body (the \_\_\_\_\_, for example).
9. The big disadvantage with tattoos is that they're fairly \_\_\_\_\_.
10. In a few cases, it's all been a terrible mistake... especially if the tattoo is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Johnny Depp had "Winona forever" [dedicated to his girlfriend Winona Ryder] tattooed on his \_\_\_\_\_, but later had to change it after they split up.

### Classroom debate

1. If you had a tattoo, what would it be of? Why?
2. Do you know anyone with a tattoo? What is it? What do you think of it?
3. What's the worst / best tattoo you've ever seen?

## Transcript

What do David Beckham, Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp have in common? Not much you might think... apart from the fact that they're all the **proud owners** of tattoos. So, what's the appeal?

Tattooing has been practised for thousands of years. In 1991, a 5,300-year-old **mummy** was discovered in the Alps. He had more than 50 tattoos on various parts of his body. The first written record of tattooing was found in a Japanese book from the year 297 AD. In Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, Buddhist monks have used tattoos to **ward off** evil spirits for centuries. Maori tribes use tattoos to mark children's **rites of passage** into adulthood. And Native Americans wore tattoos to indicate which tribe they belonged to.

So, why are tattoos so popular these days? For many, it's a form of personal expression – a way of **making a statement** about your personality, an inner vision of yourself. Some of the most popular tattoos include roses, stars, dragons, lions, butterflies and snakes, and each one represents something special. For example, butterflies can symbolise youth and **rejuvenation**, a lion can be considered a symbol of strength and power, and the sun is often used to represent life, light and **fertility**.

Others get tattoos as a way of rebelling against society – of setting themselves apart, or as **a badge of social rejection**. Some do it because they think it's attractive, or to **draw attention to** a particular part of their body (the lower back, for example). Others do it to identify themselves with a particular group (many members of the Yakuza (the Japanese mafia) wear tattoos). And some do it for fun, as a result of **peer pressure** or in a moment of drunken stupidity.

The big disadvantage with tattoos is that they're fairly difficult to **remove**. And this can pose problems if they're no longer wanted. While having a tattoo may have been a good idea at the time, the **ink** on a tattoo can **fade** over the years, a person's body may change shape and **stretch** the tattoo, or the owner of the tattoo may decide that it's no longer part of the image they want to project. In a few cases, it's all been a terrible mistake... especially if the tattoo is misspelled. Some examples of poorly spelt tattoos include: "Only God will judge me. / Tomarrow never knows. / I have no enermies. / To young to die. / I'm awsome!" [sic]

Even the stars get it wrong sometimes. Johnny Depp had "Winona forever" [dedicated to his girlfriend Winona Ryder] tattooed on his upper arm, but later had to change it after they **split up**. It now reads, "**wino** forever". Angelina had "Billy Bob" tattooed on her upper arm, but later had to have it surgically removed after they separated. And David Beckham's tattoo of his wife's name (Victoria) in **Hindi** is the subject of a debate over whether it's a misspelling or not. The president of the UK Hindi Committee (Padmesh Gupta) claims that it spells out "vihctoria".

So, will you be getting a tattoo?

## Glossary

### **The proud owner of** *exp*

If you are the “proud owner of” something, you have something that you really like and that you are pleased with

### **A mummy** *n*

A well-preserved body (sometimes because it has been in ice)

### **To ward off** *phr vb*

If something is used to “ward off” evil spirits, that thing is used to make evil spirits go away

### **A rite of passage** *exp*

A ritual performed in some cultures to celebrate the time when a child becomes an adult

### **To make a statement** *exp*

To communicate an idea without using words

### **Rejuvenation** *n*

The act of making you young again – of restoring youth

### **Fertility** *n*

The ability to produce babies / offspring; the power of reproduction

### **A badge of social rejection** *exp*

Something you wear / have that says that you don't like society

### **To draw attention to** *exp*

If A “draws your attention to” B, A attracts you to B and makes you look at it or notice it

### **Peer pressure** *n*

If someone feels “peer pressure”, they feel an obligation to do something because other people from their class / group / social group / age do it

### **To remove** *vb*

To eliminate; to delete; to make go away

### **Ink** *n*

The coloured substance used to draw / paint / make tattoos

### **To fade** *vb*

If a colour “fades”, it loses its colour and becomes less intense

### **To stretch** *vb*

If something is “stretched”, it becomes longer / bigger / wider, etc.

### **To split up** *phr vb*

To separate

### **A wino** *n informal*

Someone who drinks a lot of wine

### **Hindi** *adj*

A form of Hindustani, an official language of India, and the most widely spoken language of northern India

## Answer key

### Comprehension task:

1. It had more than 50 tattoos on various parts of his body.
2. Native Americans wore tattoos to indicate which tribe they belong to.
3. A butterfly can symbolize youth and rejuvenation.
4. The sun is often used to represent life, light, and fertility.
5. It can fade/disappear over the years.
6. Because she and her husband separated.
7. Because some people think it is a misspelling.

### Fill in the gaps:

1. 5,300
2. From the year 297 AD
3. Evil spirits
4. Into adulthood
5. Inner vision
6. Stars, snakes
7. Way of rebelling
8. Lower back
9. Difficult to remove
10. misspelled
11. upper arm