



Vocabulary & Pronunciation / Level 2

Unit 9 - *Describing Appearance*



About this eBook

This eBook goes together with the audio that you can download from Zappenglish.com. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please visit our website – we always value your opinion. Good luck! Katie, Tom & Mark



Introduction

In this unit you're going to learn how to describe what people look like, and work on your pronunciation with these words and phrases.

Vocabulary and Listening 1

Listen to these descriptions. How many of the words or phrases for describing people do you know?

KATIE: OK, Tom and I are describing ourselves.

TOM: Great.

KATIE: How would you describe your appearance Tom?

TOM: Well I'm...I'm not **thin**. I'm er...medium built. And...I've **got quite short hair**.

KATIE: Mmm Hmm.

TOM: But it's getting longer. Probably almost **medium length hair** now.

KATIE: Yeah.

TOM: I'm...I've **got quite fair skin**, being from England. Erm, and...I'm worried about going **bald**.

KATIE: (laughter) He's not **bald** yet.

TOM: No.

KATIE: But he does worry about it.

TOM: And you?

KATIE: Erm...well like you, I am also...not **thin**. (laughter) I would...

TOM: Not **thin**.

KATIE: ...I would love to be lovely and **slim**, but unfortunately...that's not true. Erm I've **got medium length**, nearly long hair. Erm, my hair is...sort of brownish. Boring brown colour. Erm...I was **blonde** once in the past, but it looked terrible. Erm I have...I haven't **got dark skin**, but I wouldn't say I'm **fair-skinned**, I think I go brown quite easily.

TOM: Mmm.



KATIE: And...ooh and my hair, I forgot is...it's not **straight**, it's a bit **curly**. Erm, again, when I had my **blonde** hair it was **spiky**, but not now.

TOM: I had **spiky** hair when I was twelve or thirteen, as well. Big **blonde spikes**.

KATIE: (laughter) Now I just have sort of...a little bit **curly**, brown hair that's going grey.

TOM: Boo.

Meaning and Pronunciation 1

So let's check the words and phrases from the descriptions and work on pronunciation. Try and answer my questions and repeat after the beep.

There are two ways to talk about the opposite of *fat*. One of them is a more positive way to say the opposite of fat. What is it?

slim

/s/ /l/ **slim** She's tall and **slim**.

The other can sometimes be a little negative. What is it?

thin

/θ/ /θ/ **thin** She's looking really **thin**. I hope she's OK.

There are lots of ways to describe people's hair. The description starts with, *He or she's got....*How many did you hear or can you think of?

Here are some of them.

He's **got short hair**.

He's **got short hair**.

She's **got long hair**.

She's **got long hair**.

She's **got medium length hair**.

She's **got medium length hair**.

What about hair that is like a yellow colour?

She's got **blonde** hair.

She's got **blonde** hair.

What about a colour similar to **blonde**, meaning *light*, but we can also use it to describe skin?



fair

There are two ways of saying this;

He's **fair-haired**. He's **fair-haired**.

He's **got fair hair**. He's **got fair hair**.

She's **fair-skinned**. She's **fair-skinned**.

She's **got fair skin**. She's **got fair skin**.

What about the opposite to *light*?

dark

He's **got dark hair**. He's **got dark hair**.

We can have straight hair, or what's the opposite?

curly hair

He's **got curly hair**. He's **got curly hair**.

She's **got straight hair**. She's **got straight hair**.

If someone's hair sticks directly out from their head in points, we can say they have...

spiky hair

Stress on the first syllable /spaɪ/ the second syllable is /ki:/.

spiky He's **got spiky hair**.

And what about if someone has no hair on the top of their head? What do we call them?

bald

Listen, it's /ɔ:/.

bald

He's **bald**.



Remember, some people might not like being called **bald**, so be careful with that one!

Vocabulary and Listening 2

Now listen to Clare talking about how people look. Which other words and phrases do you hear for describing someone?

CLARE: Well I was just thinking about really, the way people look and how it's actually really important, erm...to people, er, their physical appearance is very important to them, and for me also I suppose. Erm, generally I'm very **pale**...and...in the past, this used to be a problem, I used to think, *Oh, if only I was er, **tanned** and oh I'd love to...to be more **tanned**.* Now...it's not so much of a problem. I think you have to consider the risks to health, and that...you know, to be **tanned**, this...this has problems, potentially in later life. So I'm quite happy now to be **pale**.

CLARE: OK **spots**. Well **spots** are a problem aren't they? Erm...**spots** have always been a problem in my life...erm...from being a child, and even through to...to now on the occasion...er on an occasion getting a big **spot** on my chin, or in a really, really uncomfortable place...er...um, fortunately I've never suffered with **scars** because of the **spots**, erm...I know people that in the past have had...um...er, a serious problem with **spots**, acne in fact, and this has left them in later life with **scars**, and some quite serious **scars** on their face. So I suppose I have to be thankful that it's never happened to me.

CLARE: I really don't like facial hair; **moustaches**, **beards**...erm, it's just, I don't really understand the...the purpose...erm...of...of them, and they're not particularly...for me they're not attractive to look at, and...you know especially if it's a boyfriend or a partner, it's not particularly pleasant if you're going to kiss them, and they scratch your face with their hair. Erm, for me there's nothing nice about **moustaches** or **beards**, and if I could have my way, I would make both of them illegal!

