

True Beauty A2/B1

With a new app, a photo can show your true beauty. Read what happens when people see how beautiful they are on the inside.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. blessed
2. fit
3. a filter
4. to give up
5. a sewer
6. an influencer
7. truly
8. a hashtag

Definition

- a. healthy and strong thanks to exercise
- b. to stop trying to do something
- c. a large pipe or tunnel under the street where dirty water from sinks and toilets goes
- d. lucky to have the kind of life you have
- e. a tool that makes photos look different after you take them
- f. really, honestly
- g. #
- h. a person on social media who affects or changes the way other people behave

True Beauty — A2/B1

Steph was looking at Instagram. There were #blessed yoga photos and #SundayBreakfast pictures. She saw photos of fresh bread and coffee with hearts in the milk.

On the other side of the city, Matt was doing the same thing. His Instagram was full of #FitBody gym selfies and #beachlife holiday photos.

Steph put some flowers next to her breakfast and took a photo of it. Her eggs and coffee were cold now, but the plate looked good. The plate was from an expensive art market. She had 'borrowed' the flowers from her neighbour's garden. Probably only ten people a day walked past old Mrs Robinson's garden. *Flowers are for everyone to enjoy, aren't they?* she thought. If she put the picture on Instagram, more people would see the flowers.

Steph changed the colours on her picture to make the orange juice more orange and the pink roses brighter. She was choosing an Instagram filter when she noticed TrueBeauty. She had downloaded it the day before and then forgotten about it. Her picture looked perfect with that filter. She posted the photo for her 15k followers. She hoped some of them would feel jealous of her life. Then she threw the food on her plate into the bin. She didn't want to eat it now that it was cold.

Matt was ready to give up. He had worked out for an hour and he had put cooking oil on his skin so that it would look shiny. But the photos still didn't look good. He only wanted to be fit so that he could put photos on social media. He looked at his Instagram again. He hoped to see some ideas he could copy. Then he noticed an ad for TrueBeauty.

Pictures as beautiful as you are. See the real you with TrueBeauty. Available in your app store for £0. Because True Beauty is free.

That's what he needed. He downloaded the app. In minutes, he had the perfect selfie. In the photos, his body looked amazing. He posted the photo for his 27k followers. Then he got in the shower to wash off all the cooking oil. He remembered reading about all the fat under the city, in the sewers. Millions of people lived in his city. Most of them washed their cooking oil down the sink. The oil went to the sewers. It made a disgusting mess and some poor worker had to clean it. Or did the oil go into the ocean and kill dolphins? He couldn't remember. But it wasn't his problem, was it? It was someone else's problem.

Both Steph and Matt were surprised to get so few likes. And they weren't prepared for the negative comments they received.

susieQ Remind me never to get breakfast at your place!

gymguy21 Ewww, disgusting!

The rest of the comments were even worse.

Both social media influencers looked again at the pictures they had posted.

Steph's picture showed horrible, green eggs with flies all over them. The flowers were dead, and the coffee looked disgusting and grey. In Matt's picture, his body was covered in something that looked like dirty butter. It was in his hair and in his nose. And, worst of all, his hands were really dirty. It looked as if he had been digging in the garden – or worse.

They both tried to delete the photos, but they couldn't. The negative comments kept coming. In a way, it was Steph's most popular post. And 50 people had shared Matt's post already.

Just then, everyone who had installed the TrueBeauty filter received a message from the person who had created it. Steph and Matt read:

Dear User,

Thank you for making TrueBeauty such an amazing success! Fifty million downloads in the first 24 hours! Wow, it's more than I ever hoped for. Honestly, guys, I am so #blessed.

I know that each of you really, truly cares about showing yourself as you really are. Are you as beautiful on the inside as you are on the outside? If you want your pictures to show the real you, it's time to be as beautiful in real life as you are on your social media.

Have a truly beautiful day, beautiful people!

Love,

TrueBeauty

PS. You can't remove the filter or delete the pictures you posted using it.

#SorryNotSorry

PPS. By the way, after the first time you use TrueBeauty, it will change *all* your photos from that moment on!

For the next 24 hours, not many people posted photos online. There was only one way people could see if the filter was still destroying their photos: they had to post pictures first and then see how they looked.

The results were not pretty.

A few of the biggest influencers offered a reward. They joined together to offer a million pounds for the first person to remove the filter. But they couldn't post a picture of themselves holding the money because the pictures were so ugly. So they had to stop advertising the reward. It didn't matter anyway. The person who developed TrueBeauty was too clever and no one could remove the filter.

