

Lesson Plan:

Personality adjectives

LEVEL	TIME	SKILLS	FOCUS
Beginner / Intermediate (A2-B1)	50-60 minutes	Vocabulary, speaking, writing	Positive and negative traits; context-dependent adjectives; adverbs for intensity; reframing

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use at least 20 personality adjectives accurately
- Distinguish between adjectives with positive, negative, and context-dependent connotations
- Use adverbs to intensify personality descriptions
- Reframe a 'negative' trait more positively — a key communication skill

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Positive personality traits

- confident, creative, determined, empathetic, generous, honest, kind, patient, reliable, sociable, thoughtful

Negative personality traits

- arrogant, bossy, lazy, stubborn, selfish, moody, impatient, dishonest, rude, jealous

Context-dependent traits — positive or negative?

- ambitious — positive (driven) or negative (ruthless, at any cost)
- stubborn — negative (won't change mind) or positive: determined, persistent
- reserved — positive (calm, thoughtful) or negative (cold, unfriendly)

Adverb + adjective combinations

- incredibly kind, extremely patient, fairly confident, slightly stubborn, a bit rude
- She's quite generous but a little too trusting.
- He can be remarkably patient — but only when it suits him.

Meaning & Nuance

Positive framing	Negative framing	Core trait
determined	stubborn	won't give up / won't change their mind
confident	arrogant	believes in themselves / thinks too highly of themselves
careful	over-cautious	pays attention to detail / afraid to take risks
ambitious	ruthless	has high goals / will do anything to achieve them
outgoing	loud	enjoys company / too much — exhausting
direct / frank	blunt / rude	says what they think — clearly or unkindly

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: Describe someone without naming them (10 min)

Task: Students write 5 positive personality adjectives describing a classmate. Others guess who it is. → *Gets adjectives flowing naturally; creates a positive classroom atmosphere.*

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Vocabulary in categories: positive, negative, context-dependent.

- Key insight: the same trait can be reframed positively or negatively depending on context.
- Drill with adverbs: incredibly, extremely, fairly, slightly, a bit.

3. Reframing task (10 min)

Task: Students reframe 6 negative descriptions more positively.

- 'She's bossy.' → 'She's good at taking charge.' / 'She's very assertive.'
- 'He's stubborn.' → 'He's very determined.' / 'He sticks to his convictions.'

4. Speaking: Describe someone you admire (15 min)

Task: Students describe a person they admire (real or fictional) in 5–7 sentences.

- Must use at least 4 different personality adjectives with adverbs.
- Group discussion: do you agree with each other's descriptions?

TEACHER NOTES

- The positive/negative reframing activity builds critical thinking alongside vocabulary — adults find it very engaging.
- Personality adjectives are a key IELTS and TOEFL vocabulary area.
- Adverb + adjective combinations (incredibly kind) sound far more natural than single adjectives.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Write a character description of a real or fictional person using at least 8 personality adjectives.
2. Write a short paragraph arguing that a 'negative' trait can sometimes be an advantage.
3. Create a list of 10 personality adjectives — 5 you think describe you, 5 you'd like to develop.