

How is someone/something? vs. What is someone/something like?

1) How is ...?

We use "How is ...?" to ask about someone's general health or about the condition or state of something, or how people experience something:

예 1. How's your mother these days? (How is her general health?)

Oh, she's fine, thanks.

예 2. How are the walls in the kitchen? (What is the condition/state of the walls?)

Well, they need redecorating really.

예 3. How's your new car?

Wonderful. It's so much easier to drive than the old one.

2) What is ... like?

We use "What is ... like?" to ask for a description of someone or something (e.g. their appearance, their character, their behaviour):

예 1. What's her new house like?

It's a modern one, quite big, with a nice garden.

예 2. What's your new teacher like?

He's nice. He's very good-looking! But he's quite strict.

예 3. What's it like living in Spain?

예 4. What is it like to actually be in Brookie?

예 5. I haven't met Alan - what's he like?

예 6. What was it like meeting Jill's parents for the first time?

예 7. She took Andrew with her to show him what the club was like.

3) Warning:

예 1. We don't use How is ... like? to ask for a description of something:

Have you ever had Korean kimchi?

No. What's it like?

Well, it's sort of spicy fermented vegetables, cabbage and things.

예 2. Not: How is it like?