

Unit 1 – Describing People

- 1 (Before doing the listening activity, T can ask Ss to tell him/her what information is needed in order to describe a person e.g. height, build, age, facial features, character, clothes, etc. T can invite Ss to suggest as many words as possible related to each category e.g. height: tall, short, of average height, etc. Ss then do the listening activity.)

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Height | quite tall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | rather short <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Build | well-built <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | thin <input type="checkbox"/> muscular <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Age | early twenties <input type="checkbox"/> | mid thirties <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> teenaged <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Facial Features | oval face <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | high cheekbones <input type="checkbox"/> blue eyes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mole <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hair | curly <input type="checkbox"/> | short brown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wavy <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clothes | casual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | formal <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personality | good humoured <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | imaginative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vain <input type="checkbox"/> short-tempered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Activities/Hobbies | going to discos <input type="checkbox"/> | watching old films <input type="checkbox"/> cooking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Tapescript for Ex. 1 (p. 4) (to be heard twice)

Sally: Wow, Pam, this beach house is beautiful. I wish I'd come sooner. What a fantastic view! You are so lucky moving here.

Pam: I know, and not just for the house. I've met this wonderful man, and guess what ... he asked me to marry him!

Sally: What? Do I know him? Come on. You must tell me everything!

Pam: His name is Paul and we met at the marina. He's fixing up his yacht – it's a kind of a hobby for him. He told me it helps him to relax when he isn't working. He's a writer, you know.

Sally: How exciting! What does he look like?

Pam: Well, he's quite tall and very well-built – probably from all that hard work on his yacht.

Sally: Tell me more!

Pam: OK! He's in his mid thirties. He's got a nice oval face and gorgeous blue eyes. His hair is short and brown. He usually wears jeans and T-shirts – you know, casual clothes.

Sally: So, what's he like?

Pam: He's certainly good-humoured. Paul always likes to share a joke. He's quite imaginative too. He's never boring.

Sally: He sounds too good to be true!

Pam: Well, I suppose he can be a bit short-tempered occasionally. You can judge for yourself though. He's invited both of us to dinner tonight. He's going to cook paella, his favourite Spanish dish. He's an excellent cook, you know.

Sally: I can't wait to meet him!

2 Paragraph plan

2nd paragraph: physical description (late sixties, of average height, neither fat nor thin, plump round face, wavy white hair, sparkling blue eyes, casual, comfortable clothes.)

3rd paragraph: character description (generous, good-natured, patient, only gets annoyed when children pick her favourite flowers, quite stubborn.)

4th paragraph: hobbies (spends a lot of time looking after her garden, participates in local flower shows, raises money for charity.)

5th paragraph: comments/feelings (perfect next-door neighbour, very close, fond of her.)

• Topic sentences and suggested alternatives

- Mavis has been my neighbour for six years.
Mavis moved to our neighbourhood six years ago.
- Physically, Mavis looks younger than most other women in their late sixties.
Looking at Mavis, it is difficult to believe she is in her late sixties.
- As for her personality ...
As far as her character is concerned ...
- Mavis always seems to be busy doing something.
Mavis is a very busy person.
- All in all, Mavis is the perfect next-door neighbour.
Mavis is the best neighbour one could wish to have.

- **adjectives describing physical appearance:** (of average (height), neither (fat) (nor) thin, plump round (face), wavy white (hair), sparkling blue (eyes), casual comfortable (clothes))

- **adjectives describing personality:** good-natured, patient, (hardly ever gets) annoyed, stubborn

(After reading the text in Ex. 2, T asks the following comprehension questions.)

Suggested comprehension questions and answers

- How long has the writer known Mavis?
She/He has known Mavis for six years.
 - What does Mavis look like?
She is of average height and is neither fat nor thin. She is in her late sixties. Her face is round and plump and she has sparkling blue eyes and wavy white hair. She usually wears casual, comfortable clothes.
 - What annoys Mavis?
Children picking her favourite roses and lilies.
 - What are Mavis's good qualities?
She is good-natured, generous and patient.
 - How does Mavis spend most of her time?
Looking after her garden, participating in local flower shows or raising money for charity.
 - Do you think the writer enjoys living next door to Mavis? Yes, *very much.*
- 3** (Before doing Ex. 3, T should tell Ss that some items may apply to more than one of the words in the table. After Ss have done Ex. 3, T explains how **early**, **mid**, **late** are used to talk about someone's age.)

e.g. John is 21 – John is in his **early** twenties.
John is 26 – John is in his **mid** twenties.
John is 29 – John is in his **late** twenties.

Then T gives various ages and Ss make sentences as shown in the example. T can assign the relative's description as written HW.)

