

English to Describe People: Character and a Few Traits

Think about your favorite book. Think about your favorite person in your favorite book. Why do you like that person? What makes that person interesting or attractive? All the different items about that person that makes him interesting are his '**character**' or they're his '**character traits**.' If you remember that any person in a book, movie or story is a 'character,' then it's easy to remember that 'character' is also all the things that make you who you are. It's your personality, it's your habits, and it's qualities you might have.

The word character trait means one of these things that make you who you are. One part of your personality, a habit of yours. If you always open the door with your left hand, it's a character trait. And, today, I want to introduce just a few common character traits.

Think about a favorite colleague. Will this colleague help you out when you need extra work? Will this colleague say “ooh, you look overworked today, let me give you a hand.” If he does, he's a **helpful** person. I like helpful people and I think that I am a helpful person. I certainly try to be. Helpful means you help whenever you need to.

Here in Germany, I often see helpful people at the tram. When a mother has a baby carriage—a 'baby carriage' is a word for the wagon or car that you push babies in—and she's trying to carry it onto the tram, often strangers will help her carry the tram. . . they won't help her carry the tram. The tram weighs many tons and it's *heavy*. They will carry the carriage onto the tram. And I think that's a very helpful thing to do because I don't think I could carry a carriage by myself.

Think of yourself at work. When there's a big project to do, is the very first thing you do to go make some coffee, take a break, go outside for a cigarette, visit your favorite colleague and talk about your weekend? Or is the very first thing you do when there's a lot of work to do starting in on work? Do you say “okay, a lot to do, let's get straight to work.” If you get straight to work, you're a **hard-working** person. If you don't get straight to work, if you don't *like* working, we would say you're a **lazy** person.

I think, if you ask my wife, she will say I'm a lazy person. But, if you listen to yesterday's lesson, I would say I'm a laid-back person. It's all how you see it.

The last two words I want to mention today are also very important words . Imagine that, when you are walking home from work today, you find a wallet on the sidewalk. You open the wallet to see who it belongs to and you find one million Euros or whatever one million Euros is where you are living.

Do you take the money out and throw the wallet away? Do you say “Okay, I'll take the money out but I'll mail the wallet to the person,” or do you mail the wallet—with the money—to the

person? If you give back the money and the wallet, you are an ***honest*** person.

An honest person is a person who does what they believe is right, always. Even when it's not easy. And another element of being honest is always telling people the truth.

If... A good example is this: I recently had an accident with the company car, I told you about this. In theory, I could have driven the car back to work, park it in the garage and pretended like somebody else hit the car in the garage. I don't know if it would work or not, but I thought about it because I thought my boss would be angry for the car accident. If I did that, I wouldn't be a very honest person. Because, if I say that it was hit in the garage, that is not true. And telling what is not true is being ***dishonest***. My advice to you is this: nobody really likes dishonest people, so don't be one of them.

What are some words to describe your personality traits? Is there a personality trait that you hate in other people? Did you ever find a personality trait that you hated in someone else also in your self? For example, I hate it when people aren't on time, but I am also very often not on time and I know that's not a good thing to do. How else would you describe your personality? I'm interested to hear it.