

DESCRIPTIONS

Providing a good clear description of someone may be particularly useful when participating in Part 2 of the IELTS Speaking test.

Using a variety of adjectives, which refer to a person's appearance or provide information about a person's character can make your description more interesting and exciting. It can create a 'word picture' of a person, which may leave a good impression on your listener.

Also, providing such a description allows you to demonstrate your vocabulary range.

STUDY TIPS

In the IELTS speaking test, when describing someone, make your description more interesting by including information about the person's attitude, behaviour and intellectual ability, in addition to describing their physical characteristics.

This will give you an opportunity to demonstrate a good range of vocabulary.

These study notes focus on the organisation of descriptions using adjectives.

Describing people: organisation of description – appearance

A. When describing someone's appearance, it is important to think about various headings to help organise your description:

Category	Language Examples
1. Age	late teens, middle-aged, early twenties, a twenty-one-year-old, mid seventies
2. Height	tall, short, average height *
3. Build	heavy, heavy set, stocky, plump, fat, skinny, slim, long-legged, muscular, broad shouldered, well-built, average build
4. Hair	Colour: blond, brunette, black, red, auburn Length: long, short, a number one [meaning: very short, almost shaved], bald Style: straight, curly, wavy, frizzy
5. Eyes	Colour: blue, green, brown, black Qualities: cold, dreamy, shifty Size: big, tiny Shape: almond, oriental, round
6. Face	long, thin, narrow, with narrow lips, chubby cheeks, huge forehead, no chin, pointed chin, pretty face
7. Skin	Colour: white, pale, tanned, oriental, yellow, dark, black, tanned Texture: wrinkled, lined, aged, pimply, oily, greasy
8. Distinguishing Features	glasses, beard, mole, tattoo, scar, birth mark, bushy eyebrows, freckles, pimples

*In North America feet and inches are used for height, whereas in many other countries, metres & centimetres are used.

Example: That broad shouldered soccer player is 6 foot 3.

Describing people: organisation of description – character

B. When describing someone’s character, think about the following headings to help organise your description for character features:

Categories	Language Examples	
1. Intellectual ability	silly, clever, wise, intelligent, bright, dumb, clever, stupid, foolish, cunning, smart	
2. Attitudes	a. towards life: optimistic, pessimistic, introverted, extroverted, sensible, down-to-Earth, sensitive b. towards others: polite, impolite, cruel, generous, kind, mean, sociable, honest, reliable, sincere, jealous, envious	
3. Behaviour	Positive determined economical confident assertive interesting	Negative stubborn miserly, stingy arrogant aggressive weird, odd, strange

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