avax

10 Describing people: personality and character traits

A Adjectives to describe people's personality or behaviour

word	meaning	example
impetuous	acts on a sudden idea without thinking first (often negative)	She's so **impetuous**; I wish she would consider things before acting.
impulsive	similar to *impetuous*, but can be used in a more positive way	His **impulsive** generosity led him to give money to anyone who asked for help.
effusive	gives exaggerated expression of pleasure, praise or gratitude	She always gives me such an **effusive** welcome when I visit her.
excitable	easily excited by things	He's a very **excitable** child; he needs to calm down.
pushy	always selfishly promoting your own position or interests; *informal*	She's so **pushy**; it's typical of her to demand a pay rise for herself and not care about the rest of us.
self-conscious	nervous or uncomfortable because you know what people think about you or your actions	Freddie seemed **self-conscious** and uncomfortable when he had to make the announcement at the party.
well-balanced	calm and reasonable and showing good judgement	The teacher said Maddy was a **well-balanced** child who got on well at school.
taciturn /'tæsɪtɜːn/	reserved or says very little (generally negative)	He was a bit **taciturn** when I first met him. He hardly said a word.

B Sociability

Chloe's such an **introvert**. Her brother Mark is so **outgoing** and is such an **extrovert**. Strange, isn't it? [inward-looking and quiet] [energetic and friendly, finds it easy to be with others] [outward-looking, energetic and sociable]

Mr Rogers is such a **diffident** man. He seems to have quite low **self-esteem**. [lacks confidence] [has a low opinion of himself]

English people are traditionally thought of as rather **reserved**. [not immediately sociable]

Eva tends to be rather **aloof**. I don't know if she's just shy. [unfriendly and not sociable]

My aunt Annie can be very **haughty** and **disdainful** at times, but she's lovely really. [unfriendly and thinks herself better than others] [does not believe others deserve respect]

I've always found Professor Mactoft very **unapproachable**, but his colleague Dr O'Daly is very **approachable**. [not easy to be sociable with or start a conversation with] [the opposite]

Natasha is very **conceited** and **self-important**, but Rachel is such a **modest** person. [thinks herself wonderful] [has an exaggerated sense of her importance] [prefers not to exaggerate her own qualities]

Joe is always so polite and **respectful**. I wish he would be more informal and just treat me as his equal. [treating someone well and politely, often with admiration]

C Character traits

Arjen is a somewhat **naive** person; he thinks love can solve all the world's problems. [/naɪ'iːv/ willing to believe simple things, perhaps because of inexperience]

Telephone salespeople often take advantage of **gullible** people. [easily deceived]

My father was a very **conscientious** man; he never took time off work unless he was really sick. [/ˌkɒnʃi'enʃəs/ always took his work very seriously]

She's a **restless** individual. I don't think she'll ever settle down in a job. [not satisfied with what she is doing now and wanting something new]

You are so **obstinate** and **pig-headed**! Why don't you listen when people give you advice? [unwilling to change, despite persuasion] [similar to *obstinate* but stronger; *informal*]

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercises

10.1 **Answer these questions.**

1 Why would people rather have an approachable teacher or boss than an unapproachable one?
2 What is a stronger and less formal way of saying *obstinate*?
3 If someone is *diffident*, do they have little or lots of self-confidence?
4 How could you describe a greeting from someone that showed exaggerated pleasure?
5 Do you think it would be easy or difficult to have a friendly conversation with a taciturn person?
6 Which tends to be more negative, *impetuous* or *impulsive*?
7 Which would most people rather be described as, *conscientious* or *self-conscious*?
8 If you're *outgoing*, are you more likely to be seen as an introvert or an extrovert?

10.2 **Rewrite the underlined parts of the sentences using the words in the box, making any other changes necessary.**

restless	well-balanced	aloof	conceited	haughty	excitable	naive	self-esteem	pushy	outgoing

1 Don't be so over-proud of your achievements! You're not the only one to get an A-grade!
2 People who have a poor opinion of themselves can find it difficult to achieve their goals.
3 He's generally a happy, sociable sort of person.
4 She is a person who is generally quite reasonable and who shows good judgement overall.
5 You always seem unable to settle down. What's the problem?
6 He's so easily excited. He should try to calm down more.
7 She believes rather simple things when it comes to politics.
8 He's just pursuing his own interests and cares little what happens to others.
9 Frances was very unfriendly and would not take part in things at the party.
10 At times, Joel is quite cold and unfriendly and acts as if he's better than the rest of us.

10.3 **Complete the table. Some of the words are not on the opposite page.**

adjective	noun	adjective	noun
excitable		reserved	
gullible			diffidence
	disdain	pig-headed	
impetuous			respect
obstinate		self-important	
approachable		modest	

10.4 **These sentences contain words from the table in 10.3. Rewrite the sentences using the other form of the word. For example, use a noun instead of an adjective and vice versa.**

1 One of her main character traits is that she is impetuous.
2 It's difficult to get him to change his ways. He displays a high level of obstinacy.
3 Luke shows a lot of reserve, but his wife is known more for her approachability.
4 One of her nicest characteristics is that she is modest.
5 She shows a lot of respect for her elders. It's important in her culture.
6 Being pig-headed seems to be a family trait among my relatives.
7 She is so full of self-importance; it irritates everyone.
8 Online identity thieves prey on people being gullible.

10.5 **Over to you**

Choose five words from the opposite page that you feel describe you. Be honest!

LIVEWORKSHEETS