

CULTURE

Elementary

Hair

Hair is something that grows from the skin of mammals. The hair of non-human animals is usually called fur. Sheep and goats have curly hair, which is usually called wool. Having no hair is called baldness. Humans and some other animals have lost much of their hair through evolution, and some animals, such as the elephant and the whale, have almost none at all.

False hair

Other animals, for example certain insects and spiders also have hairs; these are however not true hair in the biological sense, but rather bristles. The hairs found on certain plants are also not true hair, but Trichomes.

Functions of hair

Hair can have different functions:

- * It can protect against light. It can absorb certain parts of UV radiation and of heat.
- * It can protect against getting cold too quickly; it can conserve warmth.
- * It can protect against rain; many animals with fur specially treat it for this purpose.
- * It can absorb excess moisture, which may come from sweating. The glands that produce the sweat are in the skin.
- * It can protect against being seen and help hiding. The hair of certain animals has a coloring that changes with the seasons.
- * Animals can change their hair so they look bigger, or more threatening. This can also be used for mating; which is the case with lions, for example.

Human hair

In humans, hair grows mostly on the head, and the amount of body hair is different from race to race. Asians and native North Americans have the least amount of body hair, while Caucasians tend to have the most.

Hair color

Hair color is passed down by parents only. Natural hair color can be given only by genes. It is impossible to have a hair color that is not passed down genetically by both a mother and a father. This relies on dominant and recessive genes carried by a parent. These genes may not be the color of their hair, however, many people carry genes that are recessive and don't show in their traits or features. Dyeing hair is one way to change the color of hair. It consists of a chemical mixture that can change the color of hair using a chemical reaction. Many people dye their hair to hide graying or white hairs. This is because the majority of humans gain white or gray hairs as they grow older.

History and culture

People have been interested in head hair for hundreds of thousands of years. For both men and women, styling and coloring of hair have been a way to show importance and prestige.



Sometimes society makes rules to control the amount of hair, for example by not allowing people to cut their hair or beards.

Hair loss

People have about 100,000 strands of hair on their head. About 100 fall out each day, but they usually grow back.

Men often lose some of their hair as they grow older. This is known as baldness, and doctors call it "male pattern baldness". Its name comes from the fact that hair loss almost always follows the same pattern. It begins by hair falling out first from the front and sides of the head, and thinning from the top of the head, usually until it is all gone. After a while, all that may be left is a fringe of hair running above the ears and around the lower back of the head. Even though it is unusual for women to go bald, many women suffer from thinning hair over the top of their head as they grow old.

People have tried to find cures for hair loss for thousands of years. In an effort to get their hair back, men have tried "cures" like applying strange lotions or even having their heads packed in chicken manure.[needs proving] Many unproven "cures" are still marketed today. It is only in the last decade or so that treatments have been developed which do sometimes work. Some doctors do hair transplants, where they take tiny plugs of hair from areas like the back of the neck and plant them in the bald spots on the head. Some drugs have been tested and approved for sale as hair loss treatments. They encourage hair regrowth and thickening, but work better if applied before hair loss turns to baldness.

Source: <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hair>

Intermediate

Blond

Blond (see below) or fair-hair, is a hair color characterized by low levels of the dark pigment eumelanin. The resultant visible hue depends on various factors, but always has some sort of yellowish whiteish color. The color can be from the very pale blond (caused by a patchy, scarce distribution of pigment) to reddish "strawberry" blond colors or golden-brownish blond colors (the latter with more eumelanin).

Other terms used

From the German for flax or hemp touw, the expression tow head literally means someone flaxen haired. Other variations are towhead or toe head, the latter being a misspelling that does not relate to the word origin.

Etymology, spelling, and grammar

The word blond was first attested in English in 1481 and derives from Old French blont and meant a "colour midway between golden and light chestnut".[citation needed] It largely replaced the native term fair, from Old English fæger. The French (and thus also the English) word blond has two possible origins. Some linguists say it comes from Medieval Latin blundus, meaning yellow, from Old Frankish *blund which would relate it to Old English blonden-feax meaning grey-haired, from blondan/blandan meaning to mix. Also, Old English beblonden meant dyed as ancient Germanic warriors were noted for dyeing their hair. However, other linguists who favor a Latin origin for the word say that Medieval Latin blundus was a vulgar pronunciation of Latin



flavus, also meaning yellow. Most authorities, especially French, attest the Frankish origin. The word was reintroduced into English in the 17th century from French, and was for some time considered French; in French, "blonde" is a feminine adjective; it describes a woman with blond hair. "Blond" is an adjective that refers to the hair itself. A man can have blond hair but he is rarely a "blonde".

