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## **White hair may be a thing of the past**

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17th November, 2008

## THE ARTICLE

Worried about getting old? Don't want to get wrinkles? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or silver? Well help may be at hand with the last one of these fears. Scientists have discovered the drug the body uses to give our hair its natural colour. They hope they can recreate this drug and use it to prevent people's hair from turning white. The goal is to make a shampoo that contains the drug so that our hair will stay its natural colour throughout our life. This would save us a fortune in hair dyes and treatments, and keep us all looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, the drug only seems to be for hair colour loss and not hair loss. People going bald will have to wait a little longer for the drug that stops their hair falling out.

The researchers are from the University of Lubeck, Germany, and the University of Manchester, England. The team were researching the causes of hair turning white because of illness or stress. They recreated a molecule that occurs naturally in the body that provides colour to our hair. The scientists conducted tests on the hair of six women aged between 46 and 65. They were able to reverse the process that caused the hair to lose its colour. Lead researcher Dr Ralf Paus said the technique he used could be used as an "anti-greying agent" in the future. However, he warned it was still too early in the testing process to give more details. He was not able to say whether he thought his discovery would make white hair a thing of the past.

# WARM-UPS

**1. HAIR:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about hair. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*getting old / wrinkles / going grey / natural hair colour / shampoo / hair dye / bald / researchers / illness / stress / reversing a process / details / a thing of the past*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. BODY WORRIES:** Do you worry about the changes happening to your body? Complete the table below. Share what you wrote with your partner(s).

Worry	Why?	How would life be different if it didn't happen?
White hair		
False teeth		
Wrinkles		
Big tummy		
Loss of power		
Memory loss		

**4. HAIR DYE:** Students A **strongly** believe that dying your hair a different colour is stupid; Students B **strongly** believe dying your hair is necessary nowadays. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. HAIR COLOUR:** With your partner(s), discuss what kind of people are associated with these hair colours. Are they different for men and women? Share your ideas with other students.

- Black
- White
- Grey / Gray
- Blonde
- Red
- Brown

**6. SHAMPOO:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'shampoo'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Scientists have discovered white hair from 20 million years ago.        | T / F |
| b. The hair on our hands may stop the hair on our head going gray.         | T / F |
| c. Scientists want to make shampoo that stops our hair changing colour.    | T / F |
| d. People might have more money if their hair did not turn white.          | T / F |
| e. Scientists were looking at how stress changed the colour of our hair.   | T / F |
| f. Scientists conducted tests on between 46 and 65 different hairs.        | T / F |
| g. The head scientist said his technique is available for use now.         | T / F |
| h. The scientist guaranteed that white hair would not exist in the future. | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. worried              | a. aim           |
| 2. at hand              | b. found         |
| 3. discovered           | c. lots of money |
| 4. goal                 | d. method        |
| 5. a fortune            | e. history       |
| 6. causes               | f. nearby        |
| 7. recreated            | g. experimenting |
| 8. testing              | h. reasons       |
| 9. technique            | i. anxious       |
| 10. a thing of the past | j. reproduced    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 1. help may be at   | a. in the body |
| 2. the drug the body uses to give our hair its natural    | b. hair loss   |
| 3. This would save us a fortune in hair                   | c. early       |
| 4. the drug only seems to be for hair colour loss and not | d. colour      |
| 5. stops their hair falling                               | e. of illness  |
| 6. the causes of hair turning white because               | f. dyes        |
| 7. They recreated a molecule that occurs naturally        | g. hand        |
| 8. he warned it was still too                             | h. of the past |
| 9. They were able to reverse                              | i. out         |
| 10. his discovery would make white hair a thing           | j. the process |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Worried about \_\_\_\_\_ old? Don't want to get wrinkles? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or \_\_\_\_\_? Well help may be at hand with the last one of these fears. Scientists have discovered the drug the body uses to give our hair its \_\_\_\_\_ colour. They hope they can recreate this drug and use it to \_\_\_\_\_ people's hair from turning white. The goal is to make a shampoo that contains the drug so that our hair will \_\_\_\_\_ its natural colour throughout our life. This would save us a \_\_\_\_\_ in hair dyes and treatments, and keep us all looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, the drug only \_\_\_\_\_ to be for hair colour loss and not hair loss. People going bald will have to wait a little longer for the drug that stops their hair falling \_\_\_\_\_.