HEIGHT: of medium height, tall, just over six foot, short

BUILD: slim, thin, muscular, well-built, overweight, skinny, long-legged, round shouldered

AGE: middle-aged, teenaged, elderly, in his teens, in his mid-forties, in his late forties

COMPLEXION: wrinkled, tanned, pale, freckled

FACE: round, oval, wrinkled, tanned, thin, pale, freckled

HAIR: ginger, curly, blond, thick, balding, thin, wavy, straight, shoulder-length, short

EYES: slanted, almond-shaped

NOSE: thin, curved, crooked, freckled, straight

LIPS: thin, full

SPECIAL features: mole, scar, dimples, beard, moustache, long-legged, round-shouldered

- 1 **bushy/thick/fair/thin/dark** eyebrows
- 2 **deep-set/puffy/dark** eyes
- 3 **rosy/clear/fair/pale/spotty/dark** complexion
- 4 **broad/upturned/hooked/crooked/thin** nose
- 5 **double/spotty** chin
- 6 **thin/puffy/clean-shaven/pale/oval/spotty** face
- 7 **rosy/full/thin/pale** lips
- 8 **rosy/hollow/puffy/spotty** cheeks
- 9 **bushy/thick/fair/thin/curly/dark** hair
- 10 **broad** shoulders

- 1 muscular 3 square 5 long
- 2 broad 4 thin 6 scar

Tapescript for Ex. 5 (p. 6) (to be heard twice)

'A dangerous prisoner escaped this morning from Spurswall prison. He is believed to be at large in the Waxerton area and police are warning the public not to approach him as he is likely to react violently.

Neville Slatter is 6 foot 3 inches tall and quite **muscular** with **broad** shoulders. He is 54 years old and unshaven with a **square** jaw, a large nose and **thin** lips. He has **long** untidy brown hair and is bald on top. He also has a **scar** on his right cheek.

Should you see this man, or if you have knowledge of his whereabouts, please contact your local police station.'

- There is no description of his personality because the public only have to be able to identify him physically, probably from a distance as they have been warned not to approach him.

6 (Suggested answers)

- David Keen was well-built **with** fine wrinkles around his eyes **which** showed when he laughed.
- Willy is in his mid twenties. He has an oval face and long curly hair **which** he ties back in a pony-tail. He has a big kitchen **where** he likes to cook for his friends.
- Helen is dark-skinned **with** beautiful almond-shaped eyes. She dyes her hair, **which** makes her look younger than she is.
- Marcy's mother is an attractive woman **who** usually wears her long blond hair in a bun.

- 1 persuasive 4 honest 7 trustworthy
- 2 tactless 5 fussy 8 outgoing
- 3 frank 6 reserved

- 8 (Before doing Ex. 8, T should explain that some of the adjectives can be negative or positive, depending on how they are used (e.g. ambitious, shy, reserved, thick-skinned). T also reminds Ss to justify the traits mentioned in any character description they write.) After Ss have done Ex. 8, T can assign the short paragraph describing a relative as written HW.

Positive Qualities: patient, ambitious, generous, mature, interesting, friendly, tactful, good-natured, thick-skinned, easy-going, hard-working, fair, shy, helpful, reserved, out-going, polite, cheerful.

Negative Qualities: pessimistic, mean, ambitious, hostile, immature, impatient, short-tempered, thick-skinned, deceitful, shy, aggressive, reserved.

(Suggested answers)

Jane can be very **boring**; she never has anything interesting to say.

Simon is rather **pessimistic**; he always expects the worst to happen.

He tends to be **mean**; he counts every last penny and hates spending money on anything.

James is very **ambitious**; he plans to work hard and reach the top of his profession before he is thirty.

My brother is very **generous**; he is always willing to give up his time or money to help other people.

John is very **mature** for his age; although he's only eleven, he thinks and speaks like an adult.

Mr Walker is an **interesting** man; he tells the most wonderful stories that never fail to fascinate me.

Joanna can be quite **hostile**; when she loses her temper she becomes quite unapproachable.

My sister is very **immature**; she's thirty-two but generally behaves like a child.

John is a really **friendly** boy; he is always smiling and loves meeting new people.

Barbara tends to be **impatient**; everything has to be done immediately or she gets angry.

My father is very **tactful**; he always knows how to get his point across without offending people.

My grandfather is very **good-natured**; he is never unkind or unfriendly.

George is rather **short-tempered**; he often gets angry for no good reason.

Pam is very **thick-skinned**; her little brother says horrible things to her but she never gets upset.

Hugh is really **easy-going**; he always manages to stay calm in a crisis.