Though many writers of English use the spellings interchangeably, some of them continue to distinguish between the masculine blond and the feminine blonde and, as such, it is one of the few adjectives in English with separate masculine and feminine forms, at least in written language. Each of the two forms, however, is pronounced the same way. American Heritage's Book of English Usage propounds that this particular use of the term is an example of a "sexist stereotype [in] that women are primarily defined by their physical characteristics." (Another hair color word of French origin, brunet(te), also functions in the same way in orthodox English.)

The word is also occasionally used, with either spelling, to refer to objects that have a color reminiscent of fair hair. Examples include pale wood and lager beer.

Varieties

Many sub-categories of blond hair have also been defined to describe someone with blond hair more accurately. Common examples include the following:

- * blond/flaxen— when distinguished from other varieties, "blond" by itself refers to a light but not whitish blond with no traces of red, gold, or brown. This color is often described as "flaxen".
- * yellow – yellow-blond ("yellow" can also be used to refer to hair which has been dyed yellow).
- * platinum blond or towheaded'— whitish-blond; almost all platinum blonds are children. "Platinum blond" is often used to describe dyed hair, while "towheaded" is generally refers to natural hair color.
- * sandy blond – greyish-hazel or cream-colored blond.
- * golden blond – rich, golden blond.
- * strawberry blond or Venetian blond – light reddish blond.
- * dirty blond or dishwater blond— light blond and sandy blond mixed together in stripes (occurs naturally)
- * ash-blond – pale or grayish blond.
- * bleached blond or peroxide blond – artificial blond slightly less white than platinum blond.

Evolution of blond hair

Natural lighter hair colors occur most often in Europe and less frequently in other areas.[In northern European populations, the occurrence of blonde hair is very frequent. The hair color gene MC1R has at least seven variants in Europe giving the continent a wide range of hair and eye shades. Based on recent genetic information carried out at three Japanese universities, the date of the genetic mutation that resulted in blonde hair in Europe has been isolated to about 11,000 years ago during the last ice age. Before then, Europeans mostly had black hair, which is predominant in the rest of the world.

The consensus explanation for the evolution of light hair is related to the requirement for vitamin D synthesis and northern Europe's seasonal deficiency of sunlight. Lighter skin is due to a low concentration in pigmentation, thus allowing more sunlight to trigger the production of vitamin D. In this way, high frequencies of light hair in northern latitudes are a result of the light skin adaptation to lower levels of sunlight, which reduces the prevalence of rickets caused by vitamin D deficiency. The darker pigmentation at higher latitudes in certain ethnic groups such as the Inuit is explained by a greater proportion of seafood in their diet. As seafood is high in vitamin D, vitamin D deficiency would not create a selective pressure for lighter pigmentation in that



population. However, the relatively recent immigration of the Inuit from more southern climates, into their current areas of occupation (c. 10,000 BC) coinciding with the withdrawal of the North American ice sheets may provide a better explanation.

Another theory is that that early men found blonde hair more attractive. Canadian anthropologist Peter Frost, under the aegis of University of St Andrews, published a study in March 2006 in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior* that says blond hair evolved very quickly at the end of the last ice age by means of sexual selection. According to the study, the appearance of blonde hair and blue eyes in some northern European women made them stand out from their rivals at a time of fierce competition for males made scarce due to long, arduous hunting trips; this hypothesis argues that women with blonde hair posed an alternative that helped them mate and thus increased the number of blonds.

A Finnish girl with blond hair.

Another reason men may have preferred blonde women is that light hair color is a marker of youth. Since many Northern European children have blonde hair, which darkens as they mature, blonde hair could arguably be associated with youth and therefore, fertility.

