

Changing ideas of beauty

Topic

Vitiligo and perceptions of beauty

Aims

- To encourage students to question their perception of what is beautiful and become more tolerant of difference
- To practise reading for specific information (true/false)
- To revise a range of tenses that students should know at B1 level
- To help students structure and write a biography-type text

Age/level

Adults/older teens B1/Pre-Intermediate

Time

45–60 minutes

Materials

Worksheet (two pages)

Introduction

This lesson was devised to mark World Vitiligo Day on 25 June. However, it could be used at any time of year as this is not specifically mentioned.

The lesson begins with students looking at a photo of a young woman with vitiligo and discussing their reactions to the photo. They then go on to read about a model with vitiligo, Chantelle Brown-Young (also known as Winnie Harlow), and discover what makes her special. The lesson reviews a range of tenses that might be used in a biography of a living person and looks at how to organise such a text, before the students go on to write their own.

Procedure

1. Lead-in (5 minutes)

Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to look at the photo and discuss the questions.

Feed back as a class. The young woman's skin is caused by an autoimmune condition where patches of skin turn white. It may be genetic, but is definitely not catching. Sometimes the condition may improve on its own, but there is no actual cure. It affects all skin colours, but is obviously more noticeable on darker skin.

2. Reading for gist (5 minutes)	<p>Ask students to read the text fairly quickly and pick out five facts about Chantelle. Let students compare their answers in pairs or small groups.</p> <p>There is no key, as answers may vary considerably.</p> <p>As a follow-up, you could ask one or two students to tell the class the facts they chose, and ask them why these facts seemed important.</p>
3. Reading for specific information (5–10 minutes)	<p>Ask the students to read the text again and decide if the statements are true or false. Let them check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.</p> <p>Key:</p> <p>a) False – she developed it at the age of four. b) False – there is no cure. c) True – she moved school several times. d) False – she didn't win the competition. e) True – Winnie Harlow is her professional name.</p>
4. Discussion (5–10 minutes)	<p>Ask students to discuss the question in small groups, then briefly discuss as a class.</p>
5. Focus on grammar (15–20 minutes)	<p>Ask the students to find an example of each of the tenses in exercise 5 in the text. They should already be familiar with these tenses, and the intention is to revise their use.</p> <p>Note that there are some passive constructions in the text. It is not suggested that the lesson should focus on these.</p> <p>Check that students are familiar with the form of each of these tenses.</p> <p>Key: (all possible answers)</p> <p>1. present simple</p> <p>She <u>is</u> the first supermodel with the skin condition, which <u>causes</u> areas of skin to lose their colour.</p> <p>No one really <u>knows</u> why one per cent of people <u>have</u> this skin condition, and there <u>is</u> no real cure.</p> <p>Her professional name now <u>is</u> Winnie Harlow, and she <u>has</u> nearly three million followers on Instagram.</p> <p>2. present continuous</p> <p>Little by little, she <u>is changing</u> people's ideas about what beauty is.</p> <p>3. present perfect</p> <p>... but it <u>has made</u> her famous.</p>

4. past simple

At the age of four she started to develop patches of white skin.

The other kids often called her a 'cow', because of the way her skin looked. She moved school several times and finally left school at 16. From now on, she decided, she would be proud of her skin.

She posted photos of herself on ...

... a Canadian Youtube star, Shannon Boodram, who asked her to be in a music video.

It was while she was doing that that her really 'big break' happened. Tyra Banks asked her to be on *America's Next Top Model*.

She didn't win, but she had become famous.

5. past continuous

It was while she was doing that that her really 'big break' happened.

6. Past perfect

She didn't win, but she had become famous.

6.

Then ask the students to match the sentences they have underlined with the meanings in exercise 6. Note that these meanings do not cover all the possible meanings of these tenses, but they do match with the meanings used in the article.

Depending on how confident your students are with these tenses, you may need to do more or less checking that they understand.

Key:

- A. Something which happened before now, which has an impact on the present – present perfect
- B. Something that was in progress in the past when something else happened – past continuous
- C. Something that happened before another action in the past – past perfect
- D. Something in progress at the moment – present continuous
- E. Something which is generally or always true – present simple
- F. Something which happened at a specific point in the past – past simple

Extra practice: If you feel that your students need extra practice, you could ask them to write six sentences about their life using each of the six tenses.

7. Focus on organisation	<p>Ask students to match the paragraphs with the descriptions. Explain that this could be a good way to organise a biography, though of course, it may vary slightly depending on when the most interesting things in the person's life actually happened.</p> <p>Key:</p> <p>A-2 B-4 C-1 D-3 E-6 F-5</p>
8. Writing	<p>Using the paragraph plan from exercise 7 (or similar) and a variety of tenses, students write a similar text about another famous person.</p> <p>Depending on the time available, you could ask students to either research facts about a person or to write about someone they already know about.</p>

Contributed by

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