

TRACE READING EXERCISE

INSIDE YOUR SKIN

- 1 The skin is an organ, just like the brain, the heart and the stomach, and since it's an external organ, it's the most visible one. The appearance of the skin is a fundamental part of how people present themselves to the world. However, people have highly subjective ideas about how skin should look. Some people avoid the sun because they have the notion that light-colored skin makes them more attractive, while others allow their skin to darken in order to imply that they have enough leisure time to relax in the sun. Makeup is sometimes used to give the skin a uniform look. Markings on the skin, such as tattoos, are another way people alter their appearance in order to tell the world who they are, or who they think they are. But what is the skin's actual physical function?
- 2 First of all, skin helps protect us from extreme temperatures, damaging sunlight, and harmful chemicals. It also contains elements that help the body fight off infection. In addition, the skin manufactures vitamin D, which helps the body use sunlight to build healthy bones. The rich supply of nerves just under the surface of the skin provides another important function –the ability to sense changes in temperature and feel when something touches the body. This sense of touch helps the brain know what is happening in the outside world. At the same time, skin allows parts of the body to move freely.
- 3 The skin is made up of three layers. The outer layer, called the 'epidermis', contains a tough material called 'keratin' which is also found in the hair and nails. This strong covering is crucial in protecting the body. The epidermis is constantly growing as the mature outer part is rubbed off and new skin grows to replace it. As new skin takes five weeks to reach the surface, the outermost layer is actually all dead skin. This protective coating varies in thickness on different parts of the body. For example, it is ten times thicker on the soles of the feet compared to the skin around the eyes since it needs to protect us from constant impact with the ground while walking.
- 4 The layer of skin below the epidermis is called the 'dermis'. The way it is constructed gives the skin its strength and also allows it to stretch when necessary. In addition, the rich blood flow through this layer helps the body regulate its temperature by increasing blood flow to the skin to allow heat to escape when it's hot outside, or by decreasing blood flow to raise the body's temperature when it's cold.
- 5 Under the dermis is another layer called the 'subcutis'. It includes a sheet of fat which serves as a reserve supply of energy in case the body experiences a food shortage. The fat also protects the body from sudden changes in heat and cold, and defends the body against injury from knocks and falls. The skin is a truly amazing organ, one which both connects us with and protects us from the outside world.

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1. What is the purpose of the text?
A) to explain the importance of keeping the skin healthy
B) to show how people use the skin to present themselves to the world
C) to describe the functions of the various layers of the skin

2. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
A) A person's skin tells the world something about them.
B) People have different opinions about skin color.
C) Changing the appearance of the skin is easy to do.

3. In paragraph III, the word "**it**" refers to ---.
A) the epidermis
B) the mature outer part
C) the new part

4. In paragraph III, the words "**soles**" means ---.
A) bottom
B) top
C) sides

5. All three layers of skin covering the body ---.
A) serve an important function
B) contain keratin
C) contain a certain amount of dead skin

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