CAPITOLO

2

Family and Friends

Tell me about the people in your life, and you tell me a lot about yourself.

OBIETTIVI

1. I can name the people in my family, including step-, half- and in-law relatives.
2. I can describe a person's appearance and personality with the right adjectives in the right order.
3. I can use *have got* in all its forms, and object and possessive pronouns.
4. I can ask *Whose...?*, *What is she like?* and *What does she look like?* and answer them.
5. I can write a short description of a friend or a family member.
6. I can explain how English names and titles work, and compare family celebrations in the UK, the US and Italy.

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Who are the most important people in your life? For most of us the answer is a mix of family and friends: parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, cousins, and the friends we see every day at school. In this unit you meet Sam's family — big, busy and a little complicated — and you learn how to talk about the people you love (and the people who drive you crazy!). You will describe what people look like and what they are like, say what people have got, and ask whose things are whose. At the end you will find out how names work in the English-speaking world, and why British and American mums celebrate on different days.

2.1 Vocabulary: family, appearance and personality

2.1.1 Family members

Your family is your parents, your brothers and sisters and your other **relatives** *(ita: parenti)*: grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Many family words come in pairs, one for a man or a boy and one for a woman or a girl. Some words, like *cousin*, *parents* and *grandparents*, are for both. Your brothers and sisters together are your **siblings**; if you haven't got any siblings, you are an **only child**. Two children with the same mother, born on the same day, are **twins**. Your aunt's or uncle's son or daughter is your **cousin** — in English the word is the same for a boy and a girl.

Tabella 2.1 Family words

Male	Female	Both / plural
grandfather (grandad)	grandmother (grandma, granny)	grandparents
father (dad)	mother (mum; AmE mom)	parents
son	daughter	children
brother	sister	siblings
husband	wife	(a married couple)
uncle	aunt	—
nephew	niece	—
grandson	granddaughter	grandchildren
—	—	cousin(s)

Modern families come in many shapes, and English has precise words for them. When a parent marries again, the new husband or wife is your *stepfather* or *stepmother*, and their children are your *stepbrothers* and *stepsisters*. The prefix **step-** means that there is no blood relation: you are family because of a marriage. The prefix **half-** is different: a *half-brother* or *half-sister* has one parent in common with you, not two. Finally, **-in-law** is for the family of your husband or wife: your wife's mother is your *mother-in-law*, your sister's husband is your *brother-in-law*, and the plural is *brothers-in-law* (the *-s* goes on the first word).

Look at Sam's family tree in Figure 2.1. Sam's parents, David and Helen, are divorced. Sam's mum is now married to Mark, so Mark is Sam's stepdad. Mark's son Josh is Sam's stepbrother, and little Lily, the daughter of Helen and Mark, is Sam's half-sister. Aunt Lucy is Dad's sister; her husband Tom is Sam's uncle, and their twins, Ella and Max, are Sam's cousins.

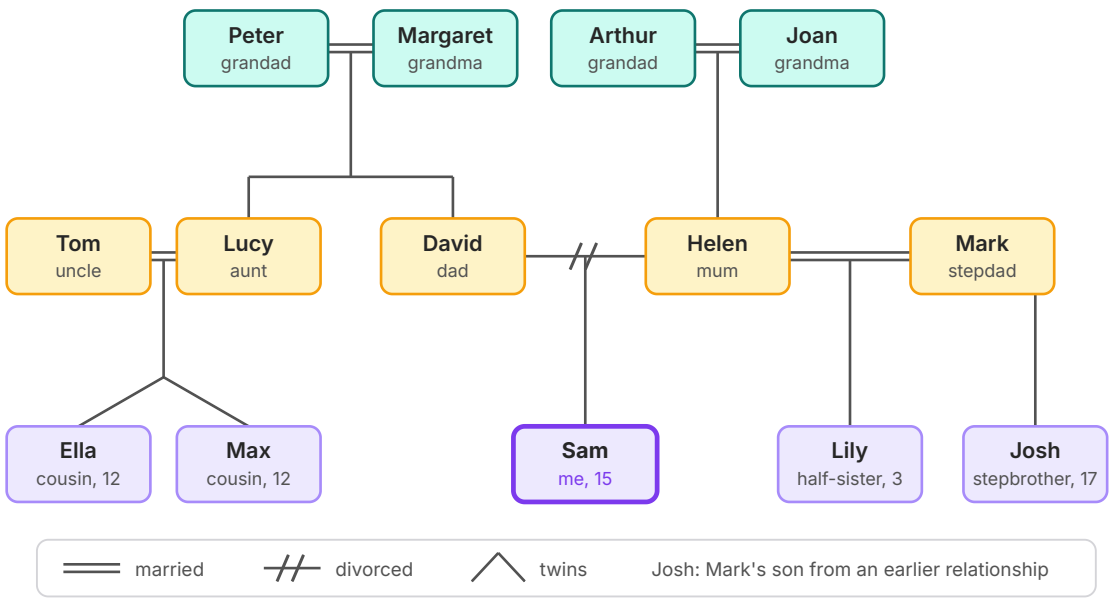


Figura 2.1 Sam's family tree: three generations. Each label shows the person's relationship to Sam, with the ages of the youngest generation. Tom is Peter and Margaret's son-in-law; Mark is Arthur and Joan's son-in-law.

DA RICORDARE

Some family words are hard to pronounce, because the spelling does not help. In the words with two syllables, the stress is on the first one: **aunt** /ɑːnt/ (AmE /ænt/), **cousin** /ˈkʌzn/, **daughter** /ˈdɔːtə/ (the letters *gh* are silent), **nephew** /ˈnefjuː/, **niece** /niːs/, **mother** /ˈmʌðə/.

2.1.2 Physical appearance

To describe what people look like, we usually talk about their **height** (how tall they are), their **build** (the shape and size of their body), their hair and their eyes, and any special features such as glasses, a beard or **freckles** — small brown spots on the skin, often on the nose and cheeks. Short hair over the forehead is a **fringe** (AmE *bangs*). Look at Table 2.2 and at Figure 2.2.

Tabella 2.2 Describing appearance

Topic	Words	Example
height	tall, short, (of) medium height	Grandad Peter is tall.
build	slim, thin, well-built, (of) medium build	Mum is tall and slim.
hair: length	short, shoulder-length, long; bald (no hair)	Ella has got long hair.
hair: type	straight, wavy, curly	Lily has got curly hair.
hair: colour	fair / blond(e), brown, dark, black, red, grey, white	Mum has got short fair hair.
eyes	blue, green, brown, grey, hazel	Lily has got big blue eyes.
other features	a beard, a moustache, glasses, freckles	Mark has got a big beard.