Julie is such a **hard-working** girl; her homework is always in on time.

Sylvia was a **deceitful** child; she would often pretend to be ill so her parents would buy her presents.

Pete is a very **fair** teacher; he never treats any of his students as if they were better than the rest.

My little brother is very **shy**; he often hides in his room if he knows people are coming to the house.

Troy is very **helpful**; he's always willing to lend a helping hand.

Murray is quite **aggressive**; he'll fight until he gets what he wants.

Bert is quite **reserved**; he rarely shows his feelings. Glenda is **outgoing**, and has a great ability to make friends.

Rita is very **polite**; she always speaks kindly to people.

Thelma is a **cheerful** person, always bright and smiling.

9 (Suggested answers)

1 He is humorous **but** has a tendency to be immature.

2 **Although** he is kind-hearted, he can, on occasion, be absent-minded.

3 She is enthusiastic, **as well as** cooperative.

4 She has a pleasant personality; **nevertheless**, she can be shy and unsociable.

5 **In addition** to being well-balanced, he **also** has a sensitive nature.

6 **In spite of the fact that** he has a generous disposition, from time to time he can be aggressive.

10 Jeff Smith: productive, decisive, cooperative, punctual

Mary Peterson: dedicated, nervous, (too) sensitive

Tapescript for Ex. 10 (p. 7) (to be heard twice)

Mrs Pringle: Ah, Mr Black. I was wondering if you could give me your opinion of the two candidates up for promotion to executive sales manager.

Mr Black: Yes, certainly, Mrs Pringle. Personally, I think Jeff Smith would be more appropriate for the position. He's very **productive**. Did you know that he's managed to double our clientele over the last five years?

Mrs Pringle: Really? Excellent!

Mr Black: Mm, quite. He's **decisive** too, which, I'm sure you would agree, is an essential quality for such a position. He's very good at using his own judgement to make decisions. From what I can gather, he's also **cooperative**. He seems to work very well with the other employees.

Mrs Pringle: Mmmm. But is he **punctual**, Mr Black? You know what I think of people who aren't punctual.

Mr Black: Oh yes, Mrs Pringle; he's never late for work.

Mrs Pringle: And what about the other one?

Mr Black: Well, Mary Peterson's definitely **dedicated**; she's been with us for eight years now. Sadly, she has a tendency to be **nervous** — quite a few of her colleagues have commented on the difficulty she seems to have in facing customers. I'd also say she's too **sensitive** — she's been known to burst into tears when criticised!

Mrs Pringle: Oh dear, we can't have that now, can we? It seems that Smith would be our best bet, wouldn't you agree?

Mr Black: Oh, absolutely, Mrs Pringle.

- 11 •** Although, as well as, In spite of the fact that, In addition

Positive Qualities: dedicated, enthusiastic, full of creative ideas, genuine leadership abilities, has made invaluable suggestions, uses own initiative, displays excellent judgement, hard-working, conscientious, responsible, trustworthy

Negative Qualities: overbearing

This extract is taken from a letter of recommendation (therefore it is written in a formal style).

There is no description of physical appearance because a letter of recommendation only details a person's character and job-related qualities/qualifications.

- 12** (Before T assigns Ex. 12 as written HW, he/she explains/elicits the meaning of the adjectives listed, and asks Ss to think of examples to justify each character quality. T also points out that the letter should be written in a formal style that is: no abbreviations, no colloquial English, no chatty descriptions but use of complex sentences, use of the passive, use of advanced vocabulary.)

13 (Suggested answers)

- flight details
- physical description (clothes)
- character description
- hobbies/interests/activities

- 14** (T can assign Ex. 14 as written HW. Ss use their notes to write the same letter in their own words. This letter should be written in an informal style.)

Appearance: tall, slim, broad shoulders, short dark hair

Clothes: blue jeans, sweatshirt, (red) baseball cap

Character: mature, helpful, easy-going, shy

Hobbies/Activities: (working out at the) gym

Tapescript for Ex. 4 (p. 8) (to be heard twice)

Dear Glenda and Bill,

Thanks so much for agreeing to let my brother, Paolo, stay at your house while he attends his summer course. At least someone will be keeping an eye on him!

He'll be arriving at Gatwick from Milan at 6.30 in the evening on the 26th of July, and as you haven't seen him since he was little I'd better give you a quick description. He's quite **tall** and **slim** with **broad shoulders**. His hair is very **dark** now and he's had it cut quite **short**. Like most 17-year-olds today, he'll almost certainly be wearing **blue jeans** and a **sweatshirt**; he'll probably be wearing his red **baseball cap** as well.

