Describing people: appearance

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each precise appearance term with its definition.

1 auburn	____	a attractively thin
2 receding hairline	____	b broad and solid in build
3 complexion	____	c red-brown in colour
4 sunburnt	____	d red and painful after too much sun
5 stocky	____	e the natural appearance of facial skin
6 muscular	____	f untidy or carelessly dressed
7 plump	____	g having clearly developed muscles
8 slim	____	h noticeable and impressive
9 scruffy	____	i gently rounded in build
10 striking	____	j gradually moving back from the forehead

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For an approving description of a narrow build: *slim* / *skinny*.

2 For a critical description of someone extremely thin: *slender* / *gaunt*.

3 For a polite, gently rounded build: *plump* / *obese*.

4 For broad shoulders and visible strength: *muscular* / *stout*.

5 For untidy clothes and hair: *scruffy* / *unconventional*.

6 For exceptionally attractive impact: *stunning* / *ordinary*.

7 For clothes that are neat and suitable: *well-dressed* / *overdressed*.

8 For a neutral medical context: *obese* / *chubby*.

3 Complete the appearance collocations with one word.

1 _____ hairline (= moving back)

2 _____ complexion (= healthy-looking and bright)

3 _____ face (= full and soft in shape)

4 _____ build (= broad and solid)

5 _____ feature (= especially noticeable detail)

6 _____ impression (= immediate reaction)

7 _____ dressed (= smartly presented)

8 _____ looking (= untidy in appearance)

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4 Complete the casting notes with words and phrases from the box.

auburn | broad-shouldered | complexion | crew-cut | distinguishing feature | elegant | freckles | receding | slim | wavy

Role A: We need a **1** _____ performer with a pale **2** _____ and shoulder-length, **3** _____ **4** _____ hair. A few **5** _____ would suit the character.
Role B: The character is **6** _____ and has an extremely short **7** _____. His hairline is **8** _____. The actor's **9** _____ should be a small facial scar.
Role C: The older sister should have an **10** _____, polished appearance.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Appearance bias in selection
People often believe they can assess competence from a face, clothes or body language, yet such impressions may reflect familiar stereotypes rather than reliable evidence. In recruitment, a polished appearance can produce a favourable first reaction, but standards of grooming and dress are culturally shaped and may disadvantage candidates who do not match a narrow professional image. Similar patterns operate in media casting, customer service and leadership selection. Reducing bias does not require ignoring presentation where it is genuinely relevant. It requires defining job-related criteria in advance, using structured evaluation and separating observable details from assumptions about character or ability.

1 What may quick assessments of competence reflect? _____

2 What can create a favourable reaction in recruitment? _____

3 Why may grooming standards disadvantage some candidates? _____

4 Name two other areas where similar patterns occur. _____

5 When can presentation still be considered? _____

6 Which three practices can reduce appearance bias? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 Her most noticeable detail is her silver hair. **FEATURE** _____

2 He is about forty and rather tall. **ISH** _____

3 She always wears smart, attractive clothes. **DRESSED** _____

4 His hair has begun to move back from his forehead. **RECEDING** _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **120-150 word** casting or witness profile. Describe appearance precisely, distinguish observation from interpretation and explain which details are most distinctive.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise appearance terms

1 **c** 2 **j** 3 **e** 4 **d** 5 **b** 6 **g** 7 **i** 8 **a** 9 **f** 10 **h**

2 Connotation

1 **slim** 2 **gaunt** 3 **plump** 4 **muscular** 5 **scruffy** 6 **stunning** 7 **well-dressed** 8 **obese**

3 Appearance collocations

1 **receding** 2 **fresh** 3 **chubby** 4 **stocky** 5 **distinctive** 6 **first** 7 **well** 8 **untidy / messy**

4 Casting notes

1 **slim** 2 **complexion** 3 **wavy** 4 **auburn** 5 **freckles** 6 **broad-shouldered** 7 **crew-cut** 8 **receding** 9 **distinguishing feature** 10 **elegant**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Familiar stereotypes rather than reliable evidence.
2 A polished appearance.
3 They are culturally shaped and may reflect a narrow professional image.
4 Any two: media casting, customer service, leadership selection.
5 When it is genuinely relevant.
6 Define criteria in advance, use structured evaluation and separate observations from assumptions.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 Her silver hair is her most distinctive **feature**. 2 He is **fortyish and tallish**. 3 She is always **well-dressed**. 4 He has a **receding hairline**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.