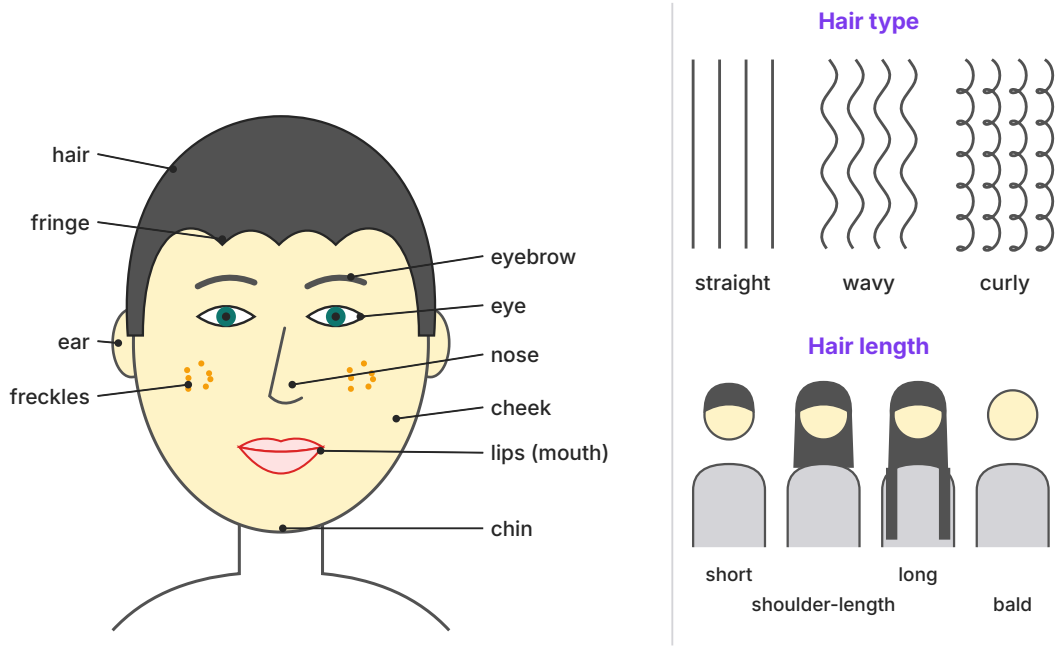


Figura 2.2 Left: the parts of the face, with the person's hair and features. Right: words for hair type and hair length. *Shoulder-length* hair stops at the shoulders; *long* hair goes below them.

Be polite when you describe people. *Slim* is a positive word; *thin* is neutral or a little negative; *fat* is rude when you talk about a person — in a description, say *well-built* or *a bit overweight*, or simply describe something else! For older people we often say *in his seventies* (70–79) or *in her forties* (40–49) instead of an exact age.

2.1.3 Personality adjectives and opposites

Personality adjectives describe what a person is like inside: their character. Many of them form their opposite with a **prefix** — a short group of letters at the start of a word: *un-*, *im-*, *in-* or *dis-* (Figure 2.3). There is no easy rule for which prefix goes with which adjective, so learn each pair as one piece of vocabulary. Only *im-* is predictable: it usually comes before *p* and *m*.

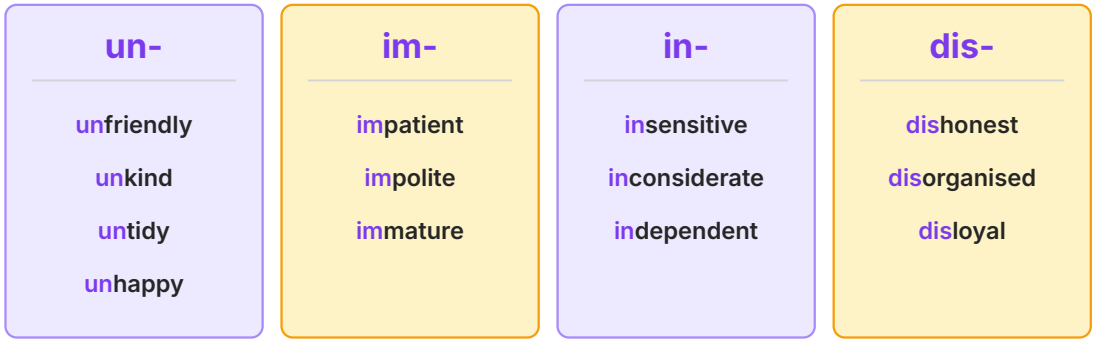


Figura 2.3 Opposite personality adjectives made with the prefixes *un-*, *im-*, *in-* and *dis-*. The prefix is in violet; the rest of the word does not change.

Other common adjectives have an opposite that is a completely different word (Table 2.3). Note that *mean* in British English is the opposite of *generous*: a mean person does not like spending money or sharing things.

Tabella 2.3 Personality opposites without a prefix

Adjective	Opposite	Example
outgoing (sociable)	shy	Josh is shy with new people.
hard-working	lazy	Ella is hard-working, but Max is a bit lazy.
generous	mean	My grandma is very generous.
funny	serious	Mark is funny — he tells terrible jokes!
easy-going (relaxed)	bossy, strict	Max is easy-going; Ella is a bit bossy.
calm	nervous	Our teacher is always calm.
clever	stupid (rude!)	Ella is really clever.

Small words like *very*, *really*, *quite* and *a bit* make a description more exact. Use *a bit* only with negative adjectives: *He's a bit lazy* ✓, but ✗ *She's a bit kind*. *Quite* means "more than a little, but not very": *Josh is quite shy*.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

Falsi amici di famiglia. *Parents* significa **genitori**, non "parenti": i parenti sono *relatives*. ✗ *I've got a lot of parents in Sicily.* → ✓ *I've got a lot of relatives in Sicily.*

Sympathetic non vuol dire "simpatico", ma **comprensivo, solidale**. Per "simpatico" usa *nice, friendly* o *likeable*. ✗ *My cousin is very sympathetic, she makes me laugh.* → ✓ *My cousin is really nice/funny, she makes me laugh.*

Anche *sensible* è un falso amico: significa **assennato, ragionevole**; "sensibile" si dice *sensitive*.

2.2 Reading: My family? It's complicated!

Before you read. Is your family big or small? How many cousins have you got? Read Sam's blog post for Giulia, an Italian exchange student. Which people in Sam's family are not blood relatives?