*stay*  
*natural*  
*out*  
*prevent*  
*getting*  
*seems*  
*fortune*  
*silver*

The \_\_\_\_\_ are from the University of Lubeck, Germany, and the University of Manchester, England. The team were researching the \_\_\_\_\_ of hair turning white because of illness or stress. They recreated a molecule that \_\_\_\_\_ naturally in the body that provides colour to our hair. The scientists conducted \_\_\_\_\_ on the hair of six women aged between 46 and 65. They were able to \_\_\_\_\_ the process that caused the hair to lose its colour. Lead researcher Dr Ralf Paus said the \_\_\_\_\_ he used could be used as an "anti-greying agent" in the future. However, he warned it was still too \_\_\_\_\_ in the testing process to give more details. He was not able to say whether he thought his discovery would make white hair a thing of the \_\_\_\_\_.

*technique*  
*tests*  
*causes*  
*past*  
*reverse*  
*occurs*  
*early*  
*researchers*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

Worried about getting old? Don't \_\_\_\_\_ wrinkles? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or silver? Well help may \_\_\_\_\_ the last one of these fears. Scientists have discovered the drug the body uses to \_\_\_\_\_ natural colour. They hope they can recreate this drug and use it to prevent people's hair from turning white. The goal \_\_\_\_\_ shampoo that contains the drug so that our hair will stay its natural colour throughout our life. This would \_\_\_\_\_ in hair dyes and treatments, and \_\_\_\_\_ looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, the drug only seems to be for hair colour loss and not hair loss. People \_\_\_\_\_ have to wait a little longer for the drug that stops their \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ from the University of Lubeck, Germany, and the University of Manchester, England. The team were researching the causes of hair turning \_\_\_\_\_ illness or stress. They recreated a molecule that occurs naturally in the body \_\_\_\_\_ colour to our hair. The scientists conducted tests \_\_\_\_\_ six women aged between 46 and 65. They were able to reverse the process that caused \_\_\_\_\_ its colour. Lead researcher Dr Ralf Paus said the technique he used could \_\_\_\_\_ "anti-greying agent" in the future. However, he warned it was still too early in the testing process to give more details. He was \_\_\_\_\_ whether he thought his discovery would make white hair a thing of the past.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'white' and 'hair'.

<b>white</b>	<b>hair</b>
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- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• wrinkles</li><li>• help</li><li>• discovered</li><li>• goal</li><li>• save</li><li>• bald</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• researchers</li><li>• causes</li><li>• occurs</li><li>• reverse</li><li>• agent</li><li>• past</li></ul>
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# STUDENT HAIR COLOUR SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about hair colour in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# HAIR COLOUR DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'hair'?
- c) Do you worry about getting old, having wrinkles and your hair turning white and falling out?
- d) Would you prefer to keep all of your hair or all of your teeth?
- e) Do you think white hair looks good on some people?
- f) [What would you do if / What did you do when] you found a white hair?
- g) Do you think the hair colour shampoo is the same as dying your hair?
- h) Do you spend a lot of money caring for your hair?
- i) Don't you think life would be easier if we had no hair?
- j) Do you ever have a bad hair day?

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# HAIR COLOUR DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of bald people?
- c) Do you like your hair colour?
- d) Does the stress of worrying about turning white make you turn white?
- e) Do you think it would be interesting if the hair turned blue, or purple, or green instead of white?
- f) What colour would you prefer if you could change your hair colour?
- g) What other things to reverse body processes do you think scientists should create?
- h) Do you think white hair will be a thing of the past one day?
- i) What do you think of your hair at the moment?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr Ralf Paus?

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# LANGUAGE

Worried about getting old? Don't want to get (1) \_\_\_\_? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or silver? Well help may be at (2) \_\_\_\_ with the last one of these fears. Scientists (3) \_\_\_\_ discovered the drug the body uses to give our hair its natural colour. They hope they can recreate this drug and use it to prevent people's hair (4) \_\_\_\_ turning white. The goal is to make a shampoo that contains the drug so that our hair will stay its natural colour throughout our life. This would save (5) \_\_\_\_ a fortune in hair dyes and treatments, and keep us all looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, the drug only seems to be (6) \_\_\_\_ hair colour loss and not hair loss. People going bald will have to wait a little longer for the drug that stops their hair falling out.

