

This is not a word-for-word transcript

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**Neil**

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

**Sam**

And I'm Sam.

**Neil**

What blood type are you, Sam?

**Sam**

Ah, you mean the different groups used to classify humans by blood – types A, B, AB and O. I think I'm type O. How about you, Neil?

**Neil**

Well, it may sound strange but actually I don't know.

**Sam**

Hmm, lots of westerners don't know their blood type, but in parts of Asia blood groups are a topic of daily conversation. People select romantic partners based on blood type and different blood groups are associated with different personalities.

**Neil**

In this programme we'll be finding out all about blood – why humans have different blood types and whether blood is something more than just a way of pumping oxygen around your body.

**Sam**

And of course we'll be learning some new vocabulary as well. Now, Neil, I have an interesting fact for you - did you know that many Japanese popstars' websites will feature their blood type alongside information like their age and hobbies?

## Neil

I didn't, Sam, but Japanese culture is certainly interested in blood. There's even a word 'burahara' meaning 'blood harassment', which is used to describe hostility towards people from a certain blood group considered to be selfish – but which group? That's my quiz question for today – which blood types may fall victim to 'burahara'? Is it:

- a) blood type A?
- b) blood type B? Or
- c) blood type O?

## Sam

I'll say a) blood type A.

## Neil

OK, Sam, we'll find out the answer later. As we've heard, blood is a big deal in Japan. Marnie Chesterton, from BBC World Service programme, *CrowdScience*, travelled to Tokyo where she asked Japanese translator, Chie Kobayashi, to explain more:

## Chie Kobayashi

For blood type A, generally it is thought they are **perfectionists**, more detail-oriented, pretty much good at precise type jobs, and that makes them good at helping others and good at teamwork and respecting rules and customs. That's a typical blood A type.

## Marnie Chesterton

40 percent of Japan's population are sensitive, anxious type As. 30 percent are curious and **stubborn**, generous type Os. Ten percent are creative ABs. But **woe betide** the twenty percent type Bs because they have a far less desirable personality, apparently.

## Sam

According to Japanese tradition, blood type As are **perfectionists** - people who want everything to be perfect and demand the highest standards possible.

## Neil

This contrasts with type Os who are considered to be **stubborn** – people who are determined to do what they want and refuse to change their mind.

## Sam

But it's unfortunate blood type Bs who have the least desirable personality – selfish and independent. "**Woe betide** the type Bs" remarks the presenter, Marnie

Chesterton – an informal British expression said when there will be trouble ahead for someone – in this case, poor type Bs!

**Neil**

But apart from customs and traditions, is there actually any science behind these beliefs?

**Sam**

Well, not according to Dr Emma Pomeroy of Cambridge University's archaeology department. She thinks that - like horoscopes – there's no scientific basis for a connection between blood types and personalities.

**Neil**

Which makes me wonder what exactly blood types are.

**Sam**

Blood types are kinds of stickers or chemical markers which support our **immune system** - the organs, cells and processes which protect the human body from infection and illness.

**Neil**

Those chemical markers can identify foreign bodies like **pathogens** - small organisms, such a virus or bacteria, that can cause disease. The variety of blood types seems to be a result of different bodily responses to different disease-causing pathogens.

**Sam**

Which explains why blood of the same type is needed in **blood transfusions** – medical procedures in which blood is taken from one person and put into another person's body, often after an accident or during an operation.

**Neil**

And explains the high demand for type O blood which can be given to anyone.

**Sam**

Ah, generous type Os – like me. I always knew I was special... and curious and stubborn, wasn't that the type O personality?

**Neil**

Oh yes, today's quiz question was about blood type personalities. I asked you which undesirable blood type is considered selfish in Japan.

**Sam**

I said a) blood type A.

**Neil**

But as we've heard, it's actually b) blood type B.

**Sam**

Never mind, I'll settle for being curious, stubborn and generous! In today's programme we've been talking all about blood types and personalities. In Japan, blood type A people are thought of as **perfectionists** - people who want everything to be perfect.

**Neil**

Unlike type Os who are considered **stubborn** – determined to get their own way and unwilling to change.

**Sam**

And **woe betide** selfish type Bs – an informal expression said when there will be trouble for someone or if they will be punished for doing a particular thing.

**Neil**

Scientifically speaking, blood types help support our **immune system** - the organs and cellular processes which protect the human body from infection.

**Sam**

They also help identify foreign **pathogens** - small organisms, such a virus or bacteria, that can cause a disease.

**Neil**

And explain why the same blood type is needed for a successful **blood transfusion** – the procedure in which blood is transferred from one person's body to another during an operation.

**Sam**

That's all we have time for today. Bye for now.

**Neil**

Bye!

## VOCABULARY

### **perfectionists**

people who want everything to be perfect and demand the highest standards possible.

### **stubborn**

determined to do what you want and unwilling to change your mind.

### **woe betide (somebody)**

informal British expression said when there will be trouble for some, or when someone will be punished if they do a particular thing

### **immune system**

the organs, cells and processes which protect the human body from infection and illness

### **pathogen**

any small organism, such a virus or bacteria, that can cause disease

### **blood transfusion**

process in which blood is taken from one person and put into another person's body, especially after an accident or during an operation