LEARNING TO LEARN

Two ways of reading. You don't always read a text in the same way. To **skim** means to read quickly for the general idea, the **gist**: look at the title, the first line of each paragraph and any pictures, and ask "What is this text about?". To **scan** means to look for one piece of information — a name, a number, a day — without reading every word, as you do with a timetable. Good readers skim first, then scan for what they need, and then read the important parts carefully.

Try it. Skim Sam's blog post in one minute: who is it for? Then scan it for numbers: how old are the twins, and how many grandparents has Sam got?

My family? It's complicated!

Hi, I'm Sam and I'm fifteen. This term my school has got an exchange programme with a liceo in Italy, and my exchange partner, Giulia, has got lots of questions about my family. So, Giulia, this post is for you. Get ready: my family is big, and it's a bit complicated!

My parents are divorced. From Monday to Friday I'm at my mum's house, and every other weekend I'm at my dad's flat. My mum, Helen, is a nurse. She's tall and slim, with short fair hair and green eyes, and she's very patient — with three children in the house, that's important! Her husband, Mark, is my stepdad. He's well-built, he's got a big beard, and he's really funny. Mark has got a son, Josh. Josh is my stepbrother. He's seventeen and he's quite shy, but he's crazy about football. Mum and Mark have also got a little daughter, Lily. She's three, so she's my half-sister. She's got curly brown hair and big blue eyes, and she's very, very noisy!

My dad, David, is a bus driver. He's got a small flat near the town centre and a lovely old black cat called Pepper. Dad has got one sister, my Aunt Lucy. She's married to Uncle Tom, and

they've got twins, Ella and Max. They're twelve. Ella is clever and hard-working, but Max is a bit lazy — sorry, Max! They've both got dark hair and glasses, but they aren't identical twins: one is a girl and one is a boy.

And my grandparents? I've got four. Grandad Peter and Grandma Maggie are Dad's parents. They're in their seventies, but they're very active — they've got bikes and an allotment *(ita: orto in affitto)* full of vegetables. Grandma Joan and Grandad Arthur are Mum's parents. Mum is their only child, so Lily and I are their only grandchildren. They're very generous with us!

Our house is busy and noisy, and some days it isn't easy. Josh's room is next to mine, and his music is LOUD. But we're a team, and I love them all. Now it's your turn, Giulia. Is your family big or small? And whose family is more complicated — yours or mine?

Language in context. Look at the blog again. Find: four sentences with *has got* or *'ve got*; two possessive pronouns (*mine*, *yours*); the question word *whose*; and the phrase *a lovely old black cat*. Why are the adjectives in this order? You will study all of these in section 2.3.

2.3 Grammar: have got, pronouns, possessives and adjectives

2.3.1 have got

We use **have got** to talk about possession (*I've got a bike*), family and relationships (*She's got two brothers*), appearance (*He's got blue eyes*) and illnesses (*I've got a cold*). It is very common in spoken British English. In the third person singular (*he, she, it*) the form is *has got*. Questions put *have/has* before the subject, and short answers use only *have/has*, without *got*.

Tabella 2.4 have got: form

Affirmative	Negative	Questions	Short answers
I have got / I've got	I have not got / I haven't got	Have I got…?	Yes, I have. / No, I haven't.
You have got / You've got	You haven't got	Have you got…?	Yes, you have. / No, you haven't.
He/She/It has got / He's got	He/She/It has not got / hasn't got	Has he/she/it got…?	Yes, she has. / No, she hasn't.
We/You/They have got / We've got	We/You/They haven't got	Have we/you/they got…?	Yes, they have. / No, they haven't.

Be careful with *'s*: *She's got green eyes* = *She has got*, but *She's tall* = *She is*. If the word *got* follows, *'s* is *has*. With *Wh-* questions, the question word goes first: *How many cousins have you got? What colour eyes has she got?* In the negative, we often use *any* with plural nouns: *I haven't got any brothers or sisters.*

In American English, and more and more in British English too, people use *have* without *got*, with *do/does* in questions and negatives: AmE *Do you have a brother? — Yes, I do. / She doesn't have a car.* You will study *do/does* in Unit 3. Both forms are correct; in this book we use *have got* for possession.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

have got = avere (possesso). Si usa per ciò che si possiede, per i rapporti di parentela, per l'aspetto fisico e per le malattie: *I've got a sister* (ho una sorella), *He's got a headache* (ha mal di testa). È formato da *have/has* (l'**ausiliare**) + *got*: alla 3ª persona singolare si usa *has got*.

Negativa: *not* dopo *have/has* → *haven't got / hasn't got*. **Interrogativa** (forma interrogativa): inversione di ausiliare e soggetto, *got* resta dopo il soggetto → *Have you got a pet?* **Risposte brevi:** solo l'ausiliare, senza *got* → *Yes, I have. / No, I haven't.*

Confronto con l'italiano. In italiano "avere" si usa anche per l'età e per molte azioni; in inglese no. L'età si esprime con *to be* (*I'm fifteen*), e per le azioni si usa *have* senza *got*: *have breakfast* (fare colazione), *have a shower* (fare la doccia), *have a party*. Inoltre *have got* non si usa al passato: "avevo un cane" = *I had a dog*.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I have got fifteen years.* → ✓ *I'm fifteen.* (l'età vuole *be*)

✗ *I've got breakfast at seven.* → ✓ *I have breakfast at seven.* (azione: niente *got*)

✗ *Have you got a sister? — Yes, I have got.* → ✓ *Yes, I have.* (nella risposta breve non c'è *got*)

✗ *Has she got a brother? — Yes, she's.* → ✓ *Yes, she has.* (nelle risposte brevi affermative niente contrazione)

2.3.2 Object pronouns

Subject pronouns (*I, you, he…*) come before the verb: they do the action. **Object pronouns** come after a verb or after a preposition (*with, for, to, about…*): they receive the action. *I love **her**. Come with **us**! This present is for **you**. Look at **them**!* We also use object pronouns after *be* in short answers: *Who's there? — It's **me**.*

Tabella 2.5 Pronouns and possessives

Subject pronoun	Object pronoun	Possessive adjective	Possessive pronoun
I	me	my	mine
you	you	your	yours
he	him	his	his
she	her	her	hers
it	it	its	— (not used)
we	us	our	ours
you	you	your	yours
they	them	their	theirs

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Pronomi complemento (object pronouns). Corrispondono a "me, mi, te, ti, lo, la, gli, le, ci, vi, li, loro...". In italiano il pronome atono va spesso **prima** del verbo ("la vedo", "ti chiamo"); in inglese va sempre **dopo** il verbo: *I see her*, *I'll call you*. Dopo una preposizione si usa sempre il pronome complemento: *with me* (con me), *for them* (per loro), *about him* (di lui).

