

1 Did you know that your small intestine is nearly six meters long? Or that there are about 60 muscles in your face, and you use 40 of them to frown<sup>1</sup> but only 20 to smile? How about the fact that our bodies  
5 **consist of** 73 percent water, and that our hearts beat over 100,000 times each day? You really are amazing!

2 The human body is a **complex** machine.  
10 From the day we are born, our bodies grow and change in response to our environment, diet, and habits. The body has many different organ<sup>2</sup> systems and parts that work together to allow us to **breathe**, move, see, talk, and digest<sup>3</sup> food all at the same time. Most of the time we are unaware of what is happening in our bodies; usually it is only when we get sick or feel pain that we notice.

3 15 Many people do not take care of their complex machines. Bad habits like smoking, drinking too much alcohol, and eating junk food damage our bodies. Stress can also cause health problems. People who worry a lot or have busy jobs often don't get enough sleep, or don't eat properly. We also can damage our bodies when we play sports or get into accidents. Studies done by the Australian government show that most people get  
20 hurt because of an accidental slip or fall, or because of **injuries** from car accidents. It's true that a lot of people go to hospital because of serious **illnesses**, but far more people end up there because they simply weren't being careful.

4 Like machines, different body parts sometimes wear down from old age. People over the age of 65 are more likely to fall and hurt themselves, and these injuries—from bad  
25 cuts to broken bones—usually require serious medical attention. Due to the increase in the population of elderly people, gerontology is now one of the fastest growing areas of medicine. There are many **treatments** available to help older people recover from illness and injury. It is now common for older people with damaged joints, for example, to have **surgery** to replace the old joint with a new one made of plastic or metal.  
30 Instead of **suffering** aches and pains through their retirement days, older people are able to lead happier and more comfortable lives.

5 As with any machine, the better you take care of it, the longer it will last. The best way to take care of your amazing machine is to eat the right foods, do regular exercise, and get enough sleep. Oh, and don't forget to smile!

<sup>1</sup> When you **frown**, you make an angry or unhappy expression with your face.

<sup>2</sup> An **organ** is a part of your body that has a special function, such as your heart or lungs.

<sup>3</sup> Your stomach **digests** food by breaking it down and taking what it needs for your body.



***Skim the first paragraph on the next page. Choose the sentence that describes the main idea. Discuss your answer with a partner.***

**Paragraph 1**

- a. Many facts about your body are surprising.
- b. Your body is mostly made of water.

**Paragraph 2**

- a. Your body is very complicated, like a machine.
- b. Your body can develop many different problems.

**Paragraph 3**

- a. Stress can cause many health problems.
- b. We do many things that can damage our bodies.

**Paragraph 4**

- a. Doctors can treat many health problems that come with old age.
- b. Modern medicine helps people live much longer than in the past.

**Paragraph 5**

- a. The most important habit for good health is regular exercise.
- b. We can do many things to take care of our bodies.