

7

Describing people: appearance

A

Hair, face, skin and complexion /kəm'plekʃən/



She's got straight hair and she's **thin-faced**/ she's got a **thin face**.



She's got long, wavy hair and she's **round-faced**/ she's got a **round face**.



She's got curly hair and is **black**.



He's got a crew-cut. He's **white**.



He's bald /bɔːld/ and has freckles.



He's got a beard and **moustache** /mʊs'taːʃ/ and has a **chubby** face.



He's got receding hair and a few **wrinkles** /'rɪŋkəlz/.



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

What sort of person would you find attractive? **Blonde**, **fair**, **dark** or **ginger-haired** / **red-haired**?

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

Fair and **dark** can be used for hair, complexion or skin. Some people like **getting a tan** in summer [exposing their skin to the sun so that it goes darker], although the risks of getting **sunburnt** are well known.

B

Height and build

Fat may sound impolite. Instead we can say that someone is rather **plump** or **stout**, or 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**. [generally said about men] Someone who is very fat can be described as **obese** /əʊ'biːs/, especially when talking in a medical context.

Someone who is thin can be described as **slim** [positive] or **skinny** [negative]. If someone **has a nice figure**, they have an attractive shape. [generally said about women]

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** / **messy-looking**.

Chloe looked **stunning** in her red dress. [very attractive]

He's very **good-looking**, but his friend's rather **unattractive**. [opp attractive]

Her eyes are her best **feature**. [the most attractive part of her face]

Do you think **beautiful** women are always attracted to **handsome** men? I don't. I think **personality** matters most.

First impressions are always important. [your first reaction to someone]

Language help

The suffix **-ish** is useful for describing people (see [Unit 70](#)). *She's **tallish**. He has **brownish** hair. He must be **thirtyish** / **in his thirties**.*

Exercises

7.1 Choose a word from the opposite page to complete these sentences.

- I wish I could get a *tan* like yours but my skin just goes red in the sun.
- My cousin used to have a lovely but she's put on weight in all the wrong places since she stopped taking much exercise.
- Thomas's eyes are his best – they're so large and sparkly and such a deep brown.
- Jess is in her thirties but she still has the same lovely fresh as her young daughter has.
- Staff at the bank were told to dress smartly for work so they would always create a good on customers.
- I'd call her rather than ginger-haired – her hair's dark brown with just a tinge of red in it.
- George says that the round his eyes just show that he has smiled a lot in his life.
- Even in jeans Alina manages to look
- Carla looks beautiful in old clothes and without any make-up but when she's dressed up for an evening out she's absolutely

7.2 Answer these remarks with the opposite description.

- A: I thought you said he was the short, chubby one.
B: *No, no, no, not at all, he's the tall, thin-faced one.*
- A: Was that his brother, the one with wavy hair?
B: No, completely the opposite, his brother's
- A: She's always quite well-dressed, so I've heard.
B: What! Who told you that? Every time I see her, she's
- A: So Charlene's that rather plump, fair-haired woman, is she?
B: No, you're looking at the wrong one. Charlene's
- A: So, tell us about the new boss; good-looking?
B: No, I'm afraid not; rather
- A: I don't know why, but I expected the tour guide to be fiftyish or rather plump.
B: No, apparently she's only

7.3 WANTED! MISSING! Complete the gaps in these police posters with your own ideas.

WANTED FOR MURDER	WANTED FOR ARMED ROBBERY	MISSING	WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE
			
Ian Prowse White, height 6ft,-faced, hair, skin	Sandra King White, height 5ft 4, hair, build,-faced	Jasmin Kaur, Age 7, Asian, height 4ft, thin-..... , hair	Jack 'Dagger' Flagstone White, height 6ft, , with and ; build.

7.4 Over to you

Write a description of each of these people, giving information about their hair and face, their height and build and general appearance:

- you yourself
- your best friend
- a neighbour
- your ideal of a handsome man / a beautiful woman