A theory propounded in *The History and Geography of Human Genes* (1994), says blonde hair became predominant in Europe in about 3,000 BC, in the area now known as Lithuania, among the recently arrived Proto-Indo-European and Slavic settlers according to the Kurgan Hypothesis, and the trait spread quickly through sexual selection into Scandinavia. As above, the theory assumes that men found women with blonde hair more attractive. That low levels of eumelanin be somehow associated with an Indo-European speaking population group in particular is questionable because of the time lines proposed for the mutation and as one of the places with the highest occurrences of blond genes happens to be Finland, a country notable for a Uralic majority language.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blond>

BLACK HAIR

Black hair is the darkest and most common of all human hair colors internationally. It is a dominant genetic trait, and it is found in people of all backgrounds and ethnicities. It has large amounts of eumelanin and is less dense than other hair colors. Black hair is known to be the shiniest of all hair colors. Sometimes very dark brown (blackish-brown) hair is mistaken for black because the potency of eumelanin in the hair gives it the lustrous properties of black hair, using the rationale that "brown" does not do the darkness of the shade justice. Black hair can therefore be slightly rufous, soft black, or blue-black. Sometimes black hair can appear to shine silver-blue in the sun. In English, black hair is sometimes described as "jet-black" or "raven black".

Outside of Europe, many humans have black or dark brown hair. This is likely the original hair color of *Homo sapiens*, and is found in its greatest distribution in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the pre-Columbian Americas. Among West Eurasians (White people, Caucasoids), black hair is particularly common in people of Southern European, Celtic peoples, West Asian, and North African ancestry, regardless of ethnolinguistic affiliation. They are also found in the British Isles, where the western Irish are particularly noted for their curly, very dark brown to jet-black hair combined with clear blue eyes; Irish people with this appearance are known as the "Black Irish." Black hair and pale eyes is also a characteristic of people of the United Kingdom. Black hair also is also seen occasionally in parts of Central Europe; Southern Europe, such as Greece; and black hair and pale eyes can also be seen among the Indo-European ethnic groups of Central and West Asia; including Iran, Afghanistan and North India. Black hair is least common in the Baltic littoral, where true blondism is believed to have originated.



Varieties

Black hair comes in a variety of textures. Straight black hair is very common in Asians and Native Americans. Curly, wavy, straight, soft and coarse hair textures are common among all racialized groups. Within African populations, hair textures vary greatly. Many people of African descent have diverse hair textures ranging from afro-textured hair (the most common), to straight, curly or wavy.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_hair

Advanced

Brown hair

Brown hair is the second most common human hair color.

Brown hair varies from light brown to almost black hair. It is characterized by higher levels of the dark pigment eumelanin and lower levels of the pale pigment pheomelanin. Its strands are thicker than those of fair hair but not as much as those of red hair. People with brown hair are often referred to as brunette, the feminine form of the diminutive form brunet from brun (brown/brown-haired), the masculine form. Brown hair is common among Indo-Europeans and West Eurasians, especially those Central and Southern Europe, West Asia, and North Africa, where it transitions smoothly into blackish-brown and black hair.

Etymology and grammar

Brunette literally means "little brown-haired girl" or "young brown-haired woman", but in modern English usage it has lost the diminutive meaning and refers simply to any brown-haired girl or woman, or the associated hair color. Although brunet is the masculine version of the popular diminutive form, used to describe a little boy or young man with brown hair, the use of brunet is uncommon in English. One is more likely to say, of a man or boy, "He has brown hair," than to say, "He is a brunet," (or brunet).

Lighter or darker shades of brown hair may be referred to as "light brunette" or "dark brunette," though in such cases one is generally referring only to the hair color, not using the term as a metaphor for the person; one would be unlikely to say, "She is a light brunette." Rather, one would say, "She has light brunette hair."

The term brunette is the feminine form of the French word brunet which is a diminutive form of "brun" meaning brown/brown-haired, the feminine being "brune". Brun is derived from the Germanic "bhru-no." The Indo-European root phoneme is "bher."

Biochemistry

The pigment Eumelanin (literally meaning "good" melanin) gives brown hair its distinctive color. Brown hair has more eumelanin than blond hair but also has much less than black. There are two different types of eumelanin, which are distinguished from each other by their pattern of polymer bonds. The two types are black eumelanin and brown eumelanin. Black eumelanin is the darkest, brown eumelanin is lighter than black. Black eumelanin is mostly present in non-Europeans and aged Europeans, while brown eumelanin is mostly present in young Europeans, and people of other ethnicities. A small amount of black eumelanin in the absence of other pigments causes



grey hair. A small amount of brown eumelanin in the absence of other pigments causes yellow (blond) color hair. Brown-haired people have medium-thick strands of hair.

