

Physical appearance (Upper-Intermediate)

Notes for the teacher

Aim

The aim of these vocabulary activities is to introduce between ten and twenty useful vocabulary items for the level, with an emphasis on checking the meaning and using the words and phrases. The students should be able to use the language actively once they have completed the tasks.

The tasks are designed to help students match words to meaning, and to use and personalise vocabulary. However, it is always a good idea to think about which words your students will find difficult. If you have a monolingual class it is easy to predict this, and think of check questions to make sure they understand the words.

1 Start by putting up a picture of a very tall, thin person and a very short, fat person on the board. Elicit as many words as you can to describe the people.

Then put the students in pairs to match the adjectives to the types of people.

Answers

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| a. a strong, thin man | → | <i>wiry</i> |
| b. a small, thin woman | → | <i>petite slim/skinny</i> |
| c. a tall, thin man | → | <i>lanky slim/skinny</i> |
| d. a small, fat, strong man | → | <i>stocky well-built, chubby, overweight</i> |
| (though these words don't necessarily suggest strength) | | |
| e. an attractive woman with broad hips and a big bust | → | <i>curvy, shapely</i> |
| f. a tall, thin woman | → | <i>slim/skinny slender</i> |

Note that *slim* has a positive connotation. *Skinny* has a negative connotation.

2 Put the students in pairs to describe which of the phrases suggest

- a slim, strong man
- a big, fat man
- an attractive man (in your opinion)

Answers

- He's got slim hips and a narrow waist, He's broad-shouldered, He's got a six pack, He's long-legged.
- He's got a double chin, He's got a pot belly
- The students' own ideas. However, the phrases in a. and *He's got high cheekbones* are usually considered attractive.

Note that *a six pack* means a strong, muscular stomach. It comes from the idea of a 'six pack' of six cans of beer, which a muscularly developed stomach bears a passing resemblance to.

3 Ask the students to work in pairs to decide on the difference between the words.

Answers

- a. a ponytail = long hair tied at the back
a pigtail = hair tied at the side of the head (usually by young girls)
a goatee = a beard on the chin only
- b. flat-chested = used to describe a woman with small breasts
pigeon-chested = used to describe a man with a narrow, weak chest
broad-chested = used to describe a man with a wide, strong chest
- c. bony = describes a part of the body on a thin person where you can feel the bone, e.g. a bony elbow.
big-boned = used to describe a person with a naturally large frame
skin and bones = an expression to describe someone who is very thin
- d. handsome usually describes men, gorgeous means very attractive, attractive is a general word.
- e. hunky = an informal way to describe a strong, attractive man
cute = very attractive – used to describe young children , but also used by young women to describe young men they find attractive, (especially in American English).
charming = used to describe a man who is polite and attractive in the way he behaves.

4 Ask the students to read the descriptions of different people, then complete the final sentence in the most appropriate way.

Answers

Students' own ideas.

5 Ask the students to write a description of someone they know well, a friend or a relative, whose appearance has changed. This could be set for homework.

6 Give the students a few minutes to think about the questions and prepare what they are going to say. Then put the students in pairs or small groups to interview each other.

Using the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD rom

If your students have access to the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD rom, set them the following quiz. They can find all the answers by finding the key words *ears* and *eyes*, and following the various links.

Ears and eyes Dictionary Quiz

- 1 What's an *eardrum*?
- 2 Which is correct: *lend an ear* or *lend an eye*?
- 3 If you *keep an eye on* someone, how do you feel about them?
- 4 What do you do if you *play something by ear*?
- 5 What's the difference between an *eyeful* and an *earful*?
- 6 If something is very noisy is it *earbashing* or *ear-splitting*?
- 7 What's the difference between an *eyebrow* and an *eyeball*?
- 8 If you are *out on your ear*, what does it mean?
- 9 If something *catches your eye*, do you like the look of it?
- 10 Does someone who is *all ears* have big ears?
- 11 If you don't see *eye to eye* with someone, do you agree with them?