Steph stopped trying to take pictures after five more horrible pictures. She couldn't remove the TrueBeauty filter. The only thing she could do to hide the ugly pictures was to make her account private. Now, no one could see anything she had ever posted in her life. She felt depressed. She didn't want to do anything if she couldn't post photos of it.

She went downstairs, past Mrs Robinson's garden. The flowers were more beautiful than ever. She noticed the smell for the first time. Lovely! She stopped and smelled a large, purple rose.

'Hello,' said Mrs Robinson. Steph was surprised because she didn't know Mrs Robinson was there.

'Oh, sorry!' said Mrs Robinson. 'I was just putting water on the plants. At this time of year, there's always so much to do.'

Steph looked around. She hadn't realised it was hard work to make a garden look nice. In fact, she had never really spoken to Mrs Robinson. She had a new thought.

'Do you want some help?' Steph asked. After all, she didn't have anything else to do.

'Oh, thank you, dear! That would be lovely!' Mrs Robinson looked delighted. Steph actually felt happy for the first time since the whole TrueBeauty nightmare had started.

A couple of hours later, to be honest, Steph didn't think the garden looked very different. But Mrs Robinson said she had been a great help. Steph had enjoyed herself a lot. Mrs Robinson had been an actor in the past and she had some amazing stories to tell.

'Take a picture of us, dear,' said Mrs Robinson as Steph was leaving. 'One of those selfies everyone loves.'

Steph almost said no. What could she do with photos now? But Mrs Robinson would be happy with an ordinary picture. Steph supposed she could take one. She took a quick picture of the two of them. They were standing together in front of the roses, smiling and looking a little bit shiny and hot.

Later that evening she looked at the picture on her phone. She changed the colours a little bit. But the roses looked beautiful anyway, with or without any changes. And nothing could improve the smiles on her and Mrs Robinson's faces.

That's a really beautiful picture, she thought. It's a shame TrueBeauty will destroy it if I post it.

But then she had a thought. She went back and read TrueBeauty's message again.

And then she posted her picture. When the picture went online, it looked exactly the same! She made her account public again. Then she added some text to the photo.

Me and my neighbour in her garden #TrueBeauty #BeautyIsOnTheInside

One of Steph's followers, Matt, saw her photo. At first, he was just pleased to see a nice photo for a change. He hadn't been to the gym for two days. He supposed he was kind of depressed. Maybe he felt bad because he hadn't exercised. Or maybe it was because of all the horrible, ugly photos he'd seen.

Then he had an idea as he read @Steph's post. Maybe it wouldn't work, but it was worth trying. He picked up all the paper, plastic and glass in his house. He put it into three different piles. Then he looked again at @Steph's picture. He went and knocked on his neighbour's door. He asked her if he could take her rubbish to the bins. The young mother who answered the door was surprised at his offer of help, but she said yes.

While Matt was at the recycling bins, he took a photo of himself next to the green glass bin. He posted the smiling selfie with the hashtag #TrueBeauty. He saw that #TrueBeauty was the fifth most popular hashtag. His picture, like many of the others, was nothing special. It was just a smiling guy, a guy who was doing something ordinary after helping his neighbour. It was a truly beautiful photo.

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Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. Steph was more interested in how food looked than how it tasted.	True	False
2. Matt worried about the environment at the beginning of the story.	True	False
3. Pictures that used TrueBeauty showed how beautiful people's thoughts were.	True	False
4. Rich influencers wanted to reward the person who created TrueBeauty.	True	False
5. Steph spoke to Mrs Robinson thanks to TrueBeauty.	True	False
6. Steph and Matt knew each other in real life.	True	False
7. TrueBeauty cost more than other apps.	True	False
8. TrueBeauty improved Matt's and Steph's lives in the end.	True	False

Task 2

Put the words in the correct order to make sentences.

1. the woman stole Steph lived downstairs. who flowers from
2. clean up. a mess workers The oil had to made that
3. Matt and Steph created TrueBeauty. got a message the person who from
4. a reward to could offered the problem. Some famous influencers anyone who solve
5. that pictures to see Matt was happy disgusting. weren't
6. Matt The woman surprised. helped who was

Discussion

Did you like the story? Do you think TrueBeauty is a good app?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. e
4. b
5. c
6. h
7. f
8. g

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. True

Task 2

1. Steph stole flowers from the woman who lived downstairs.
2. The oil made a mess that workers had to clean up.
3. Matt and Steph got a message from the person who created TrueBeauty.
4. Some famous influencers offered a reward to anyone who could solve the problem.
5. Matt was happy to see pictures that weren't disgusting.
6. The woman who Matt helped was surprised.