Brown haired people are thought to produce more skin-protecting eumelanin and are associated with having a more even skin tone. The range of skin colors associated with brown hair is vast, ranging from the palest of skin tone to an olive complexion. Brunettes can have dark or light eyes. Occasionally, natural blonde or red hair will darken over time, resulting in a brown-haired individual with light colored eyes.

Varieties of brunette-brunet

Brown hair comes in a variety of shades from the very darkest of brown (almost black) to light brown showing small signs of blondism. Shades of brown hair include:

- * Deepest brunette - The darkest brown, which can be a very dark chestnut, sometimes appears to be off black at a distance.
- * Dark brown.
- * Milk chocolate brown.
- * Chestnut brown - Dark brown with a visible wine auburn highlight.
- * Light chestnut brown - Medium to dark brown with very subtle chestnut tones.
- * Medium brown.
- * Medium (golden) brown.
- * Light golden brown.
- * Light auburn brown.
- * Light golden reddish brown - A warm light brown with red tones.
- * Light ash brown.
- * Lightest brown.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunette>

RED HAIR

Red hair (also referred to as titian or ginger hair) varies from a deep orange-red through burnt orange to bright copper. It is characterized by high levels of the reddish pigment pheomelanin and relatively low levels of the dark pigment eumelanin. People with red hair are often referred to as redheads. Approximately 1% to 2% of the human population has red hair. It occurs more frequently (between 2% and 6% of the population) in northern and western Europeans, and their descendants, and at lower frequencies throughout other parts of the world. Red hair appears in people with two copies of a recessive gene on chromosome 16 which causes a change in the MC1R protein. It is associated with fair skin colour, freckles, and sensitivity to ultraviolet light. Cultural reactions have varied from ridicule to admiration; many common stereotypes exist regarding redheads and they are often portrayed as the "fiery-tempered redhead".

Culture

In various times and cultures, red hair has been prized, feared, and ridiculed. Beliefs about temperament

A common belief about redheads is that they have fiery tempers and sharp tongues. In Anne of Green Gables, a character says of Anne Shirley, the redheaded heroine, that "her temper matches her hair", while in The Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield remarks that "People with



red hair are supposed to get mad very easily, but Allie [his dead brother] never did, and he had very red hair."

During the early stages of modern medicine, red hair was thought to be a sign of a sanguine temperament. In the Indian medicinal practice of Ayurveda, redheads are seen as most likely to have a Pitta temperament.

Another belief is that redheads are highly sexed; for example, Jonathan Swift satirizes redhead stereotypes in part four of Gulliver's Travels, "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms," when he writes that: "It is observed that the red-haired of both sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest, whom yet they much exceed in strength and activity." Swift goes on to write that: "...neither was the hair of this brute [a Yahoo] of a red colour (which might have been some excuse for an appetite a little irregular) but black as a sloe..." In the novel and film Red-Headed Woman, the titular protagonist is a sexually aggressive home-wrecker who frequently throws violent temper tantrums.

Fashion and art

Queen Elizabeth I of England was a redhead, and during the Elizabethan era in England, red hair was fashionable for women. In modern times, red hair is subject to fashion trends; celebrities such as Lindsay Lohan, Alyson Hannigan, Marcia Cross and Geri Halliwell can boost sales of red hair dye.

Sometimes, red hair darkens as people get older, becoming a more brownish colour or losing some of its vividness. This leads some to associate red hair with youthfulness, a quality that is generally considered desirable. In several countries such as India, Iran, Bangladesh and Pakistan, henna and saffron are used on hair to give it a bright red appearance.

Many painters have exhibited a fascination with red hair. The colour "titian" takes its name from Titian, who often painted women with red hair. Early Renaissance artist Sandro Botticelli's famous painting The Birth of Venus depicts the mythological goddess Venus as a redhead. Other painters notable for their redheads include the Pre-Raphaelites, Edmund Leighton, Modigliani, Gustav Klimt.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story The Red-Headed League involves a man who is asked to become a member of a mysterious group of red-headed people. The 1943 film DuBarry Was a Lady featured red-heads Lucille Ball and Red Skelton in Technicolor.

