Describing People

Height, age, hair and faces, how to describe people clearly and kindly, and the words of witnesses and writers, from A1 to C2.

A1–C2 · English Vocabulary, Lesson 15

curly-haired · in her twenties · the spitting image

Height, age and hair *A1–A2*

tall	short
young	old
long hair	short hair
straight	curly
wavy	blond / fair
dark / brown	red
grey	black

He is tall. She is ten. · She has got long hair.

The face *A1–A2*

face	eyes
nose	mouth
ears	smile
beard	moustache
glasses	cap
blue eyes	green eyes
brown eyes	jacket

What does she look like? (face, body) · What is she like? (character)

Precise and tactful *B1–B2*

Build: slim, well-built, of medium height, petite

Age: in her twenties, in his early / late forties, middle-aged, elderly

Face and hair: freckles, pale, tanned, wrinkles, a fringe, a ponytail, bald, auburn

Compounds: blue-eyed, curly-haired, well-dressed, left-handed, good-looking

Order: opinion, size, age, shape, colour, origin, material

Tact: slim (not skinny) · elderly (not old) · losing his hair (not bald)

*Max is six, **slim**, with short **curly** fair hair, a **fringe** and **freckles**.*

moreno = dark-haired (hair) or tanned (skin)

Literary and exact *C1–C2*

Build: gaunt, lanky, wiry, stocky

Complexion: sallow, ruddy, weather-beaten, pallid

Features: chiselled, angular, high cheekbones, an aquiline nose

Grooming: dishevelled, unkempt, immaculate, dapper

Idioms: the spitting image of, a face like thunder, look like a million dollars, long in the tooth, don't judge a book by its cover

Register: police report (approx. 1.85 m, heavy build) · novel · dating profile (GSOH)

*She **bears a striking resemblance to** her grandmother: the same **high cheekbones**.*

resemble someone (no "to")

Describing someone

- *What does he look like?*
- *He's tall, with short dark hair.*
- *She's got green eyes and glasses.*
- *Today he's wearing a red cap.*

Common mistakes

- ~~She has the hair long.~~ → She **has got long hair**.
- ~~I have ten years.~~ → I **am** ten.
- ~~her hairs are blond~~ → her **hair is** blond
- ~~eyes blue~~ → **blue eyes**

Words with a past

- **moustache**: Greek *mystax*, upper lip
- **handsome**: first "easy to handle"
- **auburn**: Latin *albus*, white
- **immaculate**: Latin *macula*, a spot

My new words

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