Describing people: appearance

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Match each advanced appearance term with its definition.

1 demeanour	____	a tall and attractively proportioned
2 bearing	____	b deliberate management of how one appears to others
3 grooming	____	c visibly untidy, especially in hair or clothes
4 sartorial	____	d thin, strong and lightly built
5 dishevelled	____	e relating to clothes or style of dress
6 gaunt	____	f the outward manner a person presents
7 statuesque	____	g easily recognised because of unusual qualities
8 wiry	____	h very thin, often from illness or hardship
9 distinctive	____	i posture and the way a person carries the body
10 self-presentation	____	j care devoted to cleanliness, hair and general neatness

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 A person with an untidy, neglected appearance may look *dishevelled / statuesque*.

2 A tall person with elegant proportions may be described as *statuesque / wiry*.

3 A slim but strong endurance athlete may have a *wiry / gaunt* build.

4 Clothing choices intended to create an effect are part of *self-presentation / complexion*.

5 An expression and outward manner together contribute to *demeanour / symmetry*.

6 The way someone stands and carries the body is their *bearing / grooming*.

7 A discussion of clothing conventions may use the adjective *sartorial / muscular*.

8 A highly recognisable facial detail is a *distinctive feature / first impression*.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 project	____	a a polished appearance
2 form	____	b a striking figure
3 accentuate	____	c a resemblance to someone
4 maintain	____	d a professional image
5 cut	____	e a snap judgement
6 bear	____	f a facial feature
7 challenge	____	g prevailing beauty ideals
8 conform to	____	h conventional grooming norms

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

appearance-based bias | beauty ideal | body image | first impression | grooming norms | non-verbal cues | personal style | self-presentation | visual stereotype | youthful appearance

Public figures often use **1** _____ strategically: clothing, posture and facial expression become **2** _____ that communicate authority or approachability. A carefully developed **3** _____ can shape a favourable **4** _____, yet audiences may interpret it through a familiar **5** _____. Expectations are also influenced by a culturally dominant **6** _____ and by workplace **7** _____. Pressure to maintain a **8** _____ can affect **9** _____, while **10** _____ may influence judgements of credibility before any evidence of competence is considered.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Appearance, inference and evidence

Visual information is socially useful: it helps people recognise individuals, read situations and coordinate interaction. The difficulty begins when observation becomes an unsupported inference. Posture may signal confidence, discomfort, habit or simply fatigue; formal dress may reflect status, personal taste or an institutional rule. Because several explanations can fit the same detail, appearance is weak evidence for stable traits such as honesty, intelligence or leadership ability. Bias is reinforced when a familiar image repeatedly receives positive attention, making the association feel natural. More responsible judgement identifies what is directly observable, considers alternative explanations and delays conclusions until relevant behavioural evidence is available. This does not make appearance meaningless; it places it in proportion.

1 What three social functions of visual information are mentioned? _____

2 When does visual interpretation become problematic? _____

3 Why is posture open to several interpretations? _____

4 For which stable traits is appearance weak evidence? _____

5 How can repeated positive attention reinforce bias? _____

6 What three steps support more responsible judgement? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 Her clothing and posture **communicated a professional image**. _____

2 The silver frame **made her eyes more noticeable**. _____

3 He **looked particularly impressive and noticeable** in the portrait. _____

4 The campaign **questioned dominant standards of attractiveness**. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a **160-190 word** critical commentary on appearance in recruitment, media or public life. Distinguish observation from inference and evaluate how presentation, norms and bias interact.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced appearance terms

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

2 Precise terms

1 **dishevelled** 2 **statuesque** 3 **wiry** 4 **self-presentation** 5 **demeanour** 6 **bearing** 7 **sartorial** 8 **distinctive feature**

3 Academic collocations

1 **d** project a professional image 2 **e** form a snap judgement 3 **f** accentuate a facial feature 4 **a** maintain a polished appearance 5 **b** cut a striking figure 6 **c** bear a resemblance 7 **g** challenge prevailing beauty ideals 8 **h** conform to grooming norms

4 Analysis

1 **self-presentation** 2 **non-verbal cues** 3 **personal style** 4 **first impression** 5 **visual stereotype** 6 **beauty ideal** 7 **grooming norms** 8 **youthful appearance** 9 **body image** 10 **appearance-based bias**

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Recognising people, reading situations and coordinating interaction.
2 When observation becomes unsupported inference.
3 It may reflect confidence, discomfort, habit or fatigue.
4 Honesty, intelligence and leadership ability.
5 Familiar associations begin to feel natural.
6 Identify observations, consider alternatives and wait for relevant behavioural evidence.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 **projected a professional image** 2 **accentuated her eyes** 3 **cut a striking figure** 4 **challenged prevailing beauty ideals**

Over to you: Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.