

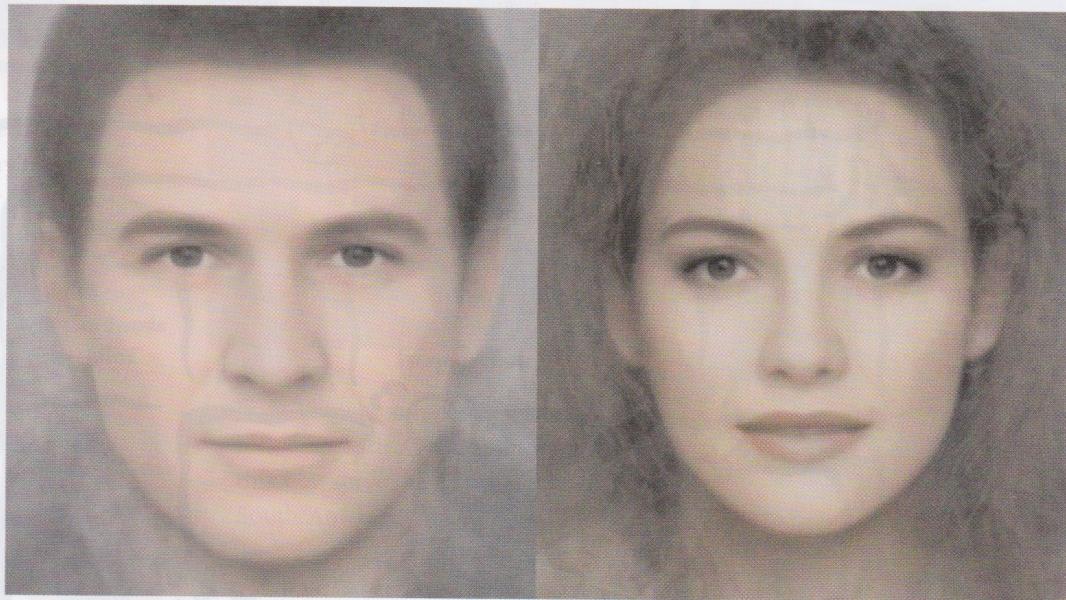
# Attraction

## The perfect face

Work in small groups and discuss these questions.

- Who do you think is the most handsome man in the world?
- Who do you think is the most beautiful woman in the world?
- What makes them more attractive than other men and women?

In a survey, ten thousand British men and women were asked about what they thought represented perfect male and female faces. When the data was processed by computer, these were the results.



### Lexis

- Do these images represent your idea of the perfect male / female face?
- Match the words in list A with the words in list B. (Sometimes more than one answer is possible.) Then choose one of the images, and use the phrases to describe the perfect male/female face to somebody who hadn't seen the pictures. What is it that makes the faces attractive?

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
a) smooth	teeth
b) perfect	eyes
c) sparkling	bone structure
d) full	in the cheeks
e) a big	jaw
f) a turned-up	lips
g) good	nose
h) high	skin
i) a square	cheekbones
j) dimples	smile

- 39** Five people were asked the question, 'What do you think makes a face attractive?' Listen to their answers and see if their opinions are the same as yours.
- Use phrases from 2 to describe people that you know.

**Reading**

1 Read this article which describes research into the nature of beauty. Find out whether, according to the research, the following statements are true or false.

- Beauty is 'in the eye of the beholder'.
- Most film stars and supermodels don't have ideal features.
- Most women prefer men with gentle features.
- There is more pressure on men to be perfect than there is on women.
- There are only subtle differences in what is considered to be beautiful by people from different cultures.

2 Work with a partner. Do you agree with the statements in 1?

Is there such a thing as the perfect face? Is beauty something you can measure?

Recent scientific evidence suggests that the answer is 'yes'. A new science, the science of attraction, has come to the conclusion that beauty is objective and quantifiable and not, as the romantics believe, in the eye of the beholder.

Julia Roberts



'The conclusion I reached,' said Dr Perrett, 'was that the most attractive shape was not average. If you look at famous film stars and supermodels, most of them have ideal features – larger than normal eyes, higher arched eyebrows, slightly smaller noses, cheekbones are a little more prominent. Even popular cartoon characters such as Betty Boop, Yasmin from Aladdin and Bambi have big eyes, small turned-up noses, big mouths and small chins. And if these features are exaggerated, the attractiveness rating goes up even more. Julia Roberts is a good example of this.'

with gentle faces. Although there is more pressure on females to be perfect, research suggests that men and women look for many of the same things: for example, expressive features such as arched eyebrows and a big smile were associated with attractiveness in men.

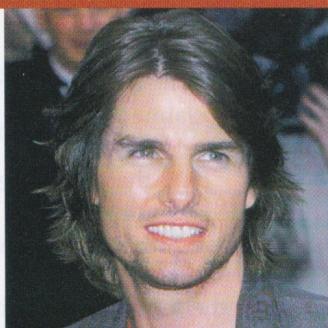
Dr David Perrett puts forward an evolutionary reason to explain why so many women now swoon over baby-faced stars such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Cruise. Women like a man with a feminine face because he is more likely to have higher levels of the female hormone oestrogen and therefore to make a kinder and more trustworthy husband and father.

But do these ideals of beauty manage to cross cultural boundaries? For instance, in some cultures, lips discs, scars and tattoos are considered to be attractive. Professor Cunningham of the University of Louisville, Kentucky, found that there were only very subtle differences between ethnic groups. For example, Asians tended to prefer faces that were slightly less mature and slightly less expressive, whereas blacks preferred faces that were a little more plump. In other words, although there might be a little truth in the old adage that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, by and large, we all seem to be attracted to the same things.

## Is **beauty** in the eye of the beholder?

For more than a century it was thought that a beautiful face was appealing because it was a collection of average features. Using his computer system, Dr David Perrett of the University of St Andrews has challenged the theory. In a key experiment, photographs of women were ranked for their attractiveness by a number of volunteers. Two composite pictures were then created: one, the average of all the pictures; the other made from those rated most attractive. Although the faces looked very similar at first glance, a significant number said they preferred the composite of most attractive faces.

Tom Cruise



But what do scientists make of men's faces? Do men with large eyes, high cheekbones and a small chin have the same irresistible appeal? Researchers were a bit shocked at the top-ranking male face. They expected it to have the classic square jaw and strong cheekbones, but instead, women seem to prefer men