



## Why Do We Have Tears?

*by Allen Hunter*

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- 1 Think about times when you've cried. At first you felt unhappy. Maybe your mouth drooped. Then your eyes scrunched up and got watery. Soon tears were rolling down your cheeks.
  - 2 And sometimes tears drop from
  - 3 your eyes when you are happy. If you laugh very, very hard, tears may spill down your face. But tears have a more important job than showing how you feel.
  - 3 All day long your eyes sit in a bath of tears. These tears keep your eyes

clean and healthy. They wash away dirt and germs and other things that get in your eyes. For instance, your eyes water when smoke gets in them. That's because smoke is made of things that bother your eyes. Extra tears come to wash the smoke away.

4 Your eyes also need tears to keep them wet. Your eyes must be wet so that they can move smoothly. All day long, your eyes are busy looking here and there. They move quickly from one thing to another. Right now as you're reading, your eyes are moving along to each word. If your eyes didn't move, you'd have to turn your head to look at things that weren't right in front of you! If you didn't have tears, your eyes couldn't move. And soon you would be blind.

5 But where do all these tears come from?

6 Under each eyelid are tiny sacs called tear glands. That's where tears are made. Every time you blink your eyes, some tears are pushed out of these glands. The tears wash over your eyes and soothe them.

7 When you're not laughing or crying your tears away, where do they go? Tears leave your eyes the way water leaves a sink. The tears go away through small holes in your lower eyelid. These holes are called tear ducts. Some of these holes lead into your nose. Many times when you cry, the tears drip down through your nose—and it starts to run. The drops that fall from your nose are your tears.

8 Maybe you don't like baths, but your eyes can't do without them. All day long, tears wash your eyes to keep them bright and healthy.



## How Well Did You Understand?

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.
- This story tells
    - what makes people sad
    - how and why people have tears
    - why people cry when they are happy
  - Tears help you by
    - washing your cheeks and nose
    - filling up your tear glands
    - washing things from your eyes
  - You probably get extra tears in your eyes when
    - it is dark and rainy
    - it is dusty and windy
    - it is hot and damp
  - If your eyes were not wet, you could not
    - look at things as quickly
    - see without your glasses
    - show people what you think
  - If your eyes need to be soothed, the first thing that must happen is
    - your nose must start to run
    - your eyes must blink to make tears
    - your tears must go into your tear ducts

## Learn about Words

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

*Directions:* Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- turned down; sagged (1)
  - squeezed; squeezed together (1)
  - very tiny animals or plants that can make people sick (3)
  - hurt; trouble; make sore (3)
  - bag-like parts that can hold liquids in plants or animals (6)
  - ease; make less painful (6)
  - fall; trickle; fall in drops (7)
  - shining (8)
- C** A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.
- My dad is a football fan.  
He keeps cool with an electric fan.*
- Directions:* Look at each word in **heavy type**. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.
- blind** (4)
    - unable to see
    - done without thinking
  - run** (7)
    - go in a hurry

## Think about It

**D** A **fact** is something that is true. An **opinion** is what someone thinks.

**Fact:** Tears soothe your eyes.

**Opinion:** I think your eyes are pretty.

*Directions:* Read each sentence. Is it a fact or an opinion? Write *F* if it is a fact. Write *O* if it is an opinion.

- 1 Tears are needed to keep your eyes healthy.
- 2 I think it is silly to cry.
- 3 People have tear glands under their eyelids.
- 4 I believe that brown eyes are prettier than blue eyes.
- 5 People's eyes move as they read.

**E** Read each set of words. Look at the first and second letter in each word. Write the word that comes first in alphabetical order.

6 scrunched sometimes sink

7 lower leaves laugh

8 eyes each extra

9 it in if

10 blink bother busy

## Find Out More

Go to the library. Find a book that shows a picture of the parts of the eye. Find the parts called tear glands and tear ducts. Show these parts to your class. Also show them other parts of the eye that you find interesting. Tell what these parts are