

## 37

## Describing people: appearance

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



She's got **straight hair** and she's **thin-faced** (or she's got a thin face).



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



She's got **curly hair** and is **dark-skinned** (or she's got dark skin).



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



He's **bald** /bɒld/ and has **freckles**.



He's got a **beard and moustache** /məs'tæʃ/ 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**. /'ɔ:bən/ [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]



a **skinny** person [rather negative]



an **obese couple** /əʊ'bi:z/ [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** /ænə'reksɪk/.

## 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**.

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 **personality** matters most.

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

## TIP

The suffix **-ish** is useful for describing people (see Unit 8). She's **tallish**. He has **brownish** hair. He must be **thirtyish**.

## Exercises

### 37.1 Answer these remarks with the opposite description.

**EXAMPLE** 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.*

- 1 A: Was that his brother, the dark-skinned, wavy-haired one?  
 B: No, completely 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 ...

### 37.2 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. He's/She's a *pop star/politician*. Can someone else guess who you are describing?

### 37.3 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. You can use the words more than once.



**EXAMPLE** *good-looking*

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

### 37.4 WANTED! MISSING! Complete the gaps in these police posters.

**WANTED FOR MURDER**



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

**Wanted for Armed Robbery**



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

**Missing**



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

**Wanted dead or alive**



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

**Follow-up:** 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.