

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

one stop english

Age: Teenager/Adult

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Time: 45 minutes

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

- » describe a person on first impressions
- » discuss what they notice about people and what people notice about them

Language focus: *look/seem/look like* to describe general impressions, adjectives and compound adjectives describing appearance and personality

Materials: search online for images of famous people and save for later access, prepare a story about an occasion when you met someone for the first time



**LANGUAGE TIP:** Here you could teach your students the popular saying 'You can't judge a book by its cover', as this idiom exists in other languages. If you have time you can encourage students to share sayings from their language and see if they exist in English.

### PROCEDURE

1. Write *first impressions* on the board and ask students what the first thing they notice is about someone when they meet them for the first time. Elicit some answers and write them on the board giving the class time to discuss each other's opinions.
2. Hand out the worksheet and ask students to look at the first exercise, What do you notice? Ask them to put the words on the page into the first column of the table in the order in which they notice them when they meet a person for the first time. When they are finished, ask them to compare their answers with the person next to them.
3. Ask students to complete 'What other people notice about me' and 'What I noticed about \_\_\_' columns on their own then compare their answers with their partner. Conduct whole class feedback and ask students to extend their answers by justifying their views.
4. As an optional extra, you could tell the students a story about meeting someone – a friend, your partner, etc. – for the first time. Describe your first impressions and whether these were accurate or not when you got to know the person better.



**LANGUAGE TIP:** If you have time, with stronger students you might want to brainstorm collocations and vocabulary relating to the eight categories, e.g. *a deep voice, a forceful personality, a winning smile, piercing eyes, spiky hair, etc.* Make sure your students keep a clear record of this new vocabulary.



**LANGUAGE TIP:** For stronger students, you could introduce useful collocations here such as *to make a good impression on someone* and continue with a discussion on the best ways to make a good first impression (smile, dress smartly, good posture, friendly manner).

5. Students prepare to tell their own story by making notes or writing the story in full. Monitor while they do this to check that they are using the new language correctly, offering corrections where necessary.
6. Students tell each other stories of meeting someone for the first time. Alternatively, you could ask students to write their stories for homework and either submit them to you or read them aloud at the start of the next lesson.
7. Focus students' attention on the photos of the women in the What are your first impressions? exercise. Ask students to work in pairs and brainstorm any words they would use to describe them. Ask them to think about their age, physical appearance, clothes, and what they think their personalities are like.
8. Focus on the vocabulary and ask students if there are any words they don't understand. Try to elicit definitions from the stronger students and drill any difficult pronunciation. Then ask students in pairs to circle the words and expressions they think best describe the women in the two photos.



**LANGUAGE TIP:** This a good opportunity to introduce some extra vocabulary such as compound adjectives related to physical appearance and character if you have a stronger class. Put students in small groups and get them to mind-map vocabulary (*dark/fair/brown/blond-haired, blue/green/brown/hazel-eyed, etc.*). Ask if they know any synonyms or antonyms for the vocabulary on the page (*outgoing = gregarious, calm = serene*).

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

9. Explain that we use the verbs *look* and *seem* to talk about the impression a person gives. We use *look* to talk about impressions based on physical appearance and *seem* to talk about impressions based on more general clues, such as the way a person talks or behaves. We use *look like* to compare the person to someone or something else.

10. Highlight the form on the board.

*She looks + adjective*

e.g. *She looks unhappy.*

*She seems + adjective*

e.g. *She seems friendly.*

*She looks/seems like + noun phrase / subject and verb*

e.g. *She looks like a nice person. She seems like she's having a bad day.*

11. Ask students: How much can you tell about a person by the way they look when you first see them? Then put them in small groups and ask them to tell each other their impressions of the two women using *look/see/look like* and expressions they circled. Find out if they agree or disagree.

12. Ask students to work in new pairs and do the First impression tasks, parts A and B. Monitor and make sure to check students have the correct answers, checking pronunciation of difficult words (*naughty, moody, etc.*) if necessary. Check answers as a class.

Key:

A:

1. e; 2. f; 3. b; 4. g; 5. d; 6. c; 7. a

B:

1. sensible; 2. cheerful; 3. shy; 4. bad-tempered; 5. lazy; 6. quiet; 7. naughty

13. In their pairs, students ask each other the questions in part C. Monitor and check their understanding, particularly of questions 1 and 2. If you have extra time, you could ask students to look at pictures from the magazines or newspapers you have provided and compare their impressions of the people.

Key:

C: Students' own answers.

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## WORKSHEET

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

one stop english

What do you notice?

PERSONALITY

HAIR

EYES

FACE

TEETH

SMILE

VOICE

CLOTHES



What do you notice first when you meet a new person? Their eyes? Their smile? Their clothes? Or something different? Complete the table below. You can use the vocabulary above or new vocabulary.

What I notice about other people	What other people notice about me	What I noticed about _____
1.		
2.		
3.		

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

### What are your first impressions?

» Look at the women in the photographs. What are your first impressions of them?



#### SHE LOOKS ...

- shy
- ambitious
- selfish
- smart
- outgoing
- scruffy
- exhausted
- worried

#### SHE SEEMS ...

- moody
- bad-tempered
- friendly
- calm
- upset
- easy-going
- sensible
- confident

#### SHE LOOKS LIKE ...

- an interesting person
- someone I know
- she's in her 20s
- she's lost
- an artist
- she's having fun
- a student
- she has a lot on her mind

- » How much can you tell about a person by the way they look when you first see them?
- » Use some of the vocabulary above to help you describe the two women. Add any more that you can think of.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

### First impression tasks

#### A. Personality adjectives

Match the adjectives with the definitions.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. shy          | a. doesn't say much                       |
| 2. bad-tempered | b. is always happy, in a good mood        |
| 3. cheerful     | c. doesn't like working                   |
| 4. naughty      | d. always knows the right thing to do     |
| 5. sensible     | e. uncomfortable with new people          |
| 6. lazy         | f. gets angry very quickly                |
| 7. quiet        | g. breaks the rules, but not a bad person |

#### B. Personality opposites

Which words in exercise A have the opposite meaning to these?

1. silly \_\_\_\_\_
2. moody \_\_\_\_\_
3. outgoing \_\_\_\_\_
4. easy-going \_\_\_\_\_
5. hard-working \_\_\_\_\_
6. talkative \_\_\_\_\_
7. well-behaved \_\_\_\_\_

#### C. First impressions questionnaire

Think about someone you met recently. Working with your partner, ask and answer the following questions about the person:

1. What type of music is he/she into? \*
2. What does he/she generally get up to on Saturday night? \*\*
3. Is he/she normally quite shy when he/she meets new people?
4. How would you describe his/her parents: strict or liberal?
5. Do you think he/she a good student?
6. Is he/she better at science or at arts subjects?
7. What sports does he/she enjoy playing?
8. Do you think that you will become good friends?

\* if you are 'into' something it means that you enjoy it, e.g. 'My little brother is really into football.'

\*\* when we say that you 'get up to' something, it is an informal way of saying that you do something, e.g. 'What did you **get up to** last weekend? I went to the cinema with my girlfriend.'