

# Personal qualities

## Upper-intermediate

### 1 Positive and negative adjectives

Look at these pairs of adjectives used to describe personal qualities. Which pairs are positive, and which negative in meaning?

1. sensitive and thoughtful
2. dishonest and unreliable
3. mean and tight-fisted
4. broad-minded and tolerant
5. thoughtless and self-centred
6. lively and inquisitive
7. shy and insecure
8. out-going and independent
9. ambitious and single-minded

### 2 Descriptions

Match the pairs of adjectives above with a description below.

1. He's a liar, and you can't ask him to do anything for you.
2. He never buys his friends a drink in a bar.
3. She knows exactly what she wants to achieve in life and how to get there.
4. He listens to other people's opinions, and knows there are always two sides to an argument.
5. She just doesn't seem to realise that what she does could hurt other people's feelings. It's all *Me! Me! Me!* with her!
6. She is very quiet and goes red if anyone speaks to her.
7. He loves parties and doing his own thing.
8. She's always asking questions – always wants to know things.
9. She never forgets my birthday.

### 3 Similar and opposite meanings

Which words in activity 1 have similar and/or opposite meanings to the words below?

trustworthy  
dependable

free-spirited  
narrow-minded

inconsiderate  
generous

confident  
selfish

## 4 Adjectives

We often use adjectives that end in **-y** to describe personality. Find the phrase in the description that defines each of the words below.

fussy                      cheeky                      witty                      nosy                      moody

Well, frankly, my brother is all of those things. He likes everything to be in the right place all the time. He always wants to know what everybody else is doing, even when it's none of his business. He is bright and lively one minute, and quiet and bad-tempered the next. But he thinks very quickly and says the funniest things, although sometimes what he says is funny but rude to people older or more senior than him. For example, he asked his teacher why his red tie was the same colour as his eyes. The teacher had been to a party the night before – it was very funny but definitely rude!

## 5 Descriptions

Read the descriptions of different people. Then fill in the gaps with words from the lesson.

1. Fiona loves parties – especially her own. That's because she likes to be the centre of attention. She's very \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. William loves gossip. He always wants to know what everybody else is up to. That's because he's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Don't invite John. He never buys a drink, and he'll probably steal some of your CDs. He's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What I like about Kate is the way she listens to people, and remembers small things about them. She's so \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Write a description of the personality of someone you know. What are they like?

## 6 Positive and negative expressions

Decide whether these expressions are positive or negative.

1. She's generous to a fault.
2. He's the life and soul of the party.
3. He's a bit off-hand with people.
4. She's ever so kind.
5. He keeps himself to himself.
6. He's full of himself.

Match the expressions above to one of the adjectives below.

anti-social      rude      extravagant      very kind      very sociable      arrogant

## 7 Discuss

Prepare to discuss these questions.

1. What personal qualities do you think are important in the following types of people?
 

a. a close friend	b. a wife/ a husband
c. a parent	d. a grandparent
e. a colleague	f. a boss
2. How would you describe your own personality?

Interview your partner.

## 8 Dictionary Quiz

Personality Dictionary Quiz.

1. What's a *personality cult*?
2. What's a *personality trait*?
3. If you have a *personality clash* with someone, what's the problem?
4. If you have *bags of personality*, is it a good thing or a bad thing?
5. What's a *personality disorder*?
6. If you get someone to do something by *sheer force of personality*, how do you do it?
7. What's another word for a *TV personality*?
8. If you have a *split personality*, what's the problem?
9. If something *reflects your personality*, what does it say about you?
10. If you *lack personality*, is it a good thing?
11. Which of these words are frequently used with *personality*? *Dominant, dynamic, engaging, elastic.*

*This activity was compiled using the Macmillan English Advanced Learner's Dictionary and CD ROM. To find out more about using dictionaries go to <http://www.macmillandictionary.com>.*

## Teacher's notes – Personality

**1) Put the students in pairs to decide which pairs of adjectives are positive, and which negative in meaning.**

**Answers:**

Positive: 1., 4., 6., 8., 9. (though 9. can be seen as negative sometimes)

Negative: 2., 3., 5., 7.

**2) Ask the students to match the pairs of adjectives with a description.**

**Answers:**

1. = 2.      2. = 3.      3. = 9.      4. = 4.      5. = 5.  
6. = 7.      7. = 8.      8. = 6.      9. = 1.

**3) Put the students in pairs to decide which words in Activity 1 have similar and/or opposite meanings to these words.**

**Answers:**

trustworthy = opposite of dishonest and unreliable

free-spirited = similar to independent

inconsiderate = opposite of sensitive and thoughtful, similar to thoughtless

confident = opposite of shy, similar to out-going

dependable = opposite of unreliable

narrow-minded = opposite of broad-minded

generous = opposite of mean and tight-fisted

selfish = similar to self-centred

**4) Ask the students to find the phrase in the description that defines the adjectives.**

**Answers:**

Well, frankly, my brother is all of those things. He **likes everything to be in the right place all the time (= fussy)**. He **always wants to know what everybody else is doing (= nosy)**, even when it's none of his business. He is **bright and lively one minute, and quiet and bad-tempered the next (=moody)**. And he **thinks very quickly and says the funniest things (=witty)**, although **sometimes what he says is funny but rude to people older or more senior than him (=cheeky)**. For example, he asked his teacher why his red tie was the same colour as his eyes. The teacher had been to a party the night before – it was very funny but definitely rude!

**5) Ask the students to read the descriptions and fill in the gaps with words from the lesson. Encourage them to describe the positive side of someone, rather than the negative, in case the description is of someone in the class.**

**Suggested answers:**

1. Fiona loves parties – especially her own. That's because she likes to be the centre of attention. She's very out-going and sociable.
2. William loves gossip. He always wants to know what everybody else is up to. That's because he's nosy and inquisitive.
3. Don't invite John. He never buys a drink, and he'll probably steal some of your CDs. He's dishonest and unreliable.
4. What I like about Kate is the way she listens to people, and remembers small things about them. She's so sensitive and thoughtful.

**Ask the students to write a description of the personality of someone they know, perhaps for homework.**

**6) Put the students in pairs to decide whether the expressions are positive or negative.**

**Answers:**

1. She's generous to a fault. = negative
2. He's the life and soul of the party. = positive
3. He's a bit off-hand with people. = negative
4. She's ever so kind. = positive
5. He keeps himself to himself. = negative (neutral)
6. He's full of himself. = negative

**Ask the students to match the phrases to one of the adjectives.**

**Answers:**

1. She's generous to a fault. = extravagant
2. He's the life and soul of the party. = very sociable
3. He's a bit off-hand with people. = rude
4. She's ever so kind. = very kind
5. He keeps himself to himself. = anti-social
6. He's full of himself. = arrogant

**7) 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.**

## 8) Dictionary quiz

Give the students a few minutes to prepare the questions. Then put them in pairs or small groups to discuss.

If you have access to the Macmillan English Dictionary CD ROM students can find all the answers by finding the key word *personality*, and following the various links.

### Personality Dictionary Quiz

1. What's a *personality cult*?
2. What's a *personality trait*?
3. If you have a *personality clash* with someone, what's the problem?
4. If you have *bags of personality*, is it a good thing or a bad thing?
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