Nota che *you* e *it* non cambiano. *Her* è sia pronome complemento (*I like her* = lei mi piace) sia aggettivo possessivo (*her bag* = la sua borsa). "Sono io" si dice *It's me*, non ✗ *I am*.

2.3.3 Possessive pronouns and Whose...?

A possessive adjective comes before a noun: *This is **my** phone.* A **possessive pronoun** replaces the possessive adjective and the noun together, so we don't repeat the noun: *This phone is **mine**. Is that bag **yours**? No, it's **hers**.* Possessive pronouns never take an article and never change for singular or plural: *These keys are mine*.

To ask who something belongs to, we use **whose**. It can come before a noun or alone, before *is/are*: *Whose dog is this? = Whose is this dog?* The answer often uses a possessive pronoun or the possessive *'s*: *It's Ella and Max's. — It's theirs.* Remember: *whose* and *who's* (*who is*) sound exactly the same, /huːz/, but they are different words.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Pronomi possessivi e *whose*. In italiano "mio" può essere aggettivo o pronome ("il mio libro", "è mio"); in inglese le due forme sono diverse: aggettivo *my* + nome, pronome *mine* da solo. Il pronome possessivo **non vuole l'articolo**: "è il mio" = *it's mine* (✗ *the mine*). È invariabile: *mine* vale per "mio, mia, miei, mie".

Alla 3ª persona singolare l'inglese guarda il **possessore**, non la cosa posseduta: "la sua bici" (di Sam) = *his bike*; (di Giulia) = *her bike*; "è sua" = *it's his / it's hers*.

Whose = di chi. In inglese la preposizione non si usa: "Di chi è questo cane?" = *Whose dog is this?* (✗ *Of who is this dog?*).

2.3.4 Adjectives: position and order

English adjectives are simple in one way: they never change. There is no plural and no masculine or feminine form: *a tall boy, two tall girls*. An adjective goes **before** the noun (*a kind woman*) or **after** *be* (*She's kind*). After *be*, we join the last two adjectives with *and*: *He's tall and thin. She's friendly, clever and funny.*

When two or more adjectives come before a noun, they follow a fixed **adjective order**: opinion – size – age – colour – noun (Figure 2.4). Opinion adjectives (*nice, lovely, friendly, beautiful*) say what you think; the others are facts. Adjectives of shape (*curly, round*) go just before colour: *long curly brown hair*. We don't usually use more than three adjectives together.

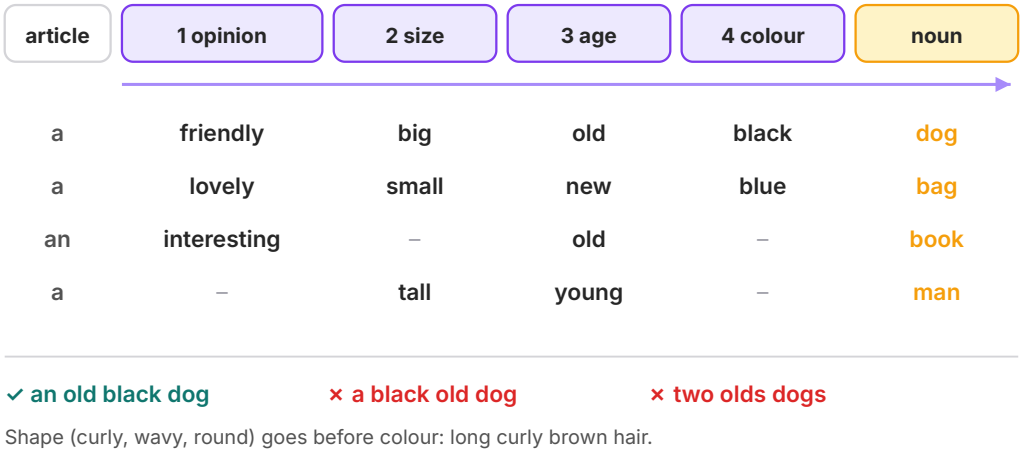


Figura 2.4 The order of adjectives before a noun: opinion, size, age, colour. Not every slot needs a word. Note *an* before a vowel sound (*an interesting book, an old dog*), and that adjectives never take *-s*.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Posizione e ordine degli aggettivi. In inglese l'aggettivo è **invariabile** (niente plurale, niente maschile/femminile) e va **prima del nome** (in italiano spesso va dopo: "una ragazza alta" = *a tall girl*) oppure dopo il verbo *be* (*The girl is tall*).

Con più aggettivi prima del nome l'ordine è fisso: **opinione – dimensione – età – (forma) – colore – nome**: *a lovely little old house*. In questo caso non si mette *and* fra gli aggettivi; si usa *and* solo fra due colori (*a black and white cat*) o fra gli ultimi due aggettivi dopo *be* (*She's tall and slim*).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I've got two olds brothers.* → ✓ *I've got two old brothers.* (l'aggettivo non prende mai la *-s*)

✗ *She's a girl very beautiful.* → ✓ *She's a very beautiful girl.* (l'aggettivo va prima del nome)

✗ *Who's bag is this?* → ✓ *Whose bag is this?* (*who's = who is*)

✗ *How is your sister? — She's tall and blonde.* → ✓ *What does your sister look like? — She's tall and blonde.* (*How is she?* = come sta?)

2.3.5 What is she like? / What does she look like?

These two questions look similar, but they ask for different information. *What is she like?* (= *What's she like?*) asks about personality, and sometimes about a person in general. *What does she look like?* asks only about appearance. In both questions *like* is not the verb "like" (*I like pizza*); it means "similar to". A third question, *How is she?*, asks about health or how someone feels today.

- *What's your stepbrother like? — He's quite shy, but he's very kind.*
- *What does your stepbrother look like? — He's tall and thin, with short black hair.*
- *How is your grandma? — She's fine, thanks. / She's ill at the moment.*

Learn *What does... look like?* as a fixed phrase for now: *does* is the auxiliary of the present simple, which you will study in Unit 3. With a plural subject it becomes *What do they look like?*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Com'è? Che aspetto ha? Come sta? L'italiano "com'è?" può riguardare carattere e aspetto; l'inglese distingue:

What is he like? = com'è (di carattere)? · *What does he look like?* = che aspetto ha? com'è fisicamente? · *How is he?* = come sta?

