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The Simpsons 《辛普森一家》

Vicki: Hi, and welcome to BBC Learning English. I'm Vicki.

Chen Li: 我是陈丽。

Vicki: In today's programme, we're finding out about a very famous animated TV programme, from the USA, The Simpsons.

Chen Li: **Animated** 动画的。这不是一个儿童节目吗 Vicki?

Vicki: Well not really, but children do like it as well as adults. It's been said that Matt Groening, who created the show, changed our idea of family entertainment.

Chen Li: 它改变了家庭娱乐的观念。

Vicki: During the 1980s, cartoons were thought of as children's programmes, but The Simpsons showed that cartoons could appeal to adults too.

Chen Li: **Cartoons** 卡通片。这个节目同时吸引了孩子和成年人，我们来听听卡通片《辛普森一家》是如何创作出来的。

Vicki: This is Mark Lawson from BBC Front Row.

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Groening, a magazine illustrator, created the family. He scribbled some figures with distinctive hairdos and gave them the names of his parents and siblings. Clumsy, lazy Homer and optimistic Marge, and their children, slacker Bart, doggoeder Lisa and dummy-sucking Maggie.

Chen Li: **Matt Groening** 原来是一个杂志插图画家。

Vicki: A magazine illustrator.

Chen Li: 他很快地就画出了人物形象。

Vicki: He scribbled down some figures.

Chen Li: To scribble 粗略地画出一些草图。

Vicki: The figures had distinctive hair-dos.

Chen Li: 人物的发型都很独特，关于这一点接下来我们将听到更多的内容。

Vicki: And he named them after his parents and siblings.

Chen Li: Siblings 兄弟姐妹。原来，辛普森一家都是以 Matt's 自己家人的名字命名的，那么他怎么来描述辛普森一家五口不同人物的个性特征呢？

Vicki: Homer is lazy and clumsy.

Chen Li: Lazy 懒惰的，clumsy 笨拙的。

Vicki: Marge is optimistic.

Chen Li: Optimistic 乐观的。

Vicki: Bart is a slacker.

Chen Li: A slacker 懒鬼，懒虫。

Vicki: Lisa is a do-gooder.

Chen Li: Do-gooder 这是个俚语表达，专指那些喜欢做好事，却又不切合实际的人。

Vicki: And there's a baby, Maggie, who always sucks a dummy.

Chen Li: A dummy 奶嘴。

Insert

Clumsy, lazy Homer and optimistic Marge, and their children, slacker Bart, do-gooder Lisa and dummy-sucking Maggie.

Vicki: The Simpsons is very popular in the UK and the USA – it's been going for 20 years and has just celebrated its 400th episode!

Chen Li: 哇，上演 20 年一共 400 集，一定是非常受欢迎了。那么，这个节目究竟好在哪里呢？

Vicki: Well, people like The Simpsons because it's funny. Even though it's a cartoon, it makes comments about real-life family life in small town America.

Chen Li: Small town America 美国郊区一个小镇。

Vicki: It's set in a town called Springfield – there are many real towns called Springfield in the USA, and in Britain! The series features lots of different characters besides the family, and Matt Groening says that this was his intention right from the start.

Chen Li: Intention 意图。

Insert

The Simpsons from the very beginning were designed to be a family sit-com that was going to go on for quite a while. That was my intention from the very beginning. I had this idea – wouldn't it be great to populate an entire small town, not just the family, but all the other people and the institutions of a small town, and then just go anywhere we wanted.

Vicki: He describes the show as a family sit-com. Sit-com is short for situation comedy.

Chen Li: Sit-com 情境喜剧。

Vicki: And because he always thought it would be a long term show, he wanted to populate the whole town.

Chen Li: To populate 安排居民，在这里指将整个城镇作为角色安排在剧中。

Vicki: So the episodes don't just take place in the family's house, but at school, work, in the shops and so on.

Chen Li: 因为他设计了整个城镇，所以，辛普森一家可以去他们想去的任何地方。

Insert

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Vicki: In the programme today, we're looking at the animated TV show The Simpsons, which has just celebrated 400 episodes and 20 years!

Chen Li: 我们可以了解更多有关人物造型的情况吗?

Vicki: Yes, one very notable thing about The Simpsons is the characters are bright yellow!

Chen Li: 这些人物都是金黄色的, 为什么呢?

Vicki: Well, one reason is so that the characters in The Simpsons were not of any particular racial background.

Chen Li: 他们没有任何种族背景。

Vicki: Matt said that he didn't want Caucasian pink flesh tone.

Chen Li: Caucasian 白种人的, flesh tone 肤色。

Vicki: And there's another reason for them being yellow too – listen and see if you can hear it.

Insert

I did not want to have that Caucasian pink that passes for fleshtone in cartoons. The animators presented me with a vast array of pinkish hues, depicting these characters and I said no no, is there something else? How about Yellow – nothing looks like that – that's fantastic! And the other secret reason for doing it that way - if the characters are yellow, whenever you're tuning around with your remote control, and you see a flash of yellow, you know you've hit The Simpsons.

