

Skin: The Great Protector

Your body is constantly under attack. Dirt and germs surround your body. Only one thing stands between dirt and the organs inside your body-skin.

The Largest Organ

Skin may not seem very important, but it is. It protects your body from burns, dirt, germs, and dangerous rays from the sun. It keeps fluids inside your body. And it contains all the nerves that allow you to feel things.

Skin is the largest organ in your body. If you stretched out an adult's skin into a flat sheet, it would cover an area of about 21 square feet. A square foot is a square whose sides each measure 1 foot.

Skin may cover a large area, but it is very thin. It is only about 1/8 inch thick. Despite being so thin, skin is made of three layers. The outermost layer is the epidermis. Just below the outermost layer is the dermis. Beneath those two layers is the subcutaneous tissue.

The Layers

The epidermis contains a chemical called keratin. Keratin makes skin tough and waterproof. Keratin keeps germs out of your body.

The dermis is mainly made of blood vessels and nerve endings. The dermis provides the epidermis with food and oxygen.

The lowest layer, the subcutaneous tissue protects the body from blows. It also regulates the body's temperature.

All three layers of your skin protect you. Because your skin protects you, you should protect it by keeping it clean and eating a healthful diet. You should use sunblock when you are in the sun. If you take care of your skin, it will last a lifetime.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does the subcutaneous tissue do to help the human body?
 - A The subcutaneous tissue helps keep the body from getting sunburn.
 - B The subcutaneous tissue helps to keep the body's temperature stable.
 - C The subcutaneous tissue helps the body process food and oxygen.
 - D The subcutaneous tissue helps keep germs out of the body.

2. Which of the following does the author describe last in the passage?
 - A The author describes three ways that skin is helpful.
 - B The author describes the size of skin.
 - C The author describes the epidermis.
 - D The author describes the three layers of skin.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that
 - A skin is especially helpful when it is sunny outside
 - B there are many important organs in the body, including skin
 - C people could not live without their skin
 - D the dermis is the lowest layer of skin

4. Read the following sentence: "Your body is constantly under attack."

In this sentence the word **attack** means

 - A a flat sheet of human skin that measures 21 square feet
 - B a plan to hit someone to obtain revenge
 - C a harmful act directed against someone or something
 - D a bad decision that hurts someone and causes problems

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe
 - A facts about human skin
 - B facts about dirt and germs
 - C facts about the epidermis
 - D facts about sunblock

6. Name two reasons why skin is an important organ.

7. If someone received a severe burn so that all three layers of skin were affected, what might the dangers be to their body?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

It is important to protect your skin. _____ you should wear sunblock, stay clean, and eat healthy foods.

- A But
- B Therefore
- C However
- D If

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Skin protects all people by serving as a barrier between us and the dirt and germs that surround us.

What? skin

(does) What? _____

How? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary Word: protect (pro · tect): to keep safe.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **protect**.

1. The mother hen wanted to protect her baby chicks from the fox.
2. If you wear sunscreen, you will protect yourself from sunburn.
3. A helmet will protect your head if you fall off your bike.
4. The firefighters came quickly to protect the family from the fire.
5. It is important to protect the Earth so that all people will have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

10b. Which image shows something that would protect you from harm?



11. If you are walking down the street, do you need someone to protect you? Why or why not?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 720

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage lays out facts about skin, the largest human organ. It describes how skin protects us, and gives information about the different layers that make up the skin.

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6. Name two reasons why skin is an important organ.

Suggested answer: Skin is important because it protects your body from burns, dirt, germs and sun. It also keeps fluids inside your body. [paragraph #2]

7. If someone received a severe burn so that all three layers of skin were affected, what might the dangers be to their body?

Suggested answer: Their body might not be able to stay at a safe temperature since the subcutaneous tissue regulates the body's temperature. The body also might get sick from germs since the epidermis (through the keratin that it contains) keeps germs out of your body. [paragraphs #5, 7]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

It is important to protect your skin. _____ you should wear sunblock, stay clean, and eat healthy foods.

- A But
- B Therefore**
- C However
- D If

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Skin protects all people by serving as a barrier between us and the dirt and germs that surround us.

What? skin

(does) What? protects all people

How? by serving as a barrier between us and the dirt and germs that surround us

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: protect

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (pro · tect)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is protect. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "protect."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Protect means to keep safe."
- b. Teacher says: "The text states that skin protects your body from burns, dirt, germs and rays from the sun. This means that skin keeps your body safe from these dangerous things."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "protect."]

Step 3: Practice the word

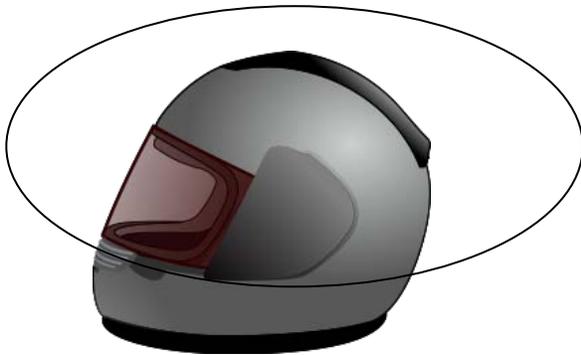
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1st sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.**
1. The mother hen wanted to protect her baby chicks from the fox.
 2. If you wear sunscreen, you will protect yourself from sunburn.
 3. A helmet will protect your head if you fall off your bike.
 4. The firefighters came quickly to protect the family from the fire.
 5. It is important to protect the Earth so that all people will have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which image shows something that would protect you from harm?



- 11.** If you are walking down the street, do you need someone to protect you? Why or why not?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: attack, layer