8 Describing people: personality

Intellectual ability

lots of ability	intelligent bright clever sharp sh[arp] able gifted talented brainy (informa[l])
lacking ability	stupid foolish simple silly brainl[ess] dumb dim thick (the last five are predominantly informal words, offensive)
clever, in a negative way, using brains to trick or deceive	cunning crafty sly

Attitudes towards life

Amal is **pessimistic** while Nia is **optimistic** – he always expects the worst to happe[n] on the bright side.

It is strange that one of the twins is so **extroverted** while the other is so **introverte[d]** being the focus of attention while Jake prefers to be alone with his thoughts.

I feel very **tense** (or **wound up** / **stressed out****) after a very busy day at work but, aft[er] I'll soon feel **relaxed**.

Eva is very **sensible** – she'd never do anything stupid. In other words, she's very pr[actical] **down-to-earth**.

Roberto is very **sensitive** – he gets very **upset** (or **worked-up**, more informal), if he fe[els] criticising him.

Attitude towards other people

Enjoying others' company: **sociable   gregarious***

Disagreeing with others: **quarrelsome   argumentative**

Taking pleasure in others' pain: **cruel   sadistic**

Relaxed in attitude to self and others: **easy-going   even-tempered   laid-b[ack]**

Not polite to others: **impolite   rude   ill-mannered   discourteous***

Telling the truth to others: **honest   trustworthy   reliable   sincere**

Unhappy if others have what you do not have yourself: **jealous   envious**

One person's meat is another person's poison

Some characteristics can be either positive or negative depending on your point o[f] in the right-hand column mean roughly the same as the words in the left-hand colu[mn] they have negative rather than positive connotations.

positive associations	negative associations
determined	**obstinate stubborn pig-he[aded]**
thrifty economical	**stingy mean tight-fisted**
self-assured confident	**self-important arrogant fu[ll]**
unconventional original	**eccentric odd peculiar wei[rd]**
frank direct open	**blunt abrupt brusque cu[rt]**

Exercises

8.1 Match the words on the left with their opposites on the right.

1	clever	f	a introverted
2	extroverted		b tight-fisted
3	rude		c courteous
4	cruel		d gregarious
5	generous		e kind-hearted
6	unsociable		f dim

8.2 Do you think that the speaker likes or dislikes the people in these senten... sentence to give the opposite impression (negative rather than positive or vic...

1 Carmen's very thrifty. *Likes – Carmen's very stingy.*
2 Molly's usually frank.
3 Grace is quite broad-minded.
4 Sam can be aggressive.

5 Nico's quite
6 I find Marcu...
7 Don't you th...
8 Freya is very...

8.3 Pair the words that have similar meanings.

brainless – silly

~~brainless~~	curt	gifted	rude	tense
brusque	direct	honest	sensible	tight-fi...
crafty	down-to-earth	impolite	~~silly~~	trustw...
cunning	frank	miserly	talented	wound...

8.4 Magazines often publish questionnaires which are supposed to analyse as... personality. Look at the words below and match them to the correspondin...

pessimistic	argumentative	sensitive	sociable
extravagant	assertive	inquisitive	~~reliable~~

1 If you arrange to meet at 7 pm, do you arrive at 7 pm? *reliable* ....
2 When you have a problem, do you think the worst will happen? ....
3 Do you find it easy to tell your boss if you feel he or she has treated you badly?
4 Do you always look out of the window if you hear a car draw up? ....
5 Do you often buy your friends presents for no particular reason? ....
6 Do you frequently disagree with what other people say? ....
7 Do you lie awake at night if someone has said something unkind to you? ....
8 Do you prefer to be in the company of other people? ....

