

THE CHAMELEON OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

I: Interviewer

B: Christian Bale

Text Type: Interview
Suggested finishing time: 15 mins



Listen!

Let's think! 

1. Do you enjoy watching films?
2. Do you have a favourite film star?

I: Hi, Mr Bale. Thanks so much for taking time off your busy schedule for this interview. We're so excited to have you here with us today.

B: Thanks for having me. The pleasure is mine.

I: Let me first risk being tedious by congratulating you again on winning the Golden Globes Award for Best Actor. Your prodigious portrayal of former US Vice President Dick Cheney in your latest film *Vice* well deserves the honour, in my humble opinion.

B: Thanks, you're too kind. Although I wouldn't say I'm extremely surprised by the result—make no mistake—it still means a great deal to me, and the fact that it's determined by the votes of the members of a highly regarded association makes it especially so. After all, the director worked very hard to create the role, and I worked no less hard to play it. I really made a great effort to get into my character. And that meant forgetting who Christian Bale is, and moving, speaking, thinking the way the scripted character is supposed to.

I: I was awestruck by your performance. Filmgoers who have followed the course of your career would be familiar with how you've been changing the way you act from role to role. Still, it is incredible to see how you transform yourself from a deranged man in *The Machinist* into a charming superhero in *Batman Begins*. Can you tell us why you chose the roles that you did? There must be easier ones.

B: There're easier roles out there, I agree. But I like to be challenged, and it's often the challenging ones that manage to strike a chord with the audience. It isn't enough for an actor just to study the personalities and behaviour of a particular character and present them faithfully to the audience. He or she should also be able to express the breadth and depth of emotions that the character experiences—the only way to emotionally engage the viewers, in my opinion. And great acting, which does this, hinges on one basic principle: whether one can immerse oneself in the assigned role. I know that some actors would isolate themselves or move to places where the living conditions resemble their characters', so as to get into their roles. That's what I call professionalism. I've long been following their examples, giving all of myself to every role. That's why I went from a 130-pound skinny guy in *The Machinist* to a 230-pound buff superhero in *Batman Begins* in just a few months. No one says it's easy, but you can do anything you've set your heart on as long as you're fully committed to it.

I: As your dedication to acting is obvious to the audience and the film industry, many aspiring young actors admire your work ethic and look up to you as a role model. If you were to give them a piece of advice, what would it be?

B: Be diligent and passionate about what you do. I've been acting since I was 13, and not for a moment have I considered leaving the big screen, where my passion lies. Keep trying and embrace failure. I believe that the universe always rewards those who cling to the notion of consistent hard work and show resilience in the face of adversity.

I: Thank you for making time to share with us today, Mr Bale. We truly appreciate it.

~570 words

Looking into Grammar

The present perfect continuous tense is used to highlight the duration of an action that started in the past and is still continuing at the present time.

✓ She has been learning (✗ is learning) Italian since her trip to Rome last year.

? Underline a sentence in which the present perfect continuous tense is used in the interview.

More to Take Away

Christian Bale is known for his role in *The Machinist* (2014), for which he lost about 28.5 kg.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the interview. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. In line 5, the word ‘prodigious’ can best be replaced by ‘_____’.

- A. extremely impressive
- B. eye-catching
- C. overly dramatic
- D. controversial

1 Note what the interviewer says about Bale’s acting in *Vice*.



2. In lines 7-12, what is Bale’s tone?

- A. astounded
- B. humble
- C. arrogant
- D. introspective

3. The interviewer was in awe most possibly because of _____.

- A. Bale’s career choices
- B. Bale’s great versatility in acting
- C. Bale’s distinguished career as an actor
- D. Bale’s decision to take the role of an insane man

4. In Bale’s opinion, good acting is about not only _____, but also _____.

- A. one’s talent...one’s dedication to acting
- B. playing challenging roles...studying the roles well
- C. careful preparation...body language and facial expressions
- D. the presentation of a character’s traits...the ability to appeal to the audience emotionally

5. To Bale, the transition period between *The Machinist* and *Batman Begins* may be described as _____.

- A. a taxing journey of determination
- B. a source of inspiration
- C. a stressful period of isolation
- D. a painless process of change

6. Bale gave a similar piece of advice in another interview. Which of the following quotes may be what he said?

- A. ‘Positivism is the key.’
- B. ‘Fear not. Let your potential shine.’
- C. ‘There’s no such thing as never failing. Go and hope for the best.’
- D. ‘Cast your fears away.’

7. Which of the following is NOT true about Bale?

- A. He is devoted to his occupation.
- B. He has won the mentioned award more than once.
- C. He is bold in his attempts.
- D. He has no preference for certain roles.



8. Which of the following is the best alternative title for the interview?

- A. All about Christian Bale
- B. The Ever-changing Bale
- C. Bale: Late Night Reflections
- D. The Secrets behind the Scene

8 Note what is special about chameleons.



Self-evaluation Checklist


Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the interview. For questions 1 and 2, answer in complete sentences.

1. For what did Bale win the Golden Globes Award for Best Actor?

2. In your opinion, why did the winning of the award not come as a surprise to Bale? Explain your answer.

 3. Based on the interviewer's words 'Let me first risk being tedious by congratulating you...', his tone cannot be described as _____.

- A. formal
 C. chatty

- B. respectful
 D. sincere

3 Find words which hint at the interviewer's tone.

4. Look for an idiom in lines 13-29 that means 'to make one feel emotion or respond in an emotional way'.

4 Associate the definition with the interviewer's questions and Bale's answers.

5. Look for a phrase that means 'despite having to deal with the difficult situation'.

 6. Complete the summary of the interview by filling in ONE word in each blank.

Christian Bale, a prominent actor in (i) _____, was first congratulated on his newly-earned (ii) _____—winning the award as the best actor. He (iii) _____ the hard work of the film *Vice*'s director, and then mentioned his (iv) _____ to his role as Dick Cheney. In addition, he cited what some actors may do to get into character as an example of (v) _____. Near the end, after offering a word of advice, he stated his belief that those who work hard (vi) _____ and are resilient when facing difficulties will always be 'rewarded'.

DSE Level Up

Q6 When completing a cloze passage, paraphrasing may be necessary. To paraphrase is to express something already said or written using different words. Note the examples below.

e.g. She often forgets things. → She has a poor memory.
Tom said he couldn't thank her enough. → Tom was grateful to her.

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos below with the names of awards from the word box.

Performance of an Actress in the Supporting Role
 Performance of an Actor in the Leading Role
 Performance of an Actor in the Supporting Role
 Performance of an Actress in the Leading Role
 Achievement in Makeup and Hairstyling Best Foreign Language Film
 Achievement in Costume Design Best Motion Picture of the Year

