

# 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                      3 a neighbour
- 2 your best friend                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.

**WANTED FOR MURDER**



Ian Prowse,  
height 6ft,  
.....-faced,  
..... hair,  
..... skin

**Wanted for Robbery**




Sandra King  
height 5ft 4,  
..... hair,  
..... build,  
.....-faced

**Missing**



Louise Fox  
age 7, Asian  
.....  
.....  
hair.

**Wanted dead or alive**



Jake 'Dagger'  
Flagstone, 6ft  
....., with  
..... and .....;  
..... build.

**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.