33 Describing people – appearance



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.

Height and build



a rather plump or stout man



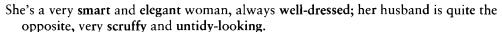
a slim woman [positive]



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.

General appearance



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.

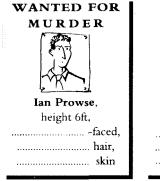
- B: No, quite the opposite, he's the tall, thin-faced one
- 1 A: Was that his brother, the dark-skinned, wavy-haired one?
 - B: No, quite the opposite, his brother's...
- 2 A: She's always quite well-dressed, so I've heard.
 - B: What! Who told you that? Every time I see her, she's...
- 3 A: So Charlene's 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...
- 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.

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



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

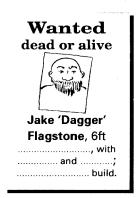




Wanted for

Robbery





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.