

# People at Their Best

## Objective

Develop basic skills for describing a person you know or a person you would like to know more about.

## Introduction

Writing is not easy. But when you write about something you know a lot about, it is easier. In this unit, you will read about some famous people you probably already know something about. You can use words and grammatical expressions from the reading to help you write about these or other people. So, as you read, notice those descriptions that tell you how a person looks, how a person acts, or what kind of a person he or she is. Specifically, pay attention to the key words or grammatical patterns that describe the person. Now you are ready to start writing!



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## Reading Selection 1

### Chen Shu-chu: An Unsung Heroine

The world is full of unsung heroes and heroines. They never become rich and famous. They never appear in newspaper headlines or do celebrity interviews on TV. But they make the world a better place for all of us. Such a person is Chen Shu-chu.

If you saw Chen Shu-chu selling vegetables in Taitung's central market, you might not pay any special attention to her. That's because she is a very ordinary-looking person who is more than 60 years of age. She is the kind of seller who wears an apron while working in her stall. Her straight black hair is pulled back in a practical way behind her head. She seldom smiles and doesn't talk much. It is clear that she is an efficient businesswoman. She works seven days a week, from early morning to night.

If you ask Chen why she works so hard and is so thrifty, you might be surprised at the answer. She says in her modest way that she uses the money she makes by selling vegetables to help others. In fact, in recent years, Chen has donated more than NT\$10 million to worthy causes. She has helped build a library at the elementary school she once attended. She also supports a local orphanage and gives financial support to needy children.

Perhaps it is Chen's early life which helps explain how she has become the kind of person she is today. She grew up in poverty and hardship. She came from a large family and had six siblings to support. She never got married. Instead, she chose to live a life of service to others. It is for



this reason that *TIME* magazine in 2010 chose Chen Shu-chu as one of the 100 people who most affect our world today. *Reader's Digest* also honored her as the winner of its 2010 Asian of the Year Award.

But Chen denies that she is a heroine. She merely says that money serves its purpose only when it is used for those who need it. In her own humble way, Chen is a very wonderful and extraordinary person indeed.

## Building Vocabulary

### Words Used to Describe People: Appearance and Actions

Descriptive words can be used to describe the way a person looks or acts. Arrange the words below into two categories, one that describes a person's appearance and the other that describes a person's actions. We have started the exercise for you.

black	generous	thin	wrinkled	efficient	neat	pretty
thrifty	muscular	thoughtful	cute	selfish	unhappy	modest
crew-cut	practical	young	idealistic	dark	handsome	poised
demanding	tall	humble	visionary	imaginative	kind	impatient
frowning	helpful					

### Appearance

*black*

### Actions

*generous*

## Focus on Usage

### Describing a Person

Focal  
Point

S + be (am/is/are/was/were) + SC

**Examples** 1. She is a very ordinary-looking person who is more than 60 years of age.

S be SC

2. In her own humble way, Chen is a very wonderful and extraordinary person indeed.

S be SC

**Practice** Write the sentences by using the pattern above and the key words given. The first one has been done for you.

1. among/the brightest students/the two brothers/in the class

→ The two brothers are among the brightest students in the class.

2. Molly/to everybody/kind and generous/so/she knows

→ \_\_\_\_\_

3. the monster/watching the movie/very frightening/to the young people

→ \_\_\_\_\_

4. both strict and very helpful/the English teacher/to his students

→ \_\_\_\_\_

5. of/Harry Potter/a series of/the fictional hero/very popular books and movies

→ \_\_\_\_\_

6. the kind of person who always has/my best friend/a kind word/to say about everyone

→ \_\_\_\_\_

7. Santa Claus/a fat and jolly old man who brings/around the world/on Christmas Eve/presents to children

→ \_\_\_\_\_

8. Bill Gates/makes/a man of middle age whose boyish face/him/look much younger

→ \_\_\_\_\_

9. with a deeply wrinkled face/Abraham Lincoln/tall thin man/a slow and thoughtful way of talking/and

