

1 THE INTERVIEW Part 1

- a Read the biographical information about Quentin Blake. Have you ever read any books illustrated by him? What else has he done apart from book illustrations?

Quentin Blake is probably one of the best-known illustrators of children's books. Apart from his illustrations of stories by other authors, for example, his famous drawings for the Roald Dahl books, he has also both written and illustrated many stories of his own. In recent years his work has increasingly appeared in public places such as galleries and museums, and he has produced work for the walls of several hospitals and mental health centers. He has also illustrated adult books such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. He is a trustee of the House of Illustration, a center for exhibitions and other activities, and was the subject of the first exhibition held there in 2014.



- b **7.13** Watch or listen to Part 1 of the interview. What does he think is the most important thing for someone who wants to become an illustrator?
- c Now listen again. Complete sentences 1–5.
- 1 Quentin Blake describes himself as...
 - 2 When he was in his early 20s, he...
 - 3 In 1960, he and John Yeoman...
 - 4 He finds it touching when...
 - 5 A lot of young people say they want to become illustrators because...

Glossary

ceramic *adj* (objects, e.g., pots) made of clay that has been permanently made hard by heat

John Yeoman author of *A Drink of Water*, the first children's book illustrated by Quentin Blake

Part 2



- a **7.14** Now watch or listen to Part 2. Mark the sentences **T** (true) or **F** (false).

- 1 Quentin Blake says that authors and illustrators usually need to have a lot of conversations.
- 2 The most important thing is the relationship between the illustrator and the words in the book.
- 3 Quentin Blake never drew any of Roald Dahl's characters without first talking to him about them.
- 4 He thinks conversations with Dahl helped him to get into the mood of the books.
- 5 Roald Dahl sometimes changed his text if an illustration wasn't working.
- 6 The BFG was originally described as wearing a leather apron.
- 7 It was decided that the apron made the BFG look too old.
- 8 The shoes the BFG wears were based on a pair of Quentin Blake's own shoes.

- b Listen again. Say why the **F** sentences are false.

Glossary

The BFG a book by Roald Dahl published in 1982; BFG stands for Big Friendly Giant

Part 3

a **7.15** Now watch or listen to Part 3. What does Quentin Blake say about...?

- his relationship with the characters he creates in an illustration
- his attitude toward children
- drawing from life
- digital drawing
- the advantage of quills, nibs, and reed pens
- Ronald Searle and André François
- his exhibition in Paris

b Listen again. Can you add any more details?

Glossary

reed pen a pen made from a tall plant that grows in or near water

Ronald Searle British artist and satirical cartoonist

André François Hungarian-born French cartoonist



quill

nib

2 LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

get

get is one of the most common verbs in English; it is frequently used by Quentin Blake in this interview. Learning expressions with get, and thoroughly assimilating the variety of meanings of this important verb, will help you to understand native speakers better.

a **7.16** Watch or listen to some extracts from the interview and complete the missing words.

- "...but **we got** _____. And I thought, 'Well, I'll, I'll try—keep—I'll try and keep on with this until I'm 30...'"
- "Um, and **I got** _____, but I passed 30 and I didn't notice!"
- "But um, uh, we talked quite a lot, again, some of it was about the, about the technicalities of the book, **getting it** _____ better..."
- "...but I think, to get, **to get** _____ the _____ of the book, which is a terribly important thing..."
- "So he—after a bit he said, 'This apron's **getting** _____ the _____, isn't it?'"
- "...if you have a quill, or a nib, or a reed pen, you **get a** _____ of scratch"
- "When I was a young man **I got** _____ and went to see him."

b With a partner, say what the phrases mean, using a synonym for get where possible.

3 ON THE STREET

a **7.17** Watch or listen to five people talking about illustrations and art. Match the people (**La, Mar, Lo, Mau, or A**) with the books they mention.



Laura
Danish

Marcus
Australian

Louise
American

Maura
Irish

Ally
American

- The Little Prince**, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- Garfield**, Jim Davis
- A Little Princess**, Frances Hodgson Burnett
- The Lord of the Rings**, J.R.R. Tolkien
- The Happy Prince and Other Stories**, Oscar Wilde

b Watch or listen again. Match the people (**La, Mar, Lo, Mau, or A**) to the artwork they have at home.

- it's a collage of photos
- it's from a place its owner visited as a child
- it has two predominant colors
- it shows an activity that its owner also does
- it wasn't originally owned by them

c **7.18** Watch or listen again and complete the Colloquial English phrases. What do you think they mean?

- "I have a painting I bought in, uh, Buenos Aires once, with two tango dancers, which I'm _____"
- "It's very vibrant and at _____ simple."
- "...and he's got watercolor illustrations and they're just, they're so _____ and _____."
- "...I think I read that as a child, so it must have really _____"
- "It's a _____ this, um, Roman, um, mural..."

4 SPEAKING

Answer the questions with a partner or in small groups.

- Can you remember a book you read when you were a child where you liked the illustrations? What did you like about them?
- Can you remember any children's books where you really disliked or were scared of the illustrations?
- Do you like comics? Do you think the illustrations in comics are more important than the story?
- Do you think any adult books would benefit from being illustrated? Which ones? Why?
- Look at the illustrations in this book on pages 10, 11, 68, 110, and 169. Which do you like the most / least? Why?