8.5 What questions like those in 8.4 could you ask to find out if a person is the...

1 thrifty *Do you use up leftover food?*

2 blunt
3 sensible

4 intelligent
5 even-tempered

6 original
7 obstinate

5.4   *Possible answers:*

   2 Penélope Cruz   4 Kylie Minogue   6 U2
   3 Nelson Mandela   5 Luciano Pavarotti   7 Bubba Watson

Unit 6

6.1   2 late   4 daytime   6 frost   8 strong, high
   3 thaw   5 It melts   7 misty   9 severe

6.2   2 flood(s)   3 heavy/torrential rain   4 drought

6.3   I think it would be interesting to live in a **tropical** climate. However, I don't like **hu**
   even dislike the **muggy** days which we get in the UK. Some people love **boiling** ho
   mind **heatwaves** occasionally, but when it's **stifling**, it's just impossible. Maybe I s
   home and forget about moving to a hot climate!

6.4   *Possible sentences:*

   2 It / The weather was very humid.
   3 There was a gentle breeze (blowing).
   4 The roads were icy. / There was ice on the roads.
   5 There was a flood. / There were floods everywhere.
   6 It / The weather was very misty (or foggy).
   7 We had a drought (or heatwave) last year.
   8 It was a very windy day. / There was a gale.
   9 There was heavy/torrential rain. / There was a (heavy) downpour.
   10 The sky was very overcast.

Unit 7

7.1   2 figure   4 complexion   6 auburn   8 elegant / smart / stunn
   3 feature   5 impression   7 wrinkles   9 stunning

7.2   *Suggested answers:*

   2 the bald one / straight-haired one.
   3 scruffy and untidy-looking/messy-looking.
   4 that slim, dark-haired woman over there.
   5 unattractive, in fact. (You could also say he/she was 'rather plain' or 'rather ordinary',
      attractive nor unattractive. 'Ugly' is a very strong word, and could be offensive.)
   6 in her twenties and quite slim.

7.3   *Suggested answers:*

   Ian Prowse: thin-faced, dark, curly hair, fair skin
   Sandra King: dark, wavy hair, stocky build, round-faced
   Jasmin Kaur: thin-faced, long, dark hair
   Jack 'Dagger' Flagstone: bald, with beard and moustache; muscular build

Unit 8

8.1   *Opposites:*

   2 a   3 c   4 e   5 b   6 d

8.3   brusque - curt
crafty - cunning
direct - frank
down-to-earth - sensible
gifted - talented
honest - trustworthy
impolite - rude
miserly - tight-fisted
tense - wound up

8.4   2 pessimistic   4 inquisitive   6 argumentative   8 sociable
3 assertive   5 extravagant   7 sensitive

8.5   *Possible questions:*

2 blunt - If a friend asks you if you like her awful new dress, would you say 'No'?
3 sensible - If you won a lot of money, would you put it in the bank rather than spend i
have always wanted?
4 intelligent - Can you give the next letter in this sequence S, M, T, W, T, F? (If you are nc
answer, think of the days of the week.)
5 even-tempered - If someone spills soup on some new clothes of yours, do you just s
'That's life'?
6 original - Do you never wear blue jeans?
7 obstinate - Do you become even more determined to do something if people try to p
to do it?
8 stressed out - Do you find it hard to sleep at night because problems are going roun

Unit 9

9.1   2 … as nails   4 … in the right place   6 … awkward customer
3 … as gold   5 … piece of work

9.2   2 the teacher's pet   4 top of the class
3 a big-head   5 a lazy-bones (or you could say this person is **bone-idle**)

9.3   2 … a good head for figures.   6 … burying your head in the sand.
3 … have a head for heights   7 … head and shoulders above …
4 … has her head screwed on.   8 … keeps his head.
5 … has his head in the clouds.

9.4   a your nerves (always with possessive, **my**, **our**, **John's**, etc.)
b the neck (always used with **the**)

9.5   2 middle-of-the-road   3 over the top   4 round the bend

Unit 10

10.1   2 Mike was my roommate at university / Mike and **I** were roommates …
3 We were classmates in 2006, weren't we?
4 She's not really a friend; she's just a workmate.