Vicki: Nothing else looks like the Simpsons!

Chen Li: Matt 说因为他们和电视上的其它形象看起来完全不同, 所以, 如果你不停地换台搜索频道, 一旦你看到这些金黄色的人物就知道这是《辛普森一家》了。

Insert

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Vicki: The way the characters were drawn has changed quite a bit since the beginning. Matt told us why.

Insert

The show has changed over the years, and I have to say that at the beginning of the show the characters were really ugly and crudely drawn – that’s the way I draw. Back in the beginning I assumed that they were going to clean up my drawings and were going to make them look really cute and cuddly, but they didn’t. So that’s why The Simpsons started out as hideous as they did.

Vicki: Originally the characters were quite ugly and crudely drawn.

Chen Li: Crude 粗略的。Matt 以为动画制作人们会将这些人物进行一些修饰美化，但是事实上却根本没有。

Vicki: But although the look of the characters has changed, they are still very distinctive.

Chen Li: 如何创作独特的卡通形象呢？我们来听听 Matt 怎么说。

Insert

Design your characters so they can be recognised in silhouette. And if you look at The Simpsons, obviously – Bart with the spike hair and Marge with the tall hair and Homer with his two little hairs on the top of his head – you can instantly identify them in silhouette, and you can distinguish them from each other.

Vicki: They can be recognised in silhouette.

Chen Li: Silhouette 轮廓。

Vicki: So those hair-dos were very important. Bart has spiky hair.

Chen Li: Bart 的头发是尖的。

Vicki: Marge has tall hair.

Chen Li: Marge 的头发高高竖立，像个宝塔。

Vicki: And Homer has almost no hair, except two!

Chen Li: Homer 的头上仅仅有两根毛。

Vicki: So they can be distinguished.

Chen Li: 所以他们很突出，**distinguish** 特别的，突出的。

Insert

Obviously – Bart with the spike hair and Marge with the tall hair and Homer with his two little hairs on the top of his head – you can instantly identify them in silhouette, and you can distinguish them from each other.

Vicki: One interesting aspect of The Simpsons is that because it's so popular, they frequently have guest stars, usually playing themselves.

Chen Li: Guest stars 客串嘉宾。那么怎么样的人物才可以在剧中客串，扮演他们自己呢？

Vicki: All sorts of people – pop stars and films stars, even the recent British Prime Minister Tony Blair!

Chen Li: 就连英国首相也曾经在《辛普森一家》中出现过。

Vicki: But no American presidents have agreed to be in the show!

Chen Li: 他们一定担心丑化他们自己。

Vicki: Yes, and also the show is generally quite anti-authority and can be a bit political.

Chen Li: **Anti-authority** 反权威的。那么辛普森一家如何反映政治问题，下面就是一个例子。

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We built in an environmental theme at the very beginning, in having Homer Simpson be an incompetent nuclear power plant worker.

Vicki: So there is an environmental theme.

Chen Li: 以环境为主题。

Vicki: **Because Homer Simpson is an incompetent nuclear power plant worker.**

Chen Li: **Homer Simpson** 在核工厂工作，但是却很低能；所以显然该剧暗示象他这样愚蠢的人，可能会引发核事故给全球带来危机。

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We built in an environmental theme at the very beginning, in having Homer Simpson be an incompetent nuclear power plant worker.

Vicki: **Interestingly, the regular voice actors who star in the series usually voice more than one character!**

Chen Li: 在这个系列当中，只有几个配音演员，他们给剧中所有人物配音。在这是动词 **to voice** 配音。

Vicki: **For example, the same person voices Homer, and his father!**

Chen Li: 关于这个卡通系列，还有什么是我们应该知道的呢？

Vicki: **The Simpsons is irreverent humour.**

Chen Li: **Irreverent** 不留情面的，直率的。

Vicki: **The team that makes it are very good at taking the mickey out of things, including themselves!**

Chen Li: **To take the mickey out of** – 拿某人某事开玩笑，甚至是他们自己。怎么理解呢？

Vicki: **Well for example, in early episodes, Bart had some silly catchphrases.**

Chen Li: **Catchphrases** 警句。

Vicki: **And in a later episode, Bart became famous purely because of a catchphrase that didn't mean anything.**

Chen Li: 所以他们利用幽默，拿名言警句开玩笑。

Vicki: Up to this point, The Simpsons has only ever been a TV show. But now there is a Simpson's movie.

Chen Li: 那么为什么要花 20 年时间才想到制作出一部影片呢?

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It's taken us so long because we've been working on many many other episodes for the show. And we don't have a team standing by waiting to do that movie, everybody was working full time. And finally we decided when we came up on our 400th episode mark, and our 20th year of existence, that, "you know what – let's do a movie".

Vicki: They've just been too busy making all the episodes, to make a movie. But when they got to 20 years and 400 episodes, they decided it was time!

Chen Li: 我相信，电影也会象电视卡通系列一样大受欢迎的。

Vicki: Well, now we've run out of time.

Chen Li: 节目时间有限咱们今天就说到这里，但是别忘记下次节目我们再会。

Vicki: Goodbye!