Qui *like* è una preposizione ("come"), non il verbo "piacere". Lo stesso *look like* significa anche "assomigliare a": *You look like your mum* (assomigli a tua madre).

2.4 Listening and Speaking: describing people

Giulia and Sam are in the kitchen at home in Bristol. Sam is showing Giulia some photos on his phone from a family party. Read the script (or listen to your teacher) and find: Who is the man with the grey beard? Whose is the dog?

Tabella 2.6 Listening script — Photos from the party

Giulia	Hi, Sam! Have you got the photos from the party?
Sam	Yes, here they are. This is my cousins' birthday party, at Aunt Lucy's house.
Giulia	Your cousins are the twins, right? Ella and Max?
Sam	That's right. Ella's the girl with the glasses and the long dark hair. And that's Max next to her, in the football shirt.
Giulia	They look nice. What are they like?
Sam	Ella's really clever, but she's a bit bossy. Max is funny and very easy-going. I like him a lot.
Giulia	And who's the tall man with the grey beard?
Sam	That's Grandad Peter, my dad's father. He's seventy-four, but he's very fit.
Giulia	Wow! And the woman with long fair hair? Is she your aunt?
Sam	No, that's my mum! Her hair is short now. Aunt Lucy isn't in this photo. She's in the kitchen, with the cake.
Giulia	Oh, sorry! Your mum looks really young. And whose is the big black dog?
Sam	It's theirs — Ella and Max's. His name's Rocket. He's huge, but he's very gentle.
Giulia	I love dogs!
Sam	Me too.
Giulia	But we haven't got a dog. My dad is allergic.
Sam	Me neither. Well, Dad has got a cat, Pepper, but she's his, not mine.
Giulia	And where are you? I can't see you in the photo.
Sam	I'm not in it. The phone is mine, so I'm the photographer!
Giulia	Typical! Well, your family looks lovely.
Sam	Thanks. Now it's your turn: show me a photo of your family!

Notice how Sam and Giulia agree with each other. *Me too* agrees with a positive sentence (*I love dogs! — Me too.*); *Me neither* agrees with a negative one (*We haven't got a dog. — Me neither.*). You

can also say *So do I* after a positive sentence with a normal verb like *love* or *like*, and *Neither have I* after *haven't got*. You will meet these short replies again in later units.

Tabella 2.7 Useful language — talking about people

Function	Ask	Answer / react
asking about family	Have you got any brothers or sisters? How many cousins have you got?	Yes, I've got one brother. / No, I'm an only child.
identifying people	Who's the girl with the red hair? Who's that?	That's my cousin. / It's my aunt, Dad's sister.
describing appearance	What does he look like?	He's tall, with short dark hair. He's got glasses.
describing personality	What's she like?	She's really kind, but she's a bit shy.
asking about things	Whose is this? Whose bag is that?	It's mine. / It's Josh's. / I think it's hers.
agreeing	I love dogs. / I haven't got a pet.	Me too! So do I. / Me neither. Neither have I.
reacting	—	Really? · Oh, that's nice! · Lucky you! · How old is she?

Speak. Work in pairs.

1. **Family photos.** Bring a photo of your family or friends (or draw a simple family tree). Your partner asks *Who's that? What's he like? How old is she?* and you answer.
2. **Guess who.** Think of a famous person or a classmate. Describe their appearance in three sentences, without saying the name. Your partner guesses. Then swap.
3. **Lost property.** Put three objects from your bags on the desk. Ask and answer: *Whose is this pen? — It's mine. / It's Luca's. / It's his.*

2.5 Writing: describing a friend

A description of a person is one of the most useful texts you can write in English: for an exchange website, a school magazine or a message to a new friend. Read Giulia's description of her best friend.

My best friend, Marta

My best friend is called Marta. She's fifteen, like me, and she's in my class at school. We've got the same favourite subject: science!

Marta is quite tall and slim. She's got long wavy dark hair and big brown eyes, and she's also got a lot of freckles on her nose. Her glasses are red, and they're really cool.

Marta is very friendly and funny, and she's also generous: when I haven't got a pen, she's got three! She's a bit disorganised — her school bag is a disaster — but she isn't lazy. She's hard-working and clever, especially in maths.

I like Marta because she's honest and patient with me. When I've got a problem, she's always there for me. She's a great friend, and I'm lucky to have her!

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

How is the description organised? Giulia's text has four paragraphs, each with one job:

1 **Introduction** — who the person is, age, how you know them. 2 **Appearance** — height and build, then hair and eyes, then special features. 3 **Personality** — positive adjectives first, then a small negative point, softened with *a bit* and balanced with *but*. 4 **Conclusion** — why you like the person.

Linkers. A **linker** joins ideas: *and* adds a similar idea (*tall and slim*); *also* adds one more (*she's also generous* — after *be*, before other verbs); *but* introduces a contrast (*a bit disorganised... but she isn't lazy*); *because* gives a reason (*I like Marta because she's honest*).

Examples. Giulia supports adjectives with a small example (*when I haven't got a pen, she's got three!*). This makes the description alive and convincing.

Checklist. Before you hand in your description, check:

- Have I got four short paragraphs (introduction, appearance, personality, conclusion)?
- Are my adjectives before the noun and in the right order, without *-s*?
- Have I used *has got* for *he/she* and *be* for age?
- Have I used *and, but, also, because* at least once each?
- Have I given at least one example for a personality adjective?
- Have I checked capital letters (*I, Marta, Italian*) and spelling?

Write. Describe a friend or a family member for your school's exchange website (60–80 words). Follow Giulia's plan and use the checklist.

2.6 Culture: names and family celebrations

2.6.1 First names, middle names and surnames

In the UK and the US, most people have got a **first name** (also called a *given name*), often a **middle name**, and a **surname** (also called a *family name* or, in AmE, a *last name*). The first name comes first and the surname last, also on official forms: *Emily Rose Carter*. A middle name is

often the name of a grandparent or another relative, and some people have got two. Americans often write only the first letter of the middle name, the *middle initial*: *Mary J. Smith*. Traditionally many women took their husband's surname when they married; today some keep their own name or use both.

In everyday life people often use a **nickname**, a short or friendly form of a name: *Samuel* becomes *Sam*, *Margaret* becomes *Maggie* (like Sam's grandma), *Katherine* becomes *Kate* or *Katie*, *William* becomes *Will* or *Bill*, and *Robert* becomes *Rob* or *Bob*.

