

# Describing character

## A Opposites

**NOTE**

**Sympathetic** doesn't mean 'nice' in English. We use it to describe a person who understands other people's feelings/problems, e.g. She was very **sympathetic** when I explained the problem.

<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
warm and <b>friendly</b>	cold and <b>unfriendly</b>
<b>kind</b> (= cares about others)	<b>unkind</b>
nice, <b>pleasant</b>	horrible, <b>unpleasant</b>
<b>generous</b> (= happy to give/share)	<b>mean</b> (= never gives to others)
<b>optimistic</b> (= thinks positively)	<b>pessimistic</b> (= thinks negatively)
<b>easy-going</b> (= relaxed, calm)	<b>tense</b> (= nervous; worries a lot; not calm)
<b>sensitive</b> (= thinks about people's feelings)	<b>insensitive</b>
<b>honest</b> (= always tells the truth)	<b>dishonest</b>
<b>good fun</b> (= enjoyable to be with)	boring
<b>broad-minded</b>	<b>narrow-minded</b> (= unable to accept new ideas)

My parents are great and don't mind what I wear – they're very **broad-minded**. When I tried on the dress, the shop assistant said it would look better on a younger person. I know she was trying to be **honest**, but it was a bit **insensitive** of her.

## B What's he/she like?

He's very **self-confident**. (= feels he can do things, and is relaxed in social situations)  
 When you first meet her she seems **shy**. (= finds it difficult to talk to people and make conversation)  
 She doesn't **show her feelings**. (= you don't know what she is thinking or feeling)  
 He's got a great **sense of humour**. (= laughs a lot and sees the funny side of life)

## C Describing character in work situations

<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
<b>hard-working</b>	<b>lazy</b> (= never does any work)
<b>punctual</b> (= always on time)	not very punctual; always late
<b>reliable</b>	<b>unreliable</b> (= you cannot trust/depend on someone like this)
<b>clever</b>	<b>stupid</b>
<b>flexible</b>	<b>inflexible</b> (= a fixed way of thinking and unable to change)
<b>ambitious</b>	not ambitious (= no desire to be successful/get a better job)
has lots of <b>common sense</b> (= thinks in a practical way; doesn't do stupid things)	has no common sense; <b>an idiot</b> (= a stupid person)

## D First impressions

We use **impression** to talk about the effect that a person has on another person.  
 She **made** a very **good impression** at her interview. (= had a positive effect on the interviewer)  
 My **first impression** of him was a bit negative.  
 She **comes across as** (= appears to be) quite serious.

# Exercises

49.1 Organise these words into pairs of opposites and put them in the columns below.

mean	clever	nice	lazy	relaxed
hard-working	tense	generous	unpleasant	stupid

<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
<i>clever</i> .....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

49.2 Which prefix forms the opposite of these words? (You need three different prefixes.)

unhappy	flexible	friendly	honest
reliable	sensitive	kind	pleasant

49.3 How would you describe the person in each of these descriptions?

- 1 She's always here on time. *punctual*
- 2 He never bought me a drink in ten years.
- 3 She often promises to do things but half the time she forgets.
- 4 I don't think he's done any work since he's been here.
- 5 She finds it difficult to meet people and talk to strangers.
- 6 He can work in any of the departments – on his own or part of a team.
- 7 One of her qualities is that she is so aware of what other people think or feel.
- 8 I know Mike wants to be head of the department and then go on to a bigger company.

49.4 Fill the gaps with a suitable word.

- 1 At work, James ..... across as serious and a bit boring, but outside of work he's completely different; he's really good .....
- 2 It's important to ..... a good impression on your first day in a new job.
- 3 I'm sure he can find the place; he just needs to use his common .....
- 4 Meeting new people doesn't worry her; she's a very self-..... young woman.
- 5 It's hard to know what Sam thinks – he doesn't really ..... his feelings.
- 6 Do you think ..... impressions are very important? I do.
- 7 I always have a laugh with my cousin – he's got a great sense of .....
- 8 She is so .....-minded: she cannot accept any ideas different from her own.

49.5 What nouns can be formed from these adjectives? Use a dictionary to help you.

kind	<i>kindness</i>	optimistic	punctual	lazy	confident	ambitious
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49.6 Choose three words from the opposite page which describe you. Is there one quality you do not have but would like to have? What, in your opinion, is the worst quality described on the opposite page? If possible, compare your answers with a friend.

