

# Meet an author

## JACQUELINE WILSON



Jacqueline Wilson is one of the UK's most popular children's authors. She has written over sixty books and won many awards for her work. Read the interview and find out about how she became a famous writer, how she writes her books and her advice for budding authors!

**Q:** How did you start becoming a writer?

**A:** I was very lucky – I got a job as a magazine journalist when I was 17.

**Q:** Did you write stories when you were young?

**A:** Yes, I wrote lots and lots of stories. I spent my pocket money on notebooks and pens and always knew I wanted to be a writer.

**Q:** When did you write your first book?

**A:** I wrote my first 'book' when I was nine – but it was only 14 pages long! I wrote a reasonable-length novel when I was 17 but it didn't get published. My first published book was 'Ricky's Birthday' – I was 24 when it came out.

**Q:** Where do you get your ideas from?

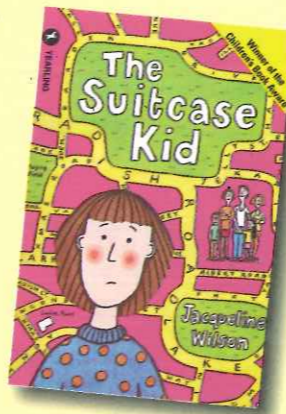
**A:** I don't know – they just seem to pop into my head. It's a bit like asking you where your dreams come from – you don't actually control it!

**Q:** Are any of the characters based on real people?

**A:** No. I make them all up. I have put a real toy in one of my books though. Radish, the little rabbit in 'The Suitcase Kid', is my own lucky mascot. She stands on my desk and keeps me company when I write.

**Q:** How long does it take to write a book?

**A:** Between three and six months.



**Q:** Why do most of your books feature children whose parents have split up?

**A:** I suppose I write about single-parent families a lot because when I was a child I got tired of reading about very happy families with mums and dads who never ever quarrel.

**Q:** Are you like any of your characters?

**A:** Not really – though there's a storyteller in a book for young children called 'The Monster Storyteller' who looks very like me!

**Q:** Do you write your stories by hand or on a computer?

**A:** I write my stories by hand. I haven't learnt to use a computer yet! I use an old-fashioned typewriter when I rewrite my stories before sending them to the publishers.

**Q:** Do you keep your book a secret until it's finished or do you talk about it?

**A:** I keep my book a secret (though I do sometimes tell my daughter, Emma, a little bit about it).

**Q:** Do you give your stories to someone else to read before you send them to the publisher?

**A:** No! I would feel worried just in case they didn't like them.

**Q:** What's your favourite book and author?

**A:** My favourite adult book is 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Brontë. My favourite children's book is 'Where the Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak.

**Q:** What's your favourite book that you've written?

**A:** 'The Illustrated Mum' – but I'm also very fond of 'Double Act'.

**Q:** Can you give me any tips on writing?

**A:** Pretend you're talking to your best friend, telling them a special secret – that way you will relax and have fun writing your story. Write a little every day. Keep a diary; and don't try to copy anyone else – be yourself!

**Q:** Is there anything you prefer to do apart from writing?

**A:** I like reading – I have over 10,000 books! I also like swimming, going to art galleries and films, and I love line dancing!

