
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Tattoos



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Rob

Hello. This is 6 Minute English, and I'm Rob.

Sam

I'm Sam. Hello!

Rob

Now, Sam, we're going to be talking about tattoos. Are you a fan?

Sam

Of tattoos? Well, I don't have one, but they can be quite impressive works of art.

Rob

Well, I'm not that keen on tattoos – I mean, who wants things drawn on their body?!

Sam

It sounds like you need some convincing, Rob! Maybe our discussion today will change your mind.

Rob

Maybe. But as you're a fan of them, here's a question for you to answer. According to the Guinness World Records, the record for the most tattooed person in the world goes to Lucky Diamond Rich from New Zealand. Do you know how much of his body is covered by tattoos? Is it...

- a) 80%?
- b) 90%? Or
- c) 100%?

What do you think, Sam?

Sam

Well, it's got to be 100% if he is the most tattooed man, surely?

Rob

Not necessarily, but, we'll see if you're right at the end of the programme. Now let's talk more about tattoos. I know many people have them. Sometimes it's a picture of an animal,

like a small gecko, sometimes it's words like 'I love you' or the name of a loved one. And then there are the huge designs spread across someone's back, chest or arm - like footballer David Beckham has.

Sam

Well, he's no stranger to a tattoo parlour. A **parlour** is the name of the shop where a tattoo artist draws a tattoo on you with ink and a needle.

Rob

Needles! Ouch!

Sam

OK, you need some convincing, so let's hear from Lucie Parfitt, YouTuber and tattoo fan. Here she is speaking on the BBC's Smart Consumer podcast...

Lucie Parfitt, YouTuber

I'm quite a **creative person** and ever since I first discovered tattoos, I thought it was a really cool way of **expressing yourself**. I'm quite a visual person as well, so for me it really, like, just looked really cool and it made me think more about my own, like, personality and how I could express that in creative ways.

Rob

Right, so, Lucie describes herself as a creative person. When you're **creative** you imaginative and like to experiment with new ideas.

Sam

Yes, Rob. And tattoos are a good way to be creative – trying out different designs and colours - it's a good way to express yourself. Here, **to express yourself** means 'to show how you feel in a particular way'.

Rob

OK, so some people express themselves through singing or wearing particular clothing, but here she's expressing herself through the images on her skin. But what happens if you want change what you want to express?

Sam

Well, then it's time for a new tattoo!

Rob

OK, well I know that the tattoo industry is **big business** now – which means it's 'popular and making lots of money'. I've heard that one in five people now have a tattoo.

Sam

Not you yet, Rob! But it has certainly become a trend in recent years and it's something tattoo artist Lee Clements has noticed. Also speaking on the BBC's Smart Consumer podcast, he explains why he thinks that is....

Lee Clements, tattoo artist

The thing for me that has obviously changed massively over the last, possibly, ten years is you see a lot of celebrities getting tattooed. With that comes the fact that you're going to get people who want to copy them or it becomes almost like a fashion thing, so we do see certain tattoos, sort of, becoming a trend and... yeah, so I guess it kind of **dilutes** that value a little bit, yeah.

Rob

Ah so it's celebrities – famous, well-known people from TV, film and fashion – that have possibly driven the trend. People want to copy them – or it's what he says is 'a fashion thing', so you have a tattoo because it's **fashionable**, which means it's 'popular at a particular time'.

Sam

And one of the down sides – the negative things – about just having one to be fashionable is it **dilutes** the individuality of having one. **Dilute** means to 'make something less strong or less valuable'.

Rob

Well, I'm not going to get one anytime soon – except maybe a big six on my arm to remind me that we only have 6 minutes for this programme so I'd better reveal the answer to the question I asked you earlier. According to Guinness World Records, the record for the most tattooed person in the world goes to Lucky Diamond Rich from New Zealand. Did you know how much of his body is covered by tattoos?

Sam

And I said 100%.

Rob

Well done, Sam. That is correct. He has held the certified record since 2006 of being 100% tattooed. This includes tattoos inside his eyelids, mouth and ears.

Sam

Wow! I wonder who gets to see those!

Rob

OK well, now it's time to recap the vocabulary we've discussed today starting with a **parlour**.

Sam

That's the name for a shop or room where certain businesses carry out their trade – such as a tattoo parlour, a massage parlour or an ice cream parlour.

Rob

A **creative person** is someone who uses imagination and experiments with new ideas.

Sam

And when you **express yourself**, it means you 'show outwardly how you feel and what you're thinking'.

Rob

If something is **big business** it is an activity that is currently popular and making lots of money.

Sam

And something that is **fashionable** is popular. And when something becomes popular it can **dilute** its value or uniqueness – so it becomes less strong or less valuable.

Rob

OK, thank you, Sam. That's all for now but there's plenty more on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. If you can't remember the address, why not tattoo it on your arm?! You can also find us on social media and on our app. Goodbye for now!

Sam

Bye!

VOCABULARY

parlour

name for a shop or room where certain businesses carry out their trade – such as a tattoo parlour, a massage parlour or an ice cream parlour

creative person

someone who uses imagination and experiments with new ideas

express yourself

show outwardly how you feel and what you're thinking

big business

activity that is currently popular and making lots of money

fashionable

popular at a particular time

dilute

make something less strong or less valuable