

## Reality check



Everyone is 'image-conscious' these days. Hundreds of advertisements tell us that, if only we used their brand of face cream or shampoo, we would look younger and more beautiful; if we ate a certain sort of food, we would be slim and healthy; and if we had this or that beauty treatment, we would look 20 years younger.

Meanwhile, the images we see on our television screens or in magazines are mainly of young, slim, good-looking people. Almost all new presenters of TV shows have to be young and sexy. Models used for fashion shows are often teenage girls who are anorexic. Girls in pop groups seem to be chosen for their looks rather than their singing voice. The 'soaps' are meant to be a reflection of real life. But look at a crowd of actors in any soap and there will only be a handful of younger actors who are not slim and good-looking.



Look at a crowd of people in the high street and there will only be one or two who *are* slim and good looking. The reality is that more and more of us are overweight. We eat the wrong sort of food and too much of it, and we don't get enough exercise. There is great concern about the number of overweight children in schools. The long term health prospects of many of us are said to be poor. Overweight people are more likely to get diabetes, suffer heart attacks and run the risk of getting diseases like cancer.

Is it a good thing that the image we are presented with in the media is of slim, young and sexy people - or should the TV screens and the DVDs reflect the reality of life, warts and all ?

1. Underline all the words in the first 2 paragraphs which contain this **sound**: 'sh' (as in 'push') or 'ti' (as in 'patient')
2. a. Underline all the words in paragraph 3 which have 'er' in them.  
b. Think of some words which contain the same sound as 'er' but with a different spelling. e.g. 'our' in 'journey'
3. Look at the first line of the last paragraph.  
Write down the number of syllables in each word.  
e.g. 'overweight' = 3 syllables; 'only' = 2 syllables
4. What answer would you give to the question asked in the last paragraph ?
5. What is 'soap' short for, what does it mean and why is it so called ?