→ \_\_\_\_\_

10. The Phantom/by wearing a mask/his disfigured face/actually a sad and lonely man who hid

→ \_\_\_\_\_



## Reading Selection 2

### Steve Jobs: The Man with a Vision

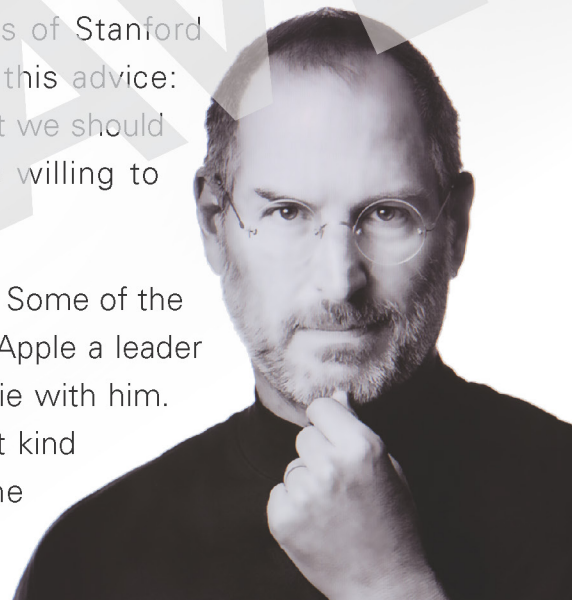
Did you ever watch Steve Jobs on television introducing a new Apple product? He was a tall, thin man who dressed very casually. He often wore blue jeans. He usually had a neat, dark beard. There was a sincere, even intense, look in his eyes as he enthusiastically described all the wonders Apple's newest electronic device could perform.

As you watched Jobs, you saw a man who was in love with what he did. He had both imagination and vision. This had been true from a very early age. Jobs had served as a summer intern at Hewlett-Packard while still in high school. He had dropped out of college to follow his own curiosity. When he was only 21, he and a friend started the business that became one of the most famous and successful of all modern companies. Jobs called his new company Apple, which was the fruit that he often liked to eat.

As his career developed, Jobs became something of a legend. The people who worked for him sometimes called him "stubborn" and "demanding." He was a perfectionist. He was not easy to get along with. Others praised him for being "passionate" and "idealistic." What was always clear was that he was a man who listened to his own voice, lived his own way, and followed his own dream.

While speaking to the graduating class of Stanford University in 2005, Jobs concluded with this advice: "Stay hungry. Stay foolish." Jobs meant that we should always be hungry for knowledge and be willing to appear foolish in our search for truth.

Steve Jobs died in 2011 at the age of 56. Some of the special character and vision that had made Apple a leader in the field of high technology seemed to die with him. Who will be the next Steve Jobs, and what kind of company will he or she lead? Only time will tell.



## Building Vocabulary

### Words Used to Describe People: Positive and Negative Qualities

Descriptive words can be used to describe a person's positive qualities or negative qualities. Arrange the words below into two categories, one that describes a person's positive qualities and the other that describes a person's negative qualities. We have started the exercise for you.

bored	cowardly	cruel	curious	decisive	determined
diligent	enthusiastic	exciting	flexible	foolish	generous
heroic	impractical	incurious	indecisive	indifferent	insecure
insincere	intelligent	kind	mean	passionate	practical
secure	selfish	sincere	stingy	stupid	stubborn
thoughtful	thoughtless	unexciting	wise		

#### Positive Qualities

*curious*

#### Negative Qualities

*bored*

## Focus on Usage

### Relative Clauses

Focal  
Point

N + **who/that/which** (+ S) + V

- Examples**
1. The people who worked for him sometimes called him “stubborn” and “demanding.”  
N                      who + V
  2. What will happen to the company that made some of the most beloved and admired electronic products in our world today?  
N    that + V
  3. The old house which Frank bought last week overlooks a beautiful park.  
N    which + S + V

**Practice** Combine the following sentences by using the appropriate pattern above. The first one has been done for you.

