

33 Describing people – appearance

A Hair, face, skin and complexion



straight hair
and thin-faced



wavy hair
and round-faced



curly hair
and dark-skinned



a crew-cut



bald
with freckles



beard and moustache
with a chubby face



receding hair
and a few wrinkles

He used to have **black** hair but now it's gone **grey**, almost **white**.

What sort of person would you like to go out with? **Blonde**, **fair**, **dark** or **ginger-haired** / **red-haired**?

She has such beautiful **auburn** hair. [red-brown]

Fair and **dark** can be used for hair, complexion or skin.

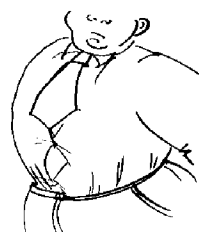
B Height and build



a rather **plump** or
stout man



a **slim** woman
[positive]



an **obese** person
[negative, very fat]

Fat may sound impolite. Instead we often say **a bit overweight**. If someone is broad and solid, we can say they are **stocky**. A person with good muscles can be **well-built** or **muscular**. If someone is terribly thin and refuses to eat, they may be **anorexic**.

C General appearance

She's a very **smart** and **elegant** woman, always **well-dressed**; her husband is quite the opposite, very **scruffy** and **untidy-looking**.

He's very **good-looking**, but his friend's rather **unattractive**.

Do you think **beautiful** women are always attracted to **handsome** men? I don't. I think **first impressions** matter most.

Tip: The suffix **-ish** is useful for describing people: (see Unit 8)

She's **tallish**.

He has **brownish** hair.

He must be **thirtyish**.

Exercises

33.1 Answer these remarks with the *opposite* description.

Example: A: I thought you said he was the short, chubby one.

B: No, quite the opposite, *he's the tall, thin-faced one*

- 1 A: Was that his brother, the dark-skinned, wavy-haired one?
B: No, quite the opposite, his brother's...
- 2 A: She's always quite well-dressed, so I've heard.
B: What! Who told you that? Every time I see her, she's...
- 3 A: So Charlene's that rather plump fair-haired woman, is she?
B: No, you're looking at the wrong one. Charlene's...
- 4 A: So, tell us about the new boss; good looking?
B: No, I'm afraid not; rather...
- 5 A: I don't know why, but I expected the tour-guide to be middle-aged or elderly.
B: No, apparently she's only...

33.2 Write one sentence to describe each of these people, giving information about their hair and face, their height and build and general appearance.





- 1 you yourself
- 2 your best friend
- 3 a neighbour
- 4 your ideal of a handsome man/a beautiful woman

Now, in the same way, describe somebody very famous, give some extra clues about them, e.g. *pop star/politician*, and see if someone else can guess who you are describing.

33.3 From these jumbled words, find combinations for describing people, as in the example. Not all of the words are on the left-hand page. Some of the combinations are hyphenated. Use a dictionary if necessary. *Example: good-looking*

looking long round haired good aged dressed legged
 stocky over- well faced mixed complexion build weight race tanned
 middle

33.4 WANTED! MISSING! Complete the gaps in these police posters.

<p>WANTED FOR MURDER</p>  <p>Ian Prowse, height 6ft,-faced, hair, skin</p>	<p>Wanted for Robbery</p>  <p>Sandra King height 5ft 4, hair, build,-faced</p>	<p>Missing</p>  <p>Louise Fox age 7, Asian hair.</p>	<p>Wanted dead or alive</p>  <p>Jake 'Dagger' Flagstone, 6ft, with and; build.</p>
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33.5 Make a collection of descriptions of people from newspapers and magazines. Court/crime reports, celebrity and gossip pages of magazines, and the 'personal' columns where people are seeking partners are good places to start.