

Tattoo History Fundamentals

Tattoo History · Practice Test · 25 Questions

1. Who is currently recognized as the oldest known tattooed human, dating back to roughly 3370 BCE?

- A) Otzi the Iceman
- B) The Ice Maiden of Siberia
- C) King Tutankhamun
- D) The Princess of Ukok

2. In which region did the practice of 'Tatau' originate, giving the English language the word 'tattoo'?

- A) Japan
- B) Polynesia
- C) Scandinavia
- D) Egypt

3. Which 18th-century explorer is credited with popularizing the word 'tattoo' in the English language after his voyages to the South Pacific?

- A) Christopher Columbus
- B) Ferdinand Magellan
- C) James Cook
- D) Marco Polo

4. In ancient Egypt, tattoos were predominantly found on the mummified remains of which group?

- A) Pharaohs
- B) High Priests
- C) Women
- D) Soldiers

5. What was the primary purpose of 'markings' on the bodies of ancient Roman and Greek slaves?

- A) Decoration
- B) Identification of ownership
- C) Religious protection
- D) Status symbol

6. Which invention by Samuel O'Reilly in 1891 revolutionized the tattoo industry by increasing speed and consistency?

- A) The electric tattoo machine
- B) The rotary needle gun
- C) The coil-induction pen
- D) The steam-powered injector

7. During the Edo period in Japan, what was the primary purpose of 'irezumi' markings on criminals?

- A) To identify their crime
- B) To beautify the prisoner
- C) To act as a spiritual talisman
- D) To hide old scars

8. Which U.S. city became the epicenter of American 'Old School' or 'Traditional' tattooing in the early 20th century, specifically near naval bases?

- A) New York
- B) Honolulu
- C) San Francisco
- D) New Orleans

9. Which famous tattoo artist, known as 'Sailor Jerry', became synonymous with the development of the American traditional style in Honolulu?

- A) Norman Collins
- B) Herbert Hoffmann
- C) George Burchett
- D) Ed Hardy

10. In early Christian history in the Balkans, women of the Catholic community used tattoos for what purpose?

- A) To identify as royal
- B) To protect against forced conversion
- C) To show wealth
- D) To mark wedding status

11. Which of the following historical cultures utilized 'tapu' (sacred) tattoos to signify social rank and genealogy?

- A) The Maori
- B) The Aztecs
- C) The Vikings
- D) The Spartans

12. What was the common stigma associated with tattoos in the United States during the mid-20th century?

- A) Association with counter-culture and criminality
- B) Association with royalty
- C) Association with medical professions
- D) Association with academic excellence

13. Which ancient culture practiced 'scarification' and tattooing as a form of ritualistic protection in the sub-Saharan region?

- A) The Berber people
- B) The Khmer Empire
- C) The Inca Empire
- D) The Ming Dynasty

14. How did the invention of the electric tattoo machine change the perception of tattoos in the early 1900s?

- A) They became accessible to the general public
- B) They became illegal
- C) They became exclusively for the rich
- D) They stopped being permanent

15. What does the traditional 'swallow' tattoo, popularized by sailors, traditionally signify?

- A) Every 5,000 miles sailed
- B) The return home
- C) A dangerous storm
- D) Membership in a secret club

16. Which famous historical figure is widely cited as having had a tattoo of a Jerusalem cross, contributing to the history of pilgrimage tattoos?

- A) Napoleon Bonaparte
- B) King Edward VII
- C) Winston Churchill
- D) Benjamin Franklin

17. In the 19th century, tattooing became a popular trend among European nobility after being influenced by which group?

- A) Arctic explorers
- B) Pacific Islanders
- C) South American royalty
- D) Native American diplomats

18. Which part of the body was traditionally the most common location for 'nautical' tattoos among sailors?

- A) The face
- B) The legs
- C) The forearms
- D) The back

19. What is the 'irezumi' style of Japan famously known for?

- A) Small, minimalist symbols
- B) Full-body or large-scale motifs
- C) Temporary ink
- D) Simple line work

20. Which century saw the decline of traditional tattooing in many Pacific cultures due to the influence of Christian missionaries?

- A) 15th century
- B) 19th century
- C) 11th century
- D) 21st century

21. What was the primary method of applying tattoos in many ancient cultures before the invention of the electric machine?

- A) Chemical burns
- B) Hand-tapping needles
- C) Paintbrushes
- D) Pressing heated stamps

22. Which type of tattoo was commonly used in the 20th century by the military to designate specific units or achievements?

- A) Flash art
- B) Portraiture
- C) Calligraphy
- D) Biomechanical

23. In modern history, when did tattooing transition from a fringe activity to a mainstream cultural phenomenon in Western society?

- A) 1920s
- B) 1970s and 1980s
- C) 1940s
- D) 1910s

24. Which group is known for the practice of 'face tattooing' (Moko) that signifies a person's life story and status?

- A) The Maori
- B) The Inuit
- C) The Sami
- D) The Zulu

25. The 1970s 'Tattoo Renaissance' was driven by artists who treated tattooing as:

- A) A government mandate
- B) A fine art form
- C) A medical procedure
- D) A temporary fashion trend