

Your Five Year Map to an Illustration Career



Assess Your Skills

1. Find a critique group
2. Look at your illustrations next to published work
3. Post on social media and observe which pieces are well received
4. Participate in portfolio reviews

Find Your Style

5. What mediums do you like to work in? Is your work textural or flat? Layered or minimalist? Colorful or muted?
6. What market are you aiming for- picture book, graphic novel, middle grade, book covers?

Find Your Voice

7. What are you trying to say?
8. Do you want to be funny, emotional, quiet, fantastical, or maybe some combination of these?
9. What are your biggest influences?

Show Your Work

10. Post on social media and join events/ prompts like folktale week, the 100 day project, illo advent, kidlitart postcard, colour collective and mermay
11. Enter free contests like Draw This (SCBWI) and the Narrative Art Award (SCBWI), Query agents and publishers
12. Enter portfolio showcases at SCBWI conferences, pay for portfolio reviews, send postcards

Grow Your Community

13. Meet other kid lit creators at book launches and art shows
14. Join organizations like SCBWI and participate in connect events
15. Attend local and online conferences or artist retreats
16. Participate in social media- comment and support other creators

Query Agents

17. Research agents through their websites, SCBWI's The Essential Guide to Writing and Illustrating for Children, The Children's Writers and Illustrators Market book, manuscriptwishlist.com, and interviews and podcasts.
18. Tailor your query to each individual agent
19. Make a goal number for rejections (for example, aim for 20, 50 or 100 rejections)

Meet Your First Goal!

20. Reach out to your community
21. Ask your agent for advice
22. Do your best work!
23. Share the news!

Then find your place on the map and start again!