

## **Describing people: appearance**

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



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 /bpld/ 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 /

She has such beautiful auburn hair. /ˈɔːbən/ [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]



a skinny person [rather negative]



an obese couple /əu'biss/ [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 /ænəˈreksɪk/.

## **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]



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

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## **Exercises**

- 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

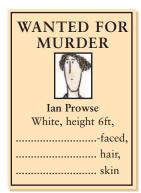
Now, in the same way, describe somebody very famous, give some extra clues about them, e.g. He's/She's a pop star/politician. Can someone else guess who you are describing?

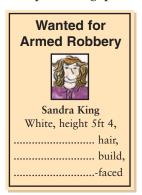
From these jumbled words, find combinations for describing people, as in the example. 37.3 Not all of the words are on the left-hand page. Some of the combinations are hyphenated. Use a dictionary if necessary. You can use the words more than once.

EXAMPLE good-looking

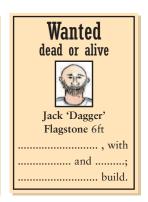
mixed dressed legged looking over round complexion weight good long race haired stocky build red aged middle tanned faced

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









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.