The researchers are from the University of Lubeck, Germany, and the University of Manchester, England. The team were researching the causes (7) \_\_\_\_ hair turning white because of illness or stress. They recreated a molecule that (8) \_\_\_\_ naturally in the body that provides colour to our hair. The scientists conducted tests on the hair of six women (9) \_\_\_\_ between 46 and 65. They were able to reverse the process (10) \_\_\_\_ caused the hair to lose its colour. Lead researcher Dr Ralf Paus said the technique he used could be used (11) \_\_\_\_ an "anti-greying agent" in the future. However, he warned it was still too early in the testing process to give more details. He was not able to say whether he thought his discovery would make white hair a (12) \_\_\_\_ of the past.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |                  |               |              |                 |
|-----|------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) crinkles     | (b) wrinkles  | (c) creases  | (d) folds       |
| 2.  | (a) hoof         | (b) heel      | (c) hand     | (d) head        |
| 3.  | (a) have         | (b) having    | (c) has      | (d) to have     |
| 4.  | (a) at           | (b) for       | (c) to       | (d) from        |
| 5.  | (a) they         | (b) them      | (c) us       | (d) all         |
| 6.  | (a) for          | (b) from      | (c) far      | (d) of          |
| 7.  | (a) for          | (b) from      | (c) far      | (d) of          |
| 8.  | (a) occasionally | (b) occurs    | (c) occupies | (d) occupations |
| 9.  | (a) ageing       | (b) ageless   | (c) age      | (d) aged        |
| 10. | (a) so           | (b) what      | (c) that     | (d) such        |
| 11. | (a) was          | (b) as        | (c) has      | (d) is          |
| 12. | (a) thing        | (b) something | (c) thingy   | (d) things      |



# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about the ageing process. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. MY HAIR:** Make a poster about the history of your hair. Describe your different styles and how you felt with each one. Include photos if you can. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. A THING OF THE PAST:** Write a magazine article about the new wonder shampoo that means our hair no longer changes colour with age. Include imaginary interviews with the CEO of the shampoo company and a person whose hair will now not change colour.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the boss of the shampoo company that will make the hair colour shampoo. Ask her/him three questions about the shampoo. Give her/him your three ideas on what other hair products the company could make. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

**6. DIARY / JOURNAL:** You are a hair on your head. Write a diary entry about an average day in your life. Does your owner look after you? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. T      f. F      g. F      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |     |                     |    |               |
|-----|---------------------|----|---------------|
| 1.  | worried             | a. | anxious       |
| 2.  | at hand             | b. | nearby        |
| 3.  | discovered          | c. | found         |
| 4.  | goal                | d. | aim           |
| 5.  | a fortune           | e. | lots of money |
| 6.  | causes              | f. | reasons       |
| 7.  | recreated           | g. | reproduced    |
| 8.  | testing             | h. | experimenting |
| 9.  | technique           | i. | method        |
| 10. | a thing of the past | j. | history       |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |     |  |    |             |
|-----|--|----|-------------|
| 1.  | help may be at   | a. | hand        |
| 2.  | the drug the body uses to give our hair its natural    | b. | colour      |
| 3.  | This would save us a fortune in hair                   | c. | dyes        |
| 4.  | the drug only seems to be for hair colour loss and not | d. | hair loss   |
| 5.  | stops their hair falling                               | e. | out         |
| 6.  | the causes of hair turning white because               | f. | of illness  |
| 7.  | They recreated a molecule that occurs naturally        | g. | in the body |
| 8.  | he warned it was still too                             | h. | early       |
| 9.  | They were able to reverse                              | i. | the process |
| 10. | his discovery would make white hair a thing            | j. | of the past |

## GAP FILL:

### White hair may be a thing of the past

Worried about **getting** old? Don't want to get wrinkles? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or **silver**? Well help may be at hand with the last one of these fears. Scientists have discovered the drug the body uses to give our hair its **natural** colour. They hope they can recreate this drug and use it to **prevent** people's hair from turning white. The goal is to make a shampoo that contains the drug so that our hair will **stay** its natural colour throughout our life. This would save us a **fortune** in hair dyes and treatments, and keep us all looking ten years younger. Unfortunately, the drug only **seems** to be for hair colour loss and not hair loss. People going bald will have to wait a little longer for the drug that stops their hair falling **out**.

The **researchers** are from the University of Lubeck, Germany, and the University of Manchester, England. The team were researching the **causes** of hair turning white because of illness or stress. They recreated a molecule that **occurs** naturally in the body that provides colour to our hair. The scientists conducted **tests** on the hair of six women aged between 46 and 65. They were able to **reverse** the process that caused the hair to lose its colour. Lead researcher Dr Ralf Paus said the **technique** he used could be used as an "anti-greying agent" in the future. However, he warned it was still too **early** in the testing process to give more details. He was not able to say whether he thought his discovery would make white hair a thing of the **past**.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - b    2 - c    3 - a    4 - d    5 - c    6 - a    7 - d    8 - b    9 - d    10 - c    11 - b    12 - a