

1 LOOKING AT LANGUAGE *get*

Complete the *get* expressions with the words in the list.

age kind mood number
~~published~~ way work

- 1 Roald Dahl got his first children's book published in 1943.
- 2 I was taking a photo of the view when somebody got in the _____.
- 3 You might get the printer to _____ better if you clean it.
- 4 You get a different _____ of look if you use pastel colors.
- 5 If you like him, why don't you just get his _____ and give him a call?
- 6 I hope to have saved enough money by the time I get to retirement _____.
- 7 We put on some music to get in the _____ for the party.

2 READING

a Read the article and answer the questions.

- 1 Why has the art world taken an interest in Anna and Elena Balbusso?
- 2 At which point in their lives did they go their separate ways?
- 3 Why did they decide to start working together again?
- 4 What is special about the works published by the Folio Society?
- 5 What is the function of a "handmaid" in the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*?
- 6 What appealed to Anna and Elena most about the novel?
- 7 What are the most striking features of their illustrations for the novel?
- 8 Which prize did their illustration *Pregnant* win?

b Underline five words or phrases you don't know. Use your dictionary to look up their meaning and pronunciation.

Anna+Elena=Balbusso

In the solitude of the studio, the lone artist hunches over a canvas to add the final brush strokes to a portrait. Or at least that is how these professionals are commonly perceived. Yet a pair of Italian sisters has recently debunked this myth by producing a series of strikingly beautiful pictures as a team. It may help that illustrators Anna and Elena Balbusso are identical twins, and the fact that they are able to create such perfect works as a duo has the art world talking.

The sisters began drawing together as children, when they would get a hold of pencils and colored markers and cover sheets of squared notebook paper with pictures. They drew their way through primary school and after secondary school, they were lucky enough to both attend a special high school that was dedicated to art: the Istituto Statale d'Arte in their hometown, Udine. After both gained their diplomas, they went on to specialize in painting and art history at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera in Milan.

At this point in their careers, the sisters decided to branch out on their own, and spent the summers working separately as graphic designers with studios and advertising agencies in Milan. Upon graduation, they had intended to continue this path but a crisis in advertising and graphics meant that there was little work available. Consequently, they decided to return to the medium of their youth – drawing – and independently began to visit publishing houses in Milan. Soon, however, the editors began to comment on how confusing it was to first receive one sister with her portfolio and then an hour later the other. To avoid the confusion, the sisters created a single identity and since 1998, they have been working together under the signature *Anna+Elena=Balbusso*.

During the years of their partnership, the sisters have been rewarded with a number of commissions, including several from the prestigious Folio Society, a privately owned publisher that produces special hardback editions of classic fiction and non-fiction books illustrated by professional artists. Undoubtedly one of their greatest works to date has been their award-winning illustrations of Margaret Atwood's classic novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. Set in the future in the fictional Republic of Gilead, where women have lost all of their rights and are only valued for their ability to reproduce, the story explores the fate of Offred, a "handmaid" employed by a military commander and his wife to bear children for them.

The two sisters were the perfect choice for this particular book, not only because of their talent, but also because their own story is reflected in the main character's struggle to find and maintain her own identity in a circle dominated by men. To create the right atmosphere, they chose a futuristic tone with accentuated perspectives and strong light. They used few colors, with a prevalence of red, black, and white. The result was a series of haunting images that emphasize the alienation of the main character and reflect the regimented society in which she lives. The Balbusso sisters' picture *Pregnant* from the series was chosen by the Society of Illustrators as the best illustration of 2012 and awarded a gold medal. Which only goes to show that in the world of art, sometimes two heads can be better than one.

