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Unusual medical condition



- 1 **SPEAKING** Look at the title of the text and the four warning signs (A–D). What is the connection? What do you think the text will be about?

Reading Strategy

When you do a matching task, follow these steps:

- 1 Read the text to get a general idea of the meaning. Do not worry if you do not understand every word.
- 2 Read the task and all the options carefully.
- 3 Read the paragraphs of the text carefully one by one and match them to the correct option.
- 4 Check that the extra options do not match with any of the paragraphs.

A life without pain







hurt





injuries





engine





burn



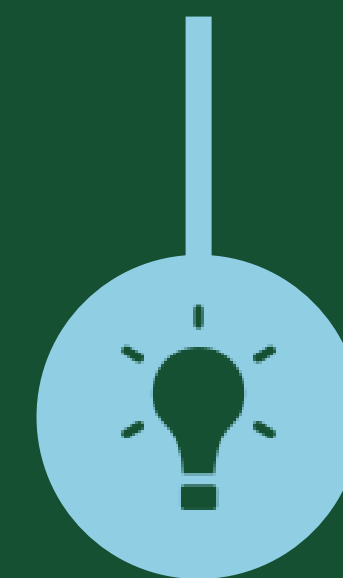
notice



realise



tríp





bruise



cure

A All children hurt themselves from time to time. But when thirteen-year-old Ashlyn Blocker was younger, she had more accidents and injuries than her friends. For example, she once put her hands on a very hot engine and got a serious burn. She only knew about it when she looked at her skin. She showed her parents and they took her straight to hospital. Ashlyn simply did not know when she injured herself.

B When Ashlyn was a baby, her parents knew she was different: she didn't cry. Then, when she was eight months old, they noticed there was some blood in her eye, so they took her to see a doctor. The doctor was shocked and confused when he looked at Ashlyn's eye: there was a serious cut. So why wasn't the baby girl upset? Why didn't she cry? The eye injury soon got better, but doctors realised that Ashlyn had a very unusual medical condition: she couldn't feel any pain.

C This condition is very rare: only about a hundred people a year in the USA are born with it, and many of them die because of it. Pain is a natural warning: when you're ill or injured, your body hurts and this tells you there's a problem. People who can't feel pain often die young because when they break a bone or have a problem with their heart, they just don't realise.

D The first few years of Ashlyn's life were very difficult. She often tripped and injured herself. Once, she broke her ankle and didn't know, so she didn't stop running. At school, Ashlyn needed a lot of attention to keep her safe. For example, in the playground, one teacher watched Ashlyn all the time. When other children fell over, the teachers could ask, 'Does it hurt?' But of course, with Ashlyn, it was not so simple, and the teachers had to search for cuts, bruises or other injuries.

E When she was five, Ashlyn's story appeared in newspapers. Then she had invitations to appear on TV shows and became well known. Scientists studied the causes of her condition and found it was a genetic disorder. For some reason, pain signals do not reach her brain. Unfortunately, at the moment, there is no hope of a cure. And as Ashlyn knows, a life without pain is both difficult and dangerous.



*1-why Ashlyn has more injuries than her friends?
2-what is the difference between Ashlyn and
others?*

- 2 Read the **Reading Strategy**. Then read the text quickly to get a general idea of the meaning. Were your ideas in exercise 1 correct?
- 3 Read the text again. Match the questions below with paragraphs A–E of the text. There are two extra questions.

In which paragraph does the writer tell us ...

- 1 when doctors realised Ashlyn had a medical problem? B
- 2 what causes her condition? E
- 3 what happened when she burned her hands? A
- 4 what scientists are doing to find a cure? —
- 5 why some people die from this condition? C
- 6 what treatment Ashlyn receives every day for her problem? —
- 7 how school life for Ashlyn was unusual? D

4 SPEAKING Work in pairs. Talk about information in the text that you found surprising or interesting.

I found it surprising that ...

I found it interesting that ...

5 Complete the questions using the question words below.
Then take turns to ask and answer the questions in pairs.

How How many When What Who Why

1 How did Ashlyn burn her hands?

2 why was the doctor shocked when he saw
Ashlyn's eye injury?

3 How many people are born with this medical condition
in the USA each year?

4 who watched Ashlyn carefully in the playground
at school?

5 when did Ashlyn's story first appear in
newspapers?

6 what is the cause of Ashlyn's medical condition?

How did Ashlyn burn her hands?

She put her hands on a hot engine.

- 2 He was shocked because there was a serious cut, but the baby wasn't upset and didn't cry.
- 3 About a hundred people are born with this condition in the USA each year.
- 4 A teacher watched her.
- 5 It appeared when Ashlyn was five.
- 6 It is a genetic disorder. Pain signals do not reach the brain.

6 VOCABULARY Find the words in the text to do with accidents and injuries and complete them below.

Accidents and injuries

Verbs

burn / cut / hurt / ¹in j u r e yourself / your hand, etc.

fall / ²tr i p / slip over ³b r e a k your arm / finger, etc.

bleed sprain your ankle / wrist hurt (e.g. *my leg hurts*)

Nouns and phrases

⁴bl o o d a broken arm / finger, etc. ⁵a b r u i se

⁶a b u r n a cut ⁷an in j u r y a sprain pain

7 Match eight of the verbs from exercise 6 with the past simple affirmative forms below. Are they regular or irregular?

a bled bleed (irregular)

e fell over Fall over (irregular)

b broke break (irregular)

f hurt hurt (irregular)

c burned burn (regular)

g injured injure (regular)

d cut cut (irregular)

h sprained sprain (irregular)



8 SPEAKING Work in pairs. Tell your partner about a time when you hurt or injured yourself. Use vocabulary from exercise 6.

I broke my arm when I was six years old.