1. { The students work hard.  
The students will succeed in their classes.  
→ The students who work hard will succeed in their classes.
2. { Kathy likes the boy.  
The boy is the tallest in the group.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
3. { I gave my mother a jacket.  
The jacket is made of a special material.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
4. { The marathon will be very exciting.  
The marathon will take place tomorrow afternoon.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
5. { The computer is very fast and has a big memory.  
I just bought the computer.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_

## Focus on Writing

### Pre-writing Activity

Most writers find that the most difficult part of writing is simply the act of beginning to write. We often refer to this difficulty as “writer’s block.” One way to overcome it is to just jot down the first words that come to mind when you think about a particular topic. You may later find those key words very useful as you begin the task of doing the actual writing. Put this idea into practice by looking at the pictures of people below and then write down 15 words that come to mind for each picture in the space below.



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## Starting to Write

### A. Writing Your Own Descriptions of Steve Jobs

You have read about two very special people, Chen Shu-chu and Steve Jobs. Now you are going to do some writing of your own.

1. First, look at the following short passage about Chen Shu-chu.

Chen Shu-chu is a woman who sells vegetables in Taitung County. She is a hard-working vendor who is always busy. She is very ordinary-looking. She wears an apron at work and ties her hair behind her head. She is a businesswoman who is practical and efficient. Chen is obviously not a selfish person. She uses the money which she makes by selling vegetables to help others. That makes her a very generous and special person indeed.

2. Now write a similar passage about Steve Jobs. Use some of the key descriptive words that you have learned in this unit. Try to include at least one relative clause. To get started, answer the following questions.

- a. Is he living or dead? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What did he do? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What did he look like? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What kind of man was he? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Why was he important? \_\_\_\_\_
- f. What is your opinion of him? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Write your own passage about Steve Jobs (we have started the first sentence for you).

*Steve Jobs was a man who*

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### B. Writing About a Person You Like a Lot

Now you are going to write a passage about a person you like a lot.

1. Before you start, ask yourself and answer some of the following questions.

- a. What is the name and age of that person? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What does the person do? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What does that person look like? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What kind of personality does he or she have? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. What makes that person so special to you? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Jot down some words below that can be used to describe that person and add any additional words of your own.

shy, smart, funny, creative, active, outgoing, brave, generous, stubborn, polite, childish, sociable, independent, intense, intelligent, competitive, confident, sensitive, romantic...

3. Now write your passage about that person (we have started the first sentence for you).

*The person I like a lot is*

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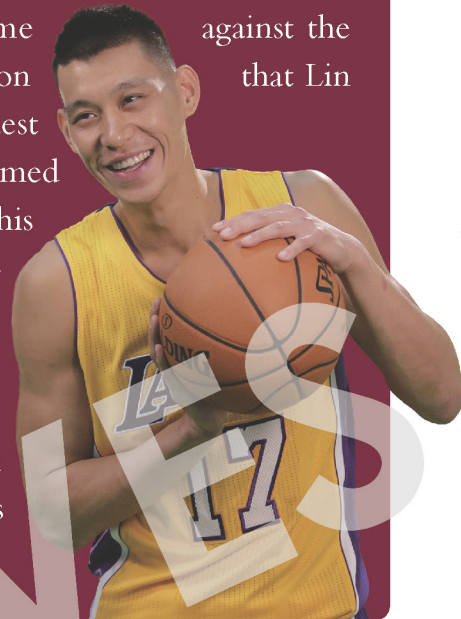
### C. Writing About a Famous Person

Choose a famous person you admire and would like to know more about. Use the Internet or other source of information and gather some facts about that person. Jot down some key words that come to your mind as you think about the person and ask yourself the same questions you answered in the previous writing assignment.