CLARE: Er, I would say that in terms of somebody's physical appearance, I always prefer...er, somebody to be **slim**, er, not really because of the...the...their body particularly...um...more to do with lifestyle, I suppose I imagine that if somebody is **slim**, they have an active lifestyle, they really enjoy sports...and so this is generally the type of person that would appeal to me, because, they would have perhaps, similar interests to me. Erm...in terms of...whether or not they need to be **muscular**, it's not particularly important to me. Erm, I think it's nice that someone has a...a...they



have a few **muscles**, but I think it can be also erm, quite unattractive if it's...if it's extreme. I would never want to be with a man that spends more time in the gym than with me!

Meaning and Vocabulary 2

So now let's check and practice the words from those descriptions. Answer the questions, repeat after the beep.

What's another way to say that someone is *fat*?

overweight

Remember, sometimes people don't like to talk about their weight. *Fat* is definitely rude and you should be very careful how you use it. **Overweight** is more polite, but you still need to be careful. Sometime we use it with *a bit* to make it less strong. It's safer to use these words to talk about yourself, than another person, unless you know them really well.

I'm a bit **overweight**. I'm a bit **overweight**.

Now for two words to talk about skin colour. The first one means *someone's skin, especially on their face, is white*. Maybe because they're scared or sick.

pale

pale Are you OK? You look very **pale**.

The other one means *brown, because a person has been in the sun*.

tanned

Listen to the end sound /d/. **tanned**

She's very **tanned**.

Or we can also say;

She's **got a tan**.

You've **got a good tan**. Have you been on holiday?



What do we call the red circles people can get on their face? We often get these when we're teenagers.

British English **spots**

American English **pimples**

Again, be careful because it can be rude to talk about someone's **spots** or **pimples**.

spots

pimples

I had lots of **spots** when I was a teenager.

I can't go out tonight, I've got a terrible **spot** on my nose.

Another thing we might see on the skin is a mark, from when someone hurt themselves in the past. If I cut myself badly, the cut'll get better, but it'll leave a...

scar

a **scar** I've got a **scar** on my knee from when I fell over.

Now for hair we find on faces. Hopefully on the faces of men! What's the hair called that men can grow below their nose?

a **moustache**

a **moustache** He's got a **moustache**.

And what about when the hair is also on the chin and sides of the face?

a **beard**

a **beard** He's got a **beard**.

And finally, when a person is strong, and they look strong, we can talk about their body and describe it by calling the person...

muscular

The end sound is /ə/. **muscular** He's very **muscular**.



Summary

That's great - now you should be better at describing appearance and have got a bit better with your pronunciation. Well done!



Extra Materials

Vocabulary Glossary

slim /slɪm/ (adjective) – a positive way to say *thin*, not fat or overweight

thin /θɪn/ (adjective) – not fat, maybe underweight

medium length (hair) /miːdiəm leŋ(k)θ/ (adjective) – not long, not short

curly (hair) /kɜːli/ (adjective) – in circles, not straight

straight (hair) /streɪt/ (adjective) – not bent or curved

spiky (hair) /spaɪki/ (adjective) – sticking up straight into the air

dark /dɑːk/ (adjective) – the opposite of light

blonde /blɒnd/ (adjective) – light yellow hair colour

bald /bɔːld/ (adjective) – no hair on the head

fair /feə/ (adjective) – the opposite of dark, used to describe hair or skin

tanned /tænd/ (adjective) – brown from the sun

pale /peɪl/ (adjective) – light coloured, to describe skin, maybe because of illness – can be negative

a beard /bɪəd/ (noun) – hair on a man's chin and face

a **m**oustache /məʊstɑːʃ/ (noun) – hair on a man's lip and below the nose

overweight /əʊvəweɪt/ (adjective) – a polite way of saying *a bit fat*

muscular /mʌskjʊlə/ (adjective) – strong looking, with a lot of muscles

a spot / a pimple /spɒt/ /pɪmpl/ (noun) – a small red mark on the skin

a scar /skɑː/ (noun) – a mark on the skin left from an old cut



Practice 1

Fill the gaps with a word from the unit.

1. He used to have lots of hair, but now he's totally _____.
2. I've always wanted _____ hair, but mine's completely straight.
3. Oh no, I can't go out tonight, I've got a big _____ on my nose.
4. He's lost a lot of weight, I think he's too _____.
5. She's been on holiday, she's got lovely _____ skin.

Practice 2

Underline the correct word/s.

1. He's got *blonde* / *dark* / *slim* hair.
2. She's overweight / tanned / spiky.
3. Her hair is *dark* / *pale* / *fair*.
4. She's *thin* / *slim* / *muscular* / *curly*.
5. He's grown a *spot* / *beard* / *moustache*.

Practice 3 - Pronunciation

Match a word on the left with one that rhymes (sounds the same) on the right.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. straight | a) fair |
| 2. thin | b) overweight |
| 3. hair | c) slim |

Write the number of syllables next to each word

1. overweight ____
2. spiky ____



3. medium ____

4. muscular ____



Extra Materials

Answers

Practice 1

1. He used to have lots of hair, but now he's totally **bald**.
2. I've always wanted **curly** hair, but mine's completely straight.
3. Oh no, I can't go out tonight, I've got a big **spot** on my nose!
4. He's lost a lot of weight, I think he's too **thin**.
5. She's been on holiday, she's got lovely **tanned** skin.

Practice 2

1. He's got blonde / dark / ~~slim~~ hair.
2. She's overweight / tanned / ~~spiky~~.
3. Her hair is dark / ~~pale~~ / fair.
4. She's thin / slim / muscular / ~~curly~~.
5. He's grown a ~~spot~~ / beard / moustache.

Practice 3 - Pronunciation

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. straight | b) overweight |
| 2. thin | c) slim |
| 3. hair | a) fair |

Write the number of syllables next to each word

1. overweight _3_
2. spiky _2_



3. medium _3_

4. muscular _3_

