Describing people: personality

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each precise personality term with its definition.

1 shrewd	____	a determined not to change an opinion
2 cunning	____	b clever at judging situations
3 gregarious	____	c relaxed, practical and realistic
4 quarrelsome	____	d enjoys being with many people
5 even-tempered	____	e willing to consider unfamiliar ideas
6 trustworthy	____	f uses intelligence to deceive
7 envious	____	g frequently starts arguments
8 obstinate	____	h honest and dependable
9 broad-minded	____	i unhappy because someone has an advantage
10 down-to-earth	____	j calm and not easily annoyed

2 Choose the most suitable word for the context and register.

1 Formal approval of practical judgement: *shrewd / brainy*.

2 Informal description of being very stressed: *wound up / tense*.

3 Written description of extreme unwillingness to change: *obstinate / pig-headed*.

4 Neutral praise for calm behaviour: *even-tempered / laid-back*.

5 Critical description of direct speech that may hurt: *frank / blunt*.

6 Positive description of interest in ideas: *inquiring / nosy*.

7 Formal praise for honesty: *sincere / full of yourself*.

8 Critical description of forceful ambition: *ambitious / pushy*.

3 Complete the strong collocations with one word.

1 highly _____ (= very intelligent)

2 fiercely _____ (= strongly determined to succeed)

3 painfully _____ (= extremely uncomfortable with people)

4 deeply _____ (= expecting very bad outcomes)

5 utterly _____ (= completely dependable)

6 remarkably _____ (= unusually confident)

7 naturally _____ (= wanting to discover more)

8 refreshingly _____ (= pleasantly direct and honest)

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4 Complete the appraisal with words and phrases from the box.

assertive | broad-minded | down-to-earth | even-tempered | gregarious | inquisitive | obstinate | self-assured | sensitive | trustworthy

Lena is confident and **1** _____ when presenting proposals. She is also **2** _____: colleagues know she will handle confidential information carefully. Her **3** _____ nature helps her build networks, while her **4** _____ questions often reveal missing details. She remains calm and **5** _____ under pressure. Although practical and **6** _____, she can become **7** _____ once she has chosen a solution. She is learning to be more **8** _____ towards alternative methods. Her manner is appropriately **9** _____, but she is also **10** _____ to how criticism affects less experienced colleagues.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Traits, situations and interpretation

Personality descriptions are most useful when treated as tendencies rather than fixed rules. A person who is generally sociable may seek solitude after an exhausting week; someone normally cautious may act decisively in an emergency. The observer also matters. A manager may call an employee assertive, while a colleague experiencing the same behaviour may call it bossy. Such disagreement does not mean that all descriptions are equally accurate. It means that a careful judgement should identify the behaviour, consider its frequency and context, and explain the standard behind the label. Over time, repeated evidence across different settings supports a stronger claim than a single memorable incident.

1 How should personality descriptions be treated? _____

2 Why might a sociable person seek solitude? _____

3 How may the same behaviour receive different labels? _____

4 Does disagreement make all descriptions equally accurate? _____

5 Which three elements should careful judgement examine? _____

6 What supports a stronger personality claim? _____

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

1 Nora rarely becomes angry or upset. **TEMPERED** _____

2 Ian refuses to reconsider the proposal. **OBSTINATE** _____

3 Mila enjoys spending time with large groups. **GREGARIOUS** _____

4 Tariq is practical and realistic. **EARTH** _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **120-150 word** balanced appraisal of someone's personality. Use behavioural evidence, distinguish positive and negative interpretations, and note the importance of context.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control register and connotation. [ ] Avoid fixed or unsupported labels.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise personality terms

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

2 Context and register

1 **shrewd** 2 **wound up** 3 **obstinate** 4 **even-tempered** 5 **blunt** 6 **inquiring** 7 **sincere** 8 **pushy**

3 Strong collocations

1 **intelligent** 2 **ambitious** 3 **shy** 4 **pessimistic** 5 **reliable** 6 **self-assured** 7 **inquisitive** 8 **frank**

4 Appraisal

1 **self-assured** 2 **trustworthy** 3 **gregarious** 4 **inquisitive** 5 **even-tempered** 6 **down-to-earth** 7 **obstinate** 8 **broad-minded** 9 **assertive** 10 **sensitive**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 As tendencies, not fixed rules.
2 Because they may be exhausted.
3 One observer may say assertive; another may say bossy.
4 No.
5 The behaviour, its frequency and context, and the standard behind the label.
6 Repeated evidence across different settings.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 Nora is **even-tempered**. 2 Ian is **obstinate**. 3 Mila is **gregarious**. 4 Tariq is **down-to-earth**.

Over to you: Answers will vary. Check precision, behavioural evidence and balanced interpretation.