

FEELINGS

The poet Emily Dickinson knew the highs and lows of intense emotion. An unmarried woman in a 19th-century New England town, and given to bouts of depression, she recorded her fears and perceptions in brief verses of remarkable power. For her, emotion was a physical experience: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know this is poetry."

The idea that feelings have a physical basis goes back to ancient times. Hippocrates believed that mood was controlled by four bodily fluids, which he called humours. A good supply of blood made a person sanguine: brave, optimistic, amorous. An excess of mucus, or phlegm, tended to make him cold, lethargic and boring -in a word phlegmatic. If a person was sad, he suffered from excess black bile. Yellow bile causes him to be quick-tempered and choleric. So convincing was this scheme that it lasted onto the 17th century.

Besides his theory of humours, Hippocrates proposed an even more significant idea -that the brain is the organ of thought and feeling. This was a bold assertion at the time since no less an authority than Aristotle had decided that thoughts and feelings resided in the heart. The question persisted. "Tell me where is fancy bred," asked Shakespeare in the *Merchant of Venice*, "in the heart or in the head?"

Questions:

1.- In your own words and based on the ideas from the text, answer these questions. (Be careful with the grammar. Write precise answers.)

- a. *According to the text, what are feelings?*
- b. *Hippocrates developed two important ideas. Which ones?*

2.- Are the following sentences TRUE or FALSE? Write the evidence from the text. No marks are given for only True or False.

- a. *Emily Dickinson is famous for her cold poetry.*
- b. *Both Aristotle and Hippocrates located the physical centre of emotions in the same part of the body.*

3.- Find the words or phrases in the text that mean:

- a. *remove (paragraph 1)*
- b. *a temporary state of mind or spirits (paragraph 2)*
- c. *amount of something (paragraph 2)*
- d. *daring (paragraph 3)*

4.- Complete the following sentences. Use the appropriate form of the words in brackets when given.

- a. No _____ has yet described _____ emotions operate.
- b. The speech _____ health food lasted _____ one hour.
- c. _____ I've started jogging, I'm feeling much _____ (healthy).
- d. If someone _____ (have) a choleric temper, he _____ (get) angry very easily.

5.- Write about 60 to 100 words on the following topic: "There are people who think that all illness is caused by mental stress. What is your opinion?" DO NOT COPY FROM THE TEXT.