2.6.2 Mr, Mrs, Ms and Miss

In formal situations — a letter, an email to a teacher, a shop — we use a title with the surname, never with the first name: *Mr Carter*, not ✗ *Mr David*. In British English these titles have no full stop; in American English they have one (*Mr. Carter*). Many women prefer **Ms**, because it does not say if a woman is married or not, just like *Mr* for men.

Tabella 2.8 Titles before a surname

Title	Pronunciation	Used for
Mr	/ˈmɪstə/	any man
Mrs	/ˈmɪsɪz/	a married woman
Ms	/mɪz/ or /məz/	any woman (married or not)
Miss	/mɪs/	a girl or an unmarried woman; also, in British schools, a female teacher

APPROFONDIMENTO

Where do English surnames come from? Many English surnames are several hundred years old, and their meaning is often still clear. Some come from a job: *Smith* (a metal worker), *Baker*, *Taylor* (from *tailor*), *Cook*. Some come from a place: *Hill*, *Wood*, *Brook*. Others mean "son of": *Johnson* (son of John), *Robinson*, *Davies* (of David). Scottish and Irish *Mac-*, *Mc-* also means "son of" (*MacDonald*), and Irish *O'* means "descendant of" (*O'Brien*). Italian surnames often work in the same way: think of *Ferrari* (from *fabbro*, a smith) or *Di Giovanni*.

2.6.3 Family days

Families in the English-speaking world celebrate birthdays, weddings and big holidays such as Christmas together, but there are also special days for parents (Figure 2.5). In the UK, mums get cards and flowers on **Mothering Sunday**, the fourth Sunday of Lent, exactly three weeks before Easter Sunday. Because Easter moves, Mothering Sunday moves too: it always falls between 1 March and 4 April, and in 2026 it is on 15 March. The name comes from an old Christian custom of visiting your "mother church" on that Sunday. In the US, Mother's Day is the second Sunday

in May — 10 May in 2026 — the same day as the *Festa della mamma* in Italy. Father's Day is the third Sunday in June in both the UK and the US (21 June in 2026), while in Italy the *Festa del papà* is always on 19 March, Saint Joseph's Day.

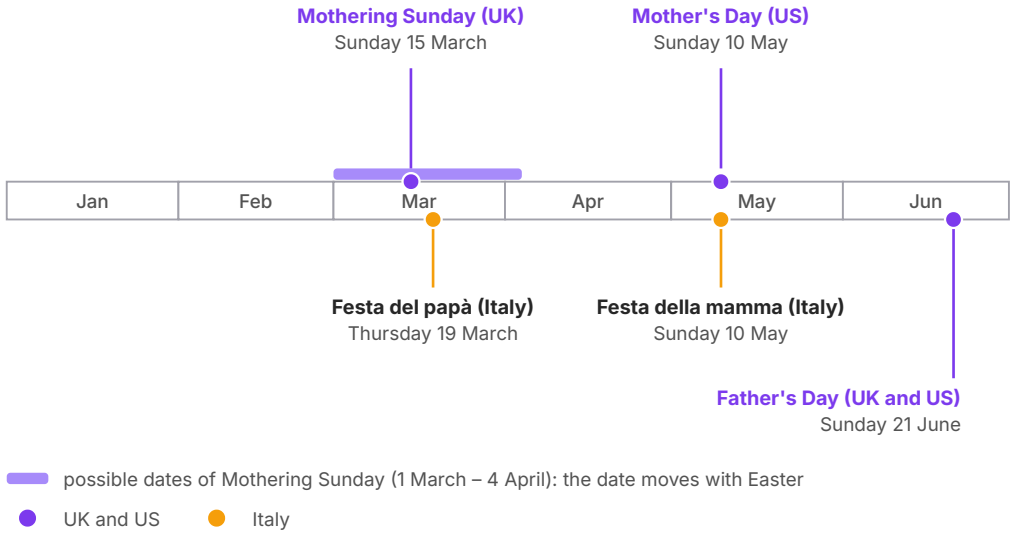


Figura 2.5 Days for parents in the first half of 2026, on a proportional time axis. UK and US dates are in violet, Italian dates in amber. The violet bar shows all the possible dates of Mothering Sunday.

Compare with Italy. Are names in Italy similar? Have you got a middle name, or a nickname? In Italy, do we use titles like *Mr* and *Mrs* with a surname (*signor Rossi*) or with a first name? How does your family celebrate the *Festa della mamma* and the *Festa del papà*?

COLLEGAMENTI

Science: two kinds of twins. In biology, *identical twins* develop from one fertilised egg that splits into two, so they have the same genes and are almost always the same sex. *Non-identical* (or *fraternal*) twins develop from two different eggs: genetically they are like ordinary brothers and sisters born at the same time, and they can be a boy and a girl — like Ella and Max. Features such as eye and hair colour depend on many genes, so brothers and sisters can look very different. You will study genes and inheritance in your science lessons.

SINTESI

- Family words often come in male/female pairs (*uncle/aunt, nephew/niece*); *cousin*, *parents* and *siblings* are for both.
- *step-* = family through a new marriage; *half-* = one parent in common; *-in-law* = the family of your husband or wife.
- Describe appearance with height, build, hair (length – type – colour), eyes and special features.
- Many personality opposites use *un-, im-, in-, dis-*; *im-* usually comes before *p* and *m*.
- *have got* (*has got* for *he/she/it*) is for possession, family, appearance and illness; short answers: *Yes, I have / No, she hasn't* (AmE *Do you have...?*).
- Age takes *be* (*I'm fifteen*); actions take *have* without *got* (*have breakfast*).
- Object pronouns (*me, you, him, her, it, us, them*) go after verbs and prepositions (it.: pronomi complemento).
- Possessive pronouns (*mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs*) replace adjective + noun and never take *the*.
- *Whose...?* asks about the owner; *who's* = *who is*.
- Adjectives never change, go before the noun or after *be*, and follow the order opinion – size – age – colour.
- *What's she like?* = personality; *What does she look like?* = appearance; *How is she?* = health.
- English names: first name – (middle name) – surname; titles *Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss* + surname.

ESERCIZI

Vocabulary

1. ● Choose the correct answer. Your mother's sister is your...
   - **A.** uncle
   - **B.** niece
   - **C.** aunt
   - **D.** cousin

2. ● Choose the correct answer. Your father's new wife (not your mother) is your...
   - **A.** stepmother
   - **B.** mother-in-law
   - **C.** half-sister
   - **D.** grandmother

3. ● Choose the correct answer. A person with no brothers or sisters is...

