

## **Love them or hate them, tattoos are really popular nowadays in the UK. What do you think of tattoos?**

In Britain, tattoos used to be seen mainly on sailors, prisoners and bikers and were considered as a sign of being a rebel. However, now they are popular with all kinds of people and it's pretty normal to have a tattoo these days.

### **Which design?**

Japanese and Chinese characters, and loved ones' names are among the most popular designs today. Mario, who runs his own tattoo parlour, says 'I have more women than men customers. Women often prefer smaller designs like stars, flowers, cherubs and men are into much bigger images.' Many well known Brits have tattoos. Here are some of them:

- David Beckham has a crucifixion scene and his kids' names on his back. He has a tattoo in Hindi of his wife's name.
- Victoria Beckham has stars on her back to symbolise the members of her family.
- Robbie Williams has a lion on his right arm, Maori designs on his left arm, a French phrase on his collar bone, the musical notes to 'all you need is love' on lower his back, 'I love you mother' on his arms, 2 birds on stomach and many more!
- Kate Moss has a small crown on her shoulder.
- Samantha Cameron, wife of the British Prime Minister, has a dolphin tattooed on her ankle.

### **Tattoo events**

There are annual tattoo events that attract thousands of visitors such as the International London Tattoo Convention and the Brighton Tattoo Convention. At these events you can get a tattoo done or see human bodies completely covered in tattoos.

Chris, 18, from Stratford attended the Brighton Tattoo Convention last year. What's his advice for someone thinking of having a tattoo done? 'Fashions change but tattoos are forever. Make sure that you choose a design that you like.'

### **Age**

Tattoos are not just for the young. Many people are now going for their first tattoo in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s.

"My dad got a tattoo done for his 50th birthday. I thought it was going to look rubbish but it's actually pretty cool."

Lewis, from Middlesbrough

### **History**

A professor of sociology has studied the history of tattooing in the West. According to the professor, it was fashionable for rich people to have small tattoos in 19th-century Europe. These tattoos were designs which represented their families. The professor explains that tattoos have gone in and out of fashion over the years. Very rich people had tattoos before they became a symbol of working class masculinity. Now they are being reinvented as a middle-class symbol.