



Skin Bleaching or Depigmentation

In many African societies, light complexion is considered a token of beauty. It may also be seen as a mark of success. Consequently, a number of women are uncomfortable with their natural blackness and want a change in skin color. Some of these black women cannot resist the temptation to start depigmentation, which leads them to spend a lot of money on skin lightening products. Some are even ready to pay a fortune on cosmetic surgery to whiten their skins.

Depigmentation now affects women of all ages. From professionals to students and housewives, it seems like everyone is getting involved. In many societies, there is often greater acceptance of light skin than dark skin. Many people think they will have a better chance of getting a job or marrying into a better family. They want to look like what their society generally considers beautiful. In addition, they are convinced that men prefer light-skinned women.

However, the phenomenon is evolving with disastrous consequences. Depigmentation products mostly contain dangerous substances like hydroquinone, a highly cancerous chemical. This substance is harmful to pregnant women and babies. Despite all these health risks, skin depigmentation continues to be practiced in several regions of Africa.

Adapted from L'Express du Faso, July 8, 2015, pp.11-12

I. COMPREHENSION: 08 marks

A) Read Paragraph 1 and write the exact passages that refer to descriptions 1-2-3-4 below. (2 marks)

1. A reason why women bleach their skin: ☞ _____
2. How some women feel about their dark skin: ☞ _____
3. Depigmentation technique n° 1: ☞ _____
4. Depigmentation technique n° 2: ☞ _____

B) Read Paragraph 2 and match the text quotes in Box X with their interpretations in Box Y. (2 marks)

<p>5. Depigmentation affects women of all ages X</p> <p>6. There is often greater acceptance of light skin than dark skin</p> <p>7. They think they will have a better chance of getting a job</p> <p>8. They are convinced that men prefer light-skinned women</p>	<p>a) Do it to have a husband Y</p> <p>b) This temptation is positive</p> <p>c) This is economic pressure</p> <p>d) This is racial discrimination</p> <p>e) Young girls are doing it too</p>
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Write your answers (a-e) here ☞

5.	6.	7.	8.
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C) Read Paragraph 3 and find the correct information to complete Boxes 9, 10, and 11. (1.5 marks)

Type of risky chemical	Young victims of chemicals	A reference to an illness
9.	10.	11.

D) Read all the text and indicate the paragraphs in which ideas 12, 13, and 14 are developed. (1.5 marks)

Principal Ideas	Paragraph Numbers
12. Terrible Effects of Skin Lightening	
13. Reasons Why Women Lighten their Skin	
14. Black Women and Depigmentation	

E) Indicate what "the phenomenon" and "This substance" refer to in the lines indicated. (1 mark)

15. the phenomenon (Line 11): _____

16. This substance (Lines 12-13): _____

II. LINGUISTIC and COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: 06 marks

F) Use the correct options in parentheses to complete the following passage. (2 marks)

"My sister has light-skinned children but my children are darker skinned. Because of that, my mother likes my sister's children more than mine," says Fatima, a Nigerian young mother. To face the pressure (17) _____ (from ⊕ on ⊕ at) her mother, Fatima used whitening products on her kids, with effects that she now deeply regrets. She says one of her daughters covers her face in order to hide her burns whenever she goes out. Another child got her skin darker than (18) _____ (before ⊕ after ⊕ ago) and had a pale circle around her eyes, while a third one had white marks on her lips and knees. Fatima bought her creams at a local supermarket, without a doctor's prescription. At first, the kids looked good. The grandmother became (19) _____ (more nice ⊕ nicest ⊕ nicer) with them. But then, the burns and marks appeared, causing the grandmother to turn away from Fatima's family, again. Since that episode, the young mother (20) _____ (blames ⊕ is blaming ⊕ has blamed) herself a million times for ruining her own children's lives.

F) Penda is under medical treatment after being diagnosed for skin cancer. Indicate the normal order of her story below by writing n°1, n°2, n°3, and n°4 after the actions listed in 21, 22, 23, and 24. (2 marks)

Penda: "It's only five months ago that I stopped using skin-whitening creams, after my dermatologist confirmed that I had contracted skin cancer as a result of my 7 years of skin bleaching. Currently, I'm reading a lot of articles on the consequences of depigmentation so that next month, I can participate to a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the dangers related to this practice.

21. Stop using skin-whitening creams: ☞ n° _____

22. Contract skin cancer: ☞ n° _____

23. Read a lot of articles: ☞ n° _____

24. Participate to a campaign: ☞ n° _____

G) Today, Penda has returned to her doctor for more information on her medical condition and on depigmentation in general. Complete their dialog meaningfully. (2 marks)

Doctor: Welcome back, Penda! You look great today.

Penda: Yeah! Following your advice, I've decided (25) _____

Doctor: Good idea! But please don't stop there. Someone like you can help us fight depigmentation.

Penda: You think I can? What (26) _____ ?

Doctor: For example, using your own case, you can dissuade young ladies from whitening their skins.

Penda: Really? You know today's youths. They (27) _____

Doctor: Listen, Penda. You (28) _____

Penda: Okay then. I will do my best. Doctor: Great! Never give up. You can do this!

III. WRITING: Choose ONE topic only and write about 150 words. 06 marks

Topic 1: Talk about two reasons why Black women should stop skin bleaching. Give them advice.

Topic 2: Considering the bad effects of depigmentation, your School Government decides to write a letter to the Minister of Health to draw attention to the seriousness of the situation and propose solutions to this dangerous practice. Reproduce the letter.

Topic 3: Awa wants to start lightening her skin. Her best friend, Alice, is an advocate of natural beauty. She tries to convince Awa to keep her skin black. Imagine and write their conversation.