   A. a twin
   B. an only child
   C. a half-brother
   D. a stepchild

4. ●● Choose the opposite of *honest*.

   A. unhonest
   B. imhonest
   C. inhonest
   D. dishonest

5. ●● Odd one out. Circle the word that does not belong and say why.
   a) curly · wavy · straight · slim b) nephew · niece · aunt · kind c) impolite · unfriendly · dishonest · generous d) beard · moustache · freckles · patient

6. ●● Word formation. Write the opposite with *un-, im-, in-* or *dis-*.
   a) patient _____ b) organised _____ c) sensitive _____ d) kind _____ e) polite _____ f) loyal _____

7. ●● Complete with words from the box: *twins · cousin · grandparents · brother-in-law · stepbrother*.
   a) My uncle's son is my _____. b) Ella and Max have got the same birthday: they're _____. c) My mum's parents and my dad's parents are my _____. d) My sister's husband is my _____. e) Josh is Mark's son, and Mark is my stepdad, so Josh is my _____.

Grammar

8. ● Complete with the correct form of *have got* (✓ = affirmative, ✗ = negative). Use contractions.
   a) Sam _____ (✓) a half-sister. b) I _____ (✗) a car — I'm fifteen! c) My grandparents _____ (✓) an allotment. d) Lily _____ (✗) a phone. e) We _____ (✓) a new English teacher.

9. ● Write questions with *have got* and short answers.
   a) you / a brother? (✓) b) Josh / a bike? (✗) c) your parents / a car? (✓) d) Giulia / blue eyes? (✗)

10. ●● Rewrite in American English, with *have* and *do/does*.
    a) Have you got a pet? b) I haven't got a laptop. c) Has he got a sister?

11. ● Choose the correct pronoun.
    a) Where's Lily? I can't see (she / her). b) This is my grandad. I love (him / his). c) Josh and Sam? I'm with (they / them). d) Is this present for (we / us)? e) Who's at the door? — It's (I / me).

12. ●● Complete with a possessive pronoun.
a) This is my bag. It's _____ . b) That's your phone. It's _____ . c) These are Sam's keys. They're _____ . d) That's our car. It's _____ . e) Those are Ella and Max's bikes. They're _____ . f) Is this Giulia's coat? Yes, it's _____ .

13. ●● Complete with *Who's* or *Whose*.
a) _____ is this jacket? b) _____ your best friend? c) _____ that girl with red hair? d) _____ dog is that?

14. ●● Put the words in the correct order.
a) a / dog / big / black / beautiful b) hair / curly / long / got / she / has c) eyes / brown / he / got / beautiful / has d) old / a / lovely / house / white

15. ●●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence.
a) ✗ She's got two olds brothers. b) ✗ Have you got a sister? — Yes, I have got. c) ✗ This book is my. d) ✗ Whose that boy? — He's my cousin. e) ✗ He's a man tall with a beard. f) ✗ I have got fifteen years.

16. ●● Match the questions (a–c) to the answers (1–3).
a) What's your cousin like? b) What does your cousin look like? c) How is your cousin?
1 She's fine, thanks. 2 She's tall, with short dark hair. 3 She's funny and really kind.

17. ●● Rewrite each sentence in the negative and as a question.
a) Grandma has got a dog. b) They've got green eyes.

18. ●●● Translate into English.
a) Ho due cugini, ma non ho fratelli né sorelle. b) Di chi è questa bici? È sua (di lei). c) Com'è tuo fratello? È simpatico e molto paziente.

Reading and Listening

19. ● Read Sam's blog (2.2). True (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS)?
a) Sam's parents are divorced. b) Sam's mum is a teacher. c) Josh is older than Sam. d) Pepper is Josh's cat. e) Grandad Peter is a bus driver too.

20. ●● Answer the questions about the blog.
a) How old is Lily, and why is she Sam's half-sister? b) Who are Aunt Lucy's children? c) Why are Ella and Max not identical twins? d) Why are Joan and Arthur's only grandchildren Sam and Lily?

21. ●● Find words in the blog that mean:
a) a man married to your mother, who is not your father b) making a lot of sound c) two children born together d) giving a lot to other people

22. ● Read the listening script (Tabella 2.6). Answer the questions.
a) Where is the party? b) Who is the man with the grey beard? c) Where is Aunt Lucy? d) Whose is the dog? e) Why isn't Sam in the photo?

23. ●● Complete the descriptions with information from the script.
a) Ella has got _____ and long dark hair. She's clever, but a bit _____ . b) Max is funny and very _____ . c) Rocket is huge, but very _____ . d) Giulia hasn't got a dog because her dad is _____ .

Writing and Speaking

24. ●● Complete the sentences about you.
a) I've got... b) I haven't got... c) My best friend is... and... d) My _____ looks like... e) The most generous person in my family is... because...

25. ●● Speaking. Work in pairs. Describe a member of your family: appearance (three sentences) and personality (two adjectives, each with an example). Your partner asks two follow-up questions.

26. ●●● Write a description of a friend or a family member for your school's exchange website (60–80 words). Use four paragraphs, *have got*, at least three adjectives in the right order, and the linkers *and, but, also, because*.

Towards B1

27. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Read the text and choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each gap.
My name is Leo and I (1) _____ *got a big family. My mum (2)* _____ *four sisters, so I've got four aunts and lots of cousins! My favourite cousin is Nina. (3)* _____ *house is near my school, and I often see (4)* _____ *after lessons. She's got a (5)* _____ *dog called Rex.*
(1) A has B have C am D is (2) A have got B is got C has got D got (3) A She B Her C Hers D Its (4) A she B hers C her D them (5) A brown big old B old big brown C big brown old D big old brown

28. ●●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap.
Hi Anna! This is a photo of my family. The woman (1) _____ *long red hair is my mum. The man next to (2)* _____ *is my stepdad. He (3)* _____ *got a beard. The two boys are my brothers. (4)* _____ *names are Tom and Ben. And the bike? It isn't mine, it's (5)* _____ *— Ben's!*

29. ●●● Sentence transformation. Complete the second sentence so it means the same as the first. Use one to three words.
a) This is my laptop. → This laptop is _____ . b) Who is the owner of this dog? → _____ is this? c) Tom is my mother's brother. → Tom is _____ . d) She hasn't got any brothers or sisters. → She's an _____ . e) My cousin is funny and kind. → What's your cousin _____ ? — He's funny and kind.