**A Feelings/emotions**

noun	adjective(s)
love ( <i>opp</i> hate)	-
happiness ( <i>opp</i> sadness)	happy ( <i>opp</i> sad)
anger	angry
fear	afraid (of)/frightened (of)
pride	proud (of)
jealousy	jealous (of)
embarrassment	embarrassed/embarrassing (see Unit 36)

Pride can be a positive feeling when you (or people you know) have done something well. I'm not a great photographer, but I'm **proud** of my pictures because I taught myself. He was very **proud** when his wife became the first president of the organisation. Jealousy is a negative feeling of anger/unhappiness, often if someone you love shows a lot of interest in others, or if someone has something you want and don't have. My boyfriend gets very **jealous** when I talk to other boys. He's **jealous** of his sister because she's more intelligent. Upset is a common adjective, and means unhappy, sad, and sometimes angry. He was **upset** when they didn't invite him. She gets **upset** if you shout at her.

**B How do you feel?**

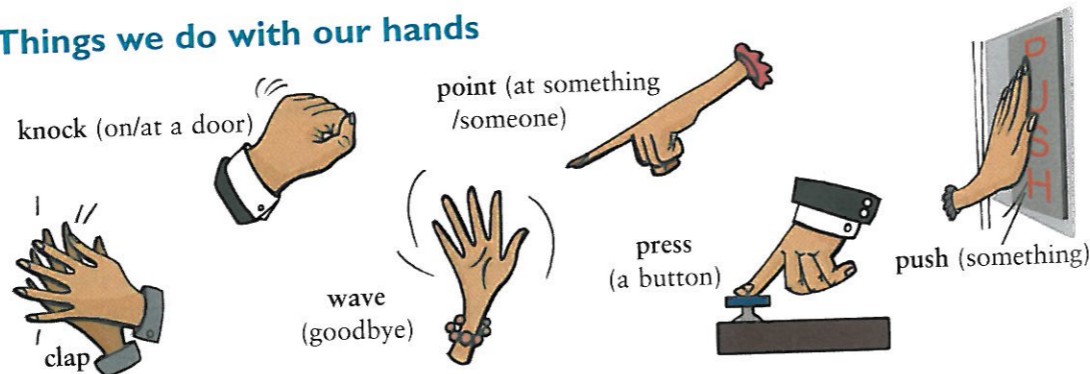
I felt very sad when I left university and all my friends.  
It was a great feeling when I finished all my exams.  
She had **mixed feelings** (= not sure what to think or feel) about leaving her job.

**C Ways of speaking, looking and walking**

**whisper** (= speak very quietly)      **shout** (= speak in a very loud voice)  
**glance (at)** (= look at sb/sth very quickly)      **stare (at)** (= look at sb/sth for a long time)  
**stroll** (= walk in a slow casual way)      **march** (= walk quickly and with a clear reason)

These words can also function as nouns with no change in form.  
I heard a **shout** from inside.      We had a **stroll** on the beach.

**D Things we do with our hands**



Exercises

**50.1** What nouns can be formed from these adjectives?

- 1 sad *sadness*      3 angry      5 happy  
2 proud      4 jealous      6 embarrassed

**50.2** Find the logical ending on the right for each of the sentence beginnings on the left.

- 1 He was very proud when — a someone stole his money.  
2 He was very jealous when — b his father appeared on TV.  
3 He was very embarrassed when — c he heard his aunt had died.  
4 He was very angry when — d he saw the man had a knife.  
5 He was very sad when — e he sent her a birthday card on the wrong day.  
6 He was very frightened when — f his best friend went out with a girl he liked.

**50.3** What are these people doing? Describe their actions using words from the opposite page.



**50.4** Replace the underlined words with a single verb that has the same meaning.

- 1 She stopped working and looked quickly at the clock.  
2 As we were in the library, he spoke very quietly in my ear.  
3 We walked casually along the beach and then stopped for a drink.  
4 He made us all walk quickly up the hill.  
5 The man kept looking at Susan, but she didn't seem to notice.  
6 He kept talking in a very loud voice.

**50.5** Fill the gaps with the missing preposition.

- 1 I knocked ..... the door.      4 Why is he pointing ..... the clock?  
2 She glanced ..... her watch.      5 He's very proud ..... them.  
3 She's jealous ..... her sister.      6 What are they afraid ..... ?

**50.6** Answer the questions. If possible, ask someone else the same questions.

- 1 How would you feel if you forgot your mother's birthday or your father's birthday?  
2 How do you feel when you are in a car that is going very fast?  
3 How do you feel when other people ask you to do things that you don't want to do?  
4 If you made a stupid mistake in English, how would you feel?  
5 Is there any one thing that you are very proud of?  
6 Are there any common situations where you sometimes feel embarrassed?  
7 How do you feel about going home after a wonderful holiday?  
8 Have you left school? If so, did you have mixed feelings when you left? If you haven't left school, do you think you'll have mixed feelings when you leave?