



Tikrit University

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Subject : Listening and speaking / 4<sup>th</sup> year

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## **How to Describe Someone's Face in English**

## **The Main Features of the Face**

First, we should make sure that we know what all the parts of the face are and how to call each part in English.

The main parts of the face are:

- Eyes
- Mouth
- Nose
- Ears
- Eyebrows
- Chin
- Jaw
- Throat
- Neck
- Cheeks
- Hair

I have included features such as hair, throat and neck in this list. Not really part of the face, but when describing people's faces, we often describe their hair and sometimes their throat and neck too.

## **Face Shape**

People's faces often have a very defined shape to them.

Usually, these shapes are

- Oval
- Round
- Square
- Diamond
- Heart
- Oblong

It can be a little difficult to assign a shape to every person's face. But for many people, they have a very clear shape to their face.

Try to identify what shape each person's face is in the above pictures. Now go round the classroom and try to identify the shape of each student's face.

**In English, we can say the following phrases**

**He has an oval-shaped face.**

**She has a heart-shaped face.**

**His face is shaped like a square.**

**Her face is like a diamond shape.**

Think about some people you know — *friends or family* — what shape face do they have?

Write some sentences describing their face shape using the examples above to help you.

## **Eyes**

There are two ways we can describe people's eyes — **colour and shape**.

The main colours for people's eyes around the world are:

- Brown/Black
- Blue
- Green
- Hazel

I have heard some people describe their eyes as 'black'. We have to be careful of using this colour to describe the colour of eyes as a black eye has another meaning!

If someone has been fighting and they get hit in the eye, the skin around the eye will become bruised. The colour turns blue and black. ***This is a black eye.***

But if you say: ***My friend's eyes are black.*** The other person should understand what you mean.

We could provide more detail by saying the shade of the colour. So, for example, we could say light blue, dark brown, light green, etc.

You don't need to provide so much detail, but if you wish to, then use the words 'light' and 'dark' to describe the shade of colour.

Do not say: *My friend's eyes are very blue!*

**This is incorrect.**

And for older people, often the colour of their eyes changes as they get older. So if someone has blue eyes when they were younger, as they get older, the blue becomes pale.

So we can say: *My grandmother has pale blue eyes.*

We can also describe the shape or size of someone's eyes.

These are the main shapes and sizes we can talk about when describing a person's eyes:

- Almond-shaped eyes
- Round shaped eyes
- Down-turned eyes
- Upturned eyes
- Deep-set eyes
- Wide-set eyes
- Close-set eyes
- Big eyes
- Small eyes

Almond is a kind of nut. This shape is considered the most attractive for people's eyes.

Down-turned eyes give someone a sad appearance, while upturned eyes give someone a cheerful, happy appearance.

Deep-set eyes are eyes that seem 'sunken' or deeper into the face. This often gives someone a serious expression.

Wide-set eyes are eyes that are not close together, while close-set eyes are close together.

For Asian people, they have a very defined shape to their eyes. Often, Asian people have single eyelids. This gives their eyes a very distinctive

appearance that is different from people's eyes from other parts of the world. ***Be very careful how you describe an Asian person's eyes though. There are terms that were used long ago that are now considered very impolite.***

Terms such as slanted eyes or saying that Asian people have small eyes. Do not use these expressions in English. They are not acceptable today.

We can also use words such as bright, shining, strong or friendly to describe someone's eyes.

Bright or shining might describe the light that comes from someone's eyes. And strong might show that the person has a very strong personality, someone very confident, and this shows in their eyes.

Some people have very friendly eyes. They look like they are smiling through their eyes.

### **What to say in English**

Here are some examples of how to describe someone's eyes in English.

**My friend has blue almond-shaped eyes.**

**My brother has deep-set dark brown eyes — people say it makes him look a little fierce.**

**My mother has pale blue eyes.**

**My friend has very friendly eyes.**

**My dad has bright eyes — they are always shining.**

**Now you try!**

***What about your friends or family?***

***What kind of eyes do they have?***

Use the models and examples above to help you. Then write full sentences to describe people's eyes.

### **Mouth**

We can describe someone's mouth by talking about the size and shape of it.

These are some common expressions we might use:

- Big mouth

- Wide mouth
- Small mouth
- Tight-lipped
- Full lips
- Heart-shaped lips
- Open mouth
- Firm mouth
- Soft lips

No one really wants to be told they have a big mouth, be careful with that. We can say '***He has a generous mouth***', that is more polite.

A wide mouth can be quite attractive. The actress Julia Roberts has a wide mouth. People with a wide mouth usually have a very big smile.

In fact, when we talk about a person's mouth, we are usually talking about their lips.

Also, people convey their emotions and feelings through their mouth.

If someone is friendly and open, they will often have a full smile — ***this makes them look friendly.***

But if someone is angry or hostile, they will show this in their mouth too — ***tight-lipped and firm.***

We can also describe someone's teeth. We can use the following expressions:

- White teeth
- Beautiful teeth
- Crooked teeth
- Discoloured teeth
- Bad teeth
- Broken teeth
- Straight teeth

Be careful what expressions you use to describe someone's teeth though. No one wants to be told they have bad and broken teeth!