**Model 1** First, read this passage about Jeremy Lin, and circle all the descriptive words in the passage.

## LINSANITY

It happened in February 2012. That is when Linsanity broke out all over the world. All of a sudden, everyone knew who Jeremy Lin was: the smart, poised point guard for the New York Knicks basketball team. The newly famous NBA player scored 38 points in one game against the Toronto Raptors. It only added to people's admiration that Lin was an extraordinary athlete who was also a modest and humble young man in his personal life. It seemed that everyone who loves sports was in love with this tall, handsome, muscular guy with the black crew-cut hair. The media even created new words to describe this enthusiasm: "Linsanity," "Linmania," and even "Linferno." But this passionate affection for Lin was especially intense in Taiwan. After all, Lin had said publicly that he was really proud that he was Chinese and that his parents were from Taiwan.



Now write the descriptive words you circled in the space below.

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**Model 2** First, read this passage about Lady Gaga, and circle all the descriptive words in the passage.

## Lady Gaga: She Was Born That Way!

Lady Gaga is a singer and performer who is especially admired by young people nowadays. They love her rebellious nature, her naughty, unconventional actions on stage, the passion in her songs, and her joy in looking different and being different. Lady Gaga's naturally brown hair is dyed blonde. She wears large, unusual hats and enormous, John Lennon-style sunglasses. She has tattoos on her body, and her clothes are in a sometimes shocking way. But side of Lady Gaga to genuinely care for others, she seems to care about the money she made from her concerts to the earthquake victims in the 2010 Haiti earthquake and the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. She also contributes to the fight against HIV and AIDS. No wonder *TIME* magazine named her in 2010 as one of the 100 most influential people in the world!



Now write the descriptive words you circled in the space below.

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**Practice**

Chen Shu-chu has just been awarded a special medal of honor by the president of your country. Now write about this event in each of the following ways.

**A. Formal Style**

WORLDNEWS Search

Home World Asia Africa Europe Business World Sport Entertainment Travel Tech

**B. E-mail to a Friend**

MAIL

To:

From:

Subject:

SEND A | +

**C. Text Message**

+

ENTER

# Language Toolbox

## Capitalization and Punctuation

**A. Beginning and Ending a Sentence**

A sentence begins with a capital letter (A, B, C...) and ends with a punctuation mark. The punctuation mark can be a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation mark (!).

- Examples**
1. Whitney Houston was one of the best singers in the 1990s.
  2. Do you agree that Whitney Houston was one of the best singers in the 1990s?
  3. What a great singer Whitney Houston was in the 1990s!

**Practice** Capitalize the letters that begin the sentences and add appropriate punctuation marks to make the paragraph on the next page easier to understand. Here we give you an example to read first.

**Example**

Without appropriate capital letters and punctuation:

mother Teresa offered her life in service to others she lived among the poorest people in India and struggled to make their lives more comfortable she did her best to avoid attracting attention she only seemed to care about helping others

With appropriate capital letters and punctuation:

Mother Teresa offered her life in service to others. She lived among the poorest people in India and struggled to make their lives more comfortable. She did her best to avoid attracting attention. She only seemed to care about helping others.



# Animal Kingdom

## Objective

Develop the skills for describing animals.

## Introduction

You have been practicing skills to describe people. Now let's turn our attention to describing animals. Animals, of course, come in all shapes and sizes. Also, they behave in very different ways from humans and from each other. Some have two legs, some four or six or even more. Some have no legs at all but wings or fins. Some make good pets; some should be left alone in the wilderness. By paying attention to the world of animals, you will be able to write about them in interesting ways. This unit will help you do that.



3. I just read A Trip to the Moon. I thought it was a really fabulous story.
4. The song, Happy Birthday to You, is considered to be the most popular song ever written.
5. In the poem, How Do I Love Thee? the poet tries to count the many ways she loves her boyfriend.

### (b) To show what somebody says

- Examples**
1. Bob said, "I am going to bed as soon as I finish the assignment."
  2. "I know a lot about the stars, but I guess I don't know everything," Jake admitted with a sigh.

**Practice** Put quotation marks where necessary in the following sentences.

1. I love you, Greg whispered to Laura.
2. The stranger asked, Can you tell me the way to the post office, please?
3. The girl cried out, Help me! Help me! when a man robbed her bag.
4. Hey, you guys, Laura yelled, wait for me!
5. Nancy said No. when she was asked if she had ever checked her horoscope.