

Lessons 3–4 **The art of henna**

- On what occasions do women use henna? Why is henna part of the Arabic tradition? Can men use henna?

Reading

1 Skim the article.



A _____
The henna plant has been used to decorate the body for thousands of years. The earliest evidence of this comes from Egyptian mummies whose hair and nails were stained with henna. Henna was used widely, for example, in the Roman Empire, Ancient Egypt, other parts of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Asia. It was a popular adornment for the rich and was also used by the poor to decorate their bodies because they could not afford jewellery.

B _____
Henna is part of the Arab world's culture and heritage. People in the desert have used henna for centuries. The henna leaves were collected, ground into a paste, then mixed with other ingredients, such as warm water, lemon juice, tea, sugar and essential oils. The dark paste can be used to decorate hands and feet, as well as to dye leather, silk, wool or hair. Henna paste was originally left on the palms and soles of the feet for its cooling effect, but as the paste comes away it leaves a stain on the skin – this probably sparked the idea of using henna for beautification.

Henna is used for special occasions such as weddings, engagements and Eid. The most popular of the traditions is the Henna Night where the bride, her family, relatives and friends get together to celebrate the wedding to come. The bride covers her hands and feet with designs ranging from simple shapes to intricate geometric patterns. The bridal

patterns can take hours and are often done by multiple henna artists.

Tradition suggests that for as long as the henna stain appears on the bride, she doesn't have to do any housework! Also, the darker the stain, the better the marriage! So you can imagine why the bride would want the stain to come out dark and last as long as possible.

C _____
Henna is considered a herb with its oil, bark and seeds rich in healing qualities. It is used topically and usually not eaten. In ancient times, it was applied to the skin surface for such ailments as headaches, stomach pains, burns and open wounds. It can also be a sunblock and has been used on the noses of animals to prevent sunburn.

D _____
Today, henna's popularity is global, mainly because of emigration and social media. Modern henna artists keep the tradition alive by developing new techniques, methods and patterns. In the UAE, popular designs include intricate flowers, ribbons and net-like arrangements. There is also a growing trend to use gold temporary henna patterns but these are reserved for very special occasions.

2 Write the sub-headings in the correct place in the article on page 30.

- 1 Henna Today
- 2 Traditions
- 3 The Origins of Henna
- 4 Medicinal Properties

3 Scan the text and answer the questions below.

- 1 Which of the following healing qualities does henna have?
 - a It helps you to sleep.
 - b It makes your skin soft.
 - c It relieves pain.
 - d It relaxes muscles.
- 2 Which of the words below is a synonym of the word *adornment*?
 - a to decorate
 - b dress
 - c rich
 - d design
- 3 List three ingredients that were added to henna:
 - a _____
 - b _____
 - c _____
- 4 The word *topically* in paragraph C means ...
 - a interesting
 - b eaten
 - c on the skin's surface
 - d ancient times

Reading strategy

Think about what the reading task is asking you to do and what strategy to use. Do you need to skim or scan?

Speaking 21st

4 In groups, discuss the following questions about the article.

- 1 What did you know about henna before and did you learn anything new?
- 2 Was the language difficult?
- 3 Who do you think would read this type of text?
- 4 What is the author's opinion about the future of the art of henna? Is it positive, negative, neutral or not clear?
- 5 Explain to your partner why you think this is the author's opinion.

Reading

5 Look at the reading text again. Underline the linking words that have been used.

Writing

6 Write a 150-word summary of *The Art of Henna*.

Writing tip


In reading and writing, we use different linking words to make it easier for the reader to follow the ideas. Linking words can be used to *help sequence, add information and give examples*.

Lessons 5–6 Weddings

- Look at the picture. What can you see? What does it represent?
- Have you ever been to a wedding?



Listening

- 1 You will hear a father and son discussing the differences between traditional and modern Emirati weddings. What words/expressions do you think you will hear? What differences do you think they will talk about?
- 2  Listen to the conversation and make notes using the graphic organiser below.



| | Now | Then |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | <i>friends, family, neighbours</i> | <i>fewer guests, close family, neighbours</i> |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

Language Focus

Use of English

When we want to talk about **repeated** actions in the past which don't happen now, we can use:

would/used to + infinitive

People used to have big weddings in the past.

The groom's family would give a big dowry to the bride.

We didn't use to have many people at the wedding party.

Only **used to** can be used with stative verbs.

I used to have a cat when I was younger.

If you're not sure, use **used to**.

Listening strategy

Don't try to listen to and write every word. Focus on key words.

- 3 Look at the pictures and talk about what people used to/would do in the past.



People used to travel by horse and carriage a long time ago.



Vocabulary

- 4 These words and expressions can help you discuss the differences between traditional weddings and modern weddings. In pairs, explain the meanings of the words.

venue tie the knot expense limit (spending) fund
groom honeymoon event bride dowry lavish (gifts)

Speaking 21st

- 5 Look at the graphic organiser you used in Activity 2. Use this to help you plan what you want to say about the differences between traditional weddings and modern weddings. Use the mind map below to record your ideas.

Speaking tip

Mind maps are useful when you want to plan what to say.



- 6 Using the mind map above, imagine you are a father and son, or a mother and daughter, having a conversation about the differences between weddings in the past and now.

I remember when the bride used to wear a green dress.

Really? How strange! I'm going to wear white.