Prejudice/discrimination towards redheads

Red hair was thought to be a mark of a beastly sexual desire and moral degeneration. A savage red-haired man is portrayed in the fable by Grimm brothers (Der Eisenhans) as the spirit of the forest of iron. Theophilus Presbyter describes how the blood of a red-haired young man is necessary to create gold from copper, in a mixture with the ashes of a basilisk.

Montague Summers, in his translation of the Malleus Maleficarum, notes that red hair and green eyes were thought to be the sign of a witch, a werewolf or a vampire during the Middle Ages;

Those whose hair is red, of a certain peculiar shade, are unmistakably vampires. It is significant that in ancient Egypt, as Manetho tells us, human sacrifices were offered at the grave of Osiris, and the victims were red-haired men who were burned, their ashes being scattered far and wide by winnowing-fans. It is held by some authorities that this was done to fertilize the fields and produce a bounteous harvest, red-hair symbolizing the golden wealth of the corn. But these men were called Typhonians, and were representatives not of Osiris but of his evil rival Typhon, whose hair was red.



In modern-day UK, the words "ginger" or "ginga" are sometimes derogatorily used to describe red-headed people, with terms such as "gingerphobia" (fear of redheads) or "gingerism" (prejudice against redheads) used by the media. Some have speculated that the dislike of red-hair may derive from the historical English sentiment that people of Irish or Celtic background, with a greater prevalence of red hair, were ethnically inferior. Redheads are also sometimes referred to disparagingly as "carrot tops" and "carrot heads". "Gingerism" has been compared to racism, although this is widely disputed, and bodies such as the UK Commission for Racial Equality do not monitor cases of discrimination and hate crimes against redheads. A UK woman recently won an award from a tribunal after being sexually harassed and receiving abuse because of her red hair; a family in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, was forced to move twice after being targeted for abuse and hate crime on account of their red hair; and in 2003, a 20 year old was stabbed in the back for "being ginger." In May 2009, a British schoolboy committed suicide after being bullied for having red hair. The British singer Mick Hucknall, who believes that he has repeatedly faced prejudice or been described as ugly on account of his hair colour, argues that Gingerism should be described as a form of racism. This prejudice has been satirised on a number of TV shows. The British comedian Catherine Tate (herself a redhead) appeared as a red haired character in a running sketch of her series *The Catherine Tate Show*. The sketch saw fictional character Sandra Kemp, who was forced to seek solace in a refuge for ginger people because they had been ostracised from society. The British comedy *Bo' Selecta!* (starring redhead Leigh Francis) featured a spoof documentary which involved a caricature of Mick Hucknall presenting a show in which celebrities (played by themselves) dyed their hair red for a day and went about daily life being insulted by people. The pejorative use of the word "ginger" and related discrimination was used to illustrate a point about racism and prejudice in the "Ginger Kids", "Le Petit Tourette" and "Fatbeard" episodes of *South Park*.

Films and television programmes often portray school bullies as having red hair; for example, Scut Farkus from *A Christmas Story* or the O'Doyle family in the movie *Billy Madison*. The bully character Caruso in *Everybody Hates Chris* is a redhead. However, children with red hair are often themselves targeted by bullies; "Somebody with ginger hair will stand out from the crowd," says anti-bullying expert Louise Burfitt-Dons.

In November 2008 social networking website Facebook received criticism after a 'Kick a Ginger' group, which aimed to establish a "National Kick a Ginger Day" on November 20, acquired almost 5,000 members. A 14-year-old boy from Vancouver who ran the Facebook group was subjected to an investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for possible hate crimes.

In December 2009 British supermarket chain Tesco was forced to withdraw a Christmas card which had the image of a child with ginger hair sitting on the lap of Santa Claus, and the words: "Santa loves all kids. Even ginger ones" after customers complained the card was too offensive.

Red Hair festival

Redheadday is the name of a Dutch festival that takes place each first weekend of September in the city of Breda, the Netherlands. The two-day festival is a gathering of people with natural red hair, but is also focused on art related to the colour red. Activities during the festival are lectures, workshops and demonstrations. The festival attracts attendance from thousands of genuine redheads from 20 countries and is free due to sponsorship of the local government.