I doubt very much that you'll have any problems with him, as he's quite **mature** for his age and very **helpful** around the house. Paolo's generally **easy-going**, but he's often **shy** around strangers.

He started going to the **gym** about six months ago and he's keen to continue working out while he's in England, so it would be great if you could help him to find a good gym when he arrives.

Thanks again for helping out, it's really kind of you. I'll probably phone after he's arrived, so hopefully I'll speak to you both then.

Love,
Pietro

- 15** 1 aggressive 3 inattentive 5 vain
2 loving 4 shy

16 a Paragraph 3

- b** – his whole body would shake with laughter whenever he found something funny
- he would frown angrily and stamp his feet
- c** The writer uses past tenses as the text is describing someone from the past who the writer is unlikely to see again. The future tense is used in the final paragraph as the writer says what his/her feelings for his father's friend will always be.
- d** The writer was very fond of Archie. He will always treasure his happy childhood memories of him.

17 (Suggested answers)

- 1 spoilt 5 cheeky/rude
- 2 shy 6 stubborn
- 3 sentimental/sensitive/ 7 cheerful/good-emotional humoured
- 4 reserved/unemotional

18 (Suggested answers)

- a Last Saturday I was standing in a corner by myself at Suzie's party trying to decide whether or not to leave and go home when I spotted Suzie dragging a reluctant-looking middle-aged man in my direction. 'Darling, you haven't met John McKay yet, have you? He's a marvellous painter, you know.'

(direct speech, suspense)

- b It was one of those beautiful summer mornings that make you doubt the importance of school when my best friend Giles and I were called up to the head teacher's office. 'Ah, Jones and Stevenson,' she smiled. 'This is Mr Simmons; he'll be taking over from Mrs Perkins for the next two weeks. I'd like you to take him down to your classroom.'

(direct speech, weather description)

- c 'What?' cried my best friend, Denise. 'You've never heard of Tom Cruise?' I felt embarrassed about my apparent ignorance and slowly shook my head. We were queuing up at the local cinema waiting to watch what I thought would be just another mediocre Hollywood film. However, little did I know how wrong I was on that day, two years ago.

(direct speech, suspense)

- 19** • **Model A** is purely descriptive
• **Model B** includes narrative techniques
• **Paragraph Outline**

1st Paragraph: name of the person, time you met her (Whitney Houston, popular singer, famous actress, successful films)

2nd Paragraph: physical description (gorgeous black hair, kind brown eyes, beautiful smile, elegant clothes, perfect figure)

3rd Paragraph: personality characteristics and justification (warm, generous, determined, strong-willed)

4th Paragraph: interests/activities (glamorous Hollywood parties, family-minded, relationship with daughter)

Final Paragraph: comments/feelings about the person (incredible woman, exhausting life but still looks fresh and beautiful for the cameras)

- 20** (T should discuss the topics in class before assigning them as written HW.)

Suggested paragraph plans

- 1 Paragraph 1:** name, time/place you met/saw the person (... , school)

Paragraph 2: physical appearance (his/her height, build, age, facial features, hair, clothes)

Paragraph 3: personality characteristics and justification (e.g. patient, supportive, easy-going, reserved, etc.)

Paragraph 4: hobbies/interests (e.g. likes painting, enjoys going to the cinema, etc.)

Paragraph 5: comments/feelings (like him/her, lucky to have him/her as a friend)

Tenses to be used:

Past Simple to say when/where you met him/her

Present Simple to describe him/her

(This composition can be written in an informal style: chatty description, colloquial English, abbreviations, etc.)

- 2 Paragraph 1:** name, time/place you met the person (aunt Claire, moved from Australia)

Paragraph 2: physical appearance (height, build, age, facial features, hair, clothes)

Paragraph 3: personality characteristics and justification emphasising how these have influenced you (e.g. frank, trustworthy, fussy, etc. include examples of mannerism)

Paragraph 4: hobbies/interests (e.g. gardening, charity organisations)

Paragraph 5: comments/feelings (admire her, respect, etc.)

(Informal style can be adopted, as well as narrative techniques.)

- 3 Paragraph 1:** name, where you heard/read about the person

Paragraph 2: physical appearance (height, born in ... , facial features)

Paragraph 3: personality characteristics and justification (e.g. determined, honest, stubborn, etc., include examples of mannerism)

Paragraph 4: hobbies/interests (alternatively his/her achievements can be mentioned)

Paragraph 5: comments/feelings (e.g. impressed, admire, etc.)

(Note that this paragraph plan differs a little from the one used in the previous compositions. Some information can be excluded (e.g. clothes, hobbies, etc.) depending on what we know about this person. His/Her achievements can be mentioned. Past tenses should be used.)