30. ●● Short message. You are meeting an exchange student at the station for the first time. Write a message (35–45 words): say what you look like and what you have got with you, so he/she can recognise you.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- MUR — R. Murphy, *Essential Grammar in Use*: the units on *have got*, object pronouns and possessives, with extra practice.
- SWA — M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on *have* and *have got*, and on the order of adjectives.
- CGE — R. Carter, M. McCarthy, *Cambridge Grammar of English*: a full description of personal and possessive pronouns.
- OAL — *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*: the pronunciation of family words, and personality adjectives with their opposites.
- CED — D. Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*: the sections on English personal names and surnames.

Glossario del capitolo

Adjective order
ordine degli aggettivi — opinion – size – age – colour – noun: a lovely little old house

Build
corporatura — the shape and size of a person's body: slim, well-built...

Cousin
cugino, cugina — the child of your aunt or uncle

Curly
riccio — (hair) with a lot of small round curls; compare *straight, wavy*

Freckles
lentiggini — small brown spots on the skin, often on the nose and cheeks

Fringe
frangia, frangetta — short hair that covers the forehead (AmE *bangs*)

Half-sister
sorellastra — a sister with only one parent in common with you

Have got
avere (possesso) — I've got a brother; she hasn't got a pet; Have you got...? Yes, I have.

Middle name
secondo nome — a name between the first name and the surname

Mother-in-law
suocera — the mother of your husband or wife

Nephew / niece
nipote (di zio) — the son / daughter of your brother or sister

Nickname
soprannome, diminutivo — a short or friendly form of a name: Maggie for Margaret

Object pronoun
pronome complemento — me, you, him, her, it, us, them: after a verb or a preposition

Only child
figlio unico, figlia unica — a child with no brothers or sisters

Possessive pronoun
pronome possessivo — mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs: It's mine.

Relatives
parenti — the people in your family, e.g. aunts, uncles, cousins (≠ *parents*, genitori)

Siblings
fratelli e sorelle — your brothers and sisters together

Stepfather
patrigno — your mother's husband, who is not your father (also *stepdad*)

Twins
gemelli — two children with the same mother, born on the same day

Whose
di chi — question word about the owner: Whose bag is this?

Soluzioni

1. C — aunt.

2. A — stepmother.

3. B — an only child.

4. D — dishonest.

5. a) *slim* (it describes build; the others describe hair type). b) *kind* (personality; the others are family members). c) *generous* (positive; the others are negative adjectives with a prefix). d) *patient* (personality; the others are features of appearance).

6. a) impatient b) disorganised c) insensitive d) unkind e) impolite f) disloyal.

7. a) cousin b) twins c) grandparents d) brother-in-law e) stepbrother.

8. a) 's got (has got) b) haven't got c) 've got d) hasn't got e) 've got.

9. a) Have you got a brother? — Yes, I have. b) Has Josh got a bike? — No, he hasn't. c) Have your parents got a car? — Yes, they have. d) Has Giulia got blue eyes? — No, she hasn't.

10. a) Do you have a pet? b) I don't have a laptop. c) Does he have a sister?

11. a) her b) him c) them d) us e) me.

12. a) mine b) yours c) his d) ours e) theirs f) hers.

13. a) Whose b) Who's c) Who's d) Whose. (*Who's* = *who is*; *whose* = di chi.)

14. a) a beautiful big black dog (opinion – size – colour) b) She has got long curly hair. / She's got long curly hair. c) He has got beautiful brown eyes. / He's got beautiful brown eyes. d) a lovely old white house.

15. a) She's got two old brothers. b) Yes, I have. c) This book is mine. d) Who's that boy? e) He's a tall man with a beard. f) I'm fifteen. / I'm fifteen years old.

16. a–3, b–2, c–1.

17. a) Grandma hasn't got a dog. — Has Grandma got a dog? b) They haven't got green eyes. — Have they got green eyes?

18. a) I've got two cousins, but I haven't got any brothers or sisters. (also: I have got... / I haven't got any siblings.) b) Whose bike is this? / Whose is this bike? — It's hers. c) What's your brother like? — He's nice/friendly and very patient. (*simpatico* = *nice*, non *sympathetic*.)

19. a) T b) F (she's a nurse) c) T (Josh is 17, Sam is 15) d) F (Pepper is Dad's cat) e) DS.

20. a) She's three. She is Sam's half-sister because they have got one parent in common: the same mother (Helen), but different fathers (Lily's father is Mark). b) Ella and Max, the twins. c) Because one is a girl and one is a boy. d) Because Helen is their only child, and Sam and Lily are Helen's only children (Josh is Mark's son, not Helen's).

21. a) stepdad b) noisy c) twins d) generous.

22. a) At Aunt Lucy's house. b) Grandad Peter, Sam's dad's father. c) In the kitchen, with the cake. d) It's Ella and Max's (it's theirs). e) Because the phone is his: he is the photographer.

23. a) glasses; bossy b) easy-going c) gentle d) allergic.

24. Open answers. Model: a) I've got a younger brother and two cats. b) I haven't got a smartwatch. c) My best friend is Luca. He's tall and funny, and he's very generous. d) My sister looks like my dad: she's got dark hair and brown eyes. e) The most generous person in my family is my grandma because she always helps everybody.

25. Open answer. Model: *This is my uncle Paolo. He's quite tall and well-built, with short grey hair and a moustache. He's got glasses. He's really funny — he always tells jokes at family lunches — and he's very pa-*

tient: he helps me with my maths homework. Partner's questions: *How old is he? Has he got any children?*

26. Model answer (≈ 75 words): *My cousin Sara is sixteen and she's from Bari. / She's short and slim. She's got shoulder-length curly red hair and lovely green eyes. / Sara is outgoing and funny, and she's also very kind. She's a bit impatient, but she's never mean. / I like her because she's honest and she always listens to me. She's my favourite cousin!* Check: four paragraphs, *has got*, adjective order, *and, but, also, because*.

27. (1) B have (2) C has got (3) B Her (4) C her (5) D big old brown (size – age – colour).

28. (1) with (2) her (3) has (4) Their (5) his.

29. a) mine b) Whose dog c) my uncle d) only child e) like.

30. Model message (≈ 40 words): *Hi Emma! See you at the station at 4.30. I'm quite tall, with long straight dark hair and glasses. I've got a big blue suitcase and a yellow umbrella with me. See you soon! Giulia*