

Discussing Film and TV

“Cinema should make you forget you are sitting in a theatre.” -Roman Polanski



Warm up:

- Do you watch a lot of TV? What do you like to watch?
- What's the last movie or show you watched? Would you recommend it?
- Is there an actor or actress you particularly like? Why do you like them?
- Can you think of a really bad movie or show you have watched? What was wrong with it?



1. Read the synopsis of the movie and match the underlined words with their definitions

Set in the American Revolution, this action-packed historical blockbuster asks the age-old question: what if George Washington had to fight zombies? Follow one of America's greatest heroes as he and his team of rough and ready revolutionary soldiers engage in gory, non-stop battles against America's most dangerous enemy yet: the walking dead. With a soundtrack that will get your heart pounding out of your chest, a star-studded cast full of the finest cinematic actors of today, and with special effects so realistic you'll think you're watching a documentary, this is one film you won't want to miss!

This instant classic will keep you on the edge of your seat from start to finish, and no spoilers, but you won't believe the twist at the end! You simply cannot afford to miss....
Washington: Revolution of the Dead!

- The music of a movie: *soundtrack*
- Very excited and completely engaged: *on the edge of your seat*
- A very popular movie with a large budget and lots of excitement: *blockbuster*
- A piece of information that ruins a movie or piece of media: *spoiler*
- The time and location a film takes place in: *set in*
- The actors in a movie: *cast*
- A surprise in the plot of a movie: *twist*
- Extremely violent and bloody: *gory*
- Illusions created in movies by tricks or computer-generated graphics (CGI): *special effects*



Is this a film you'd want to see? Why or why not?

2. Read the opinion of “Washington: Revolution of the Dead” and answer the questions.

Tom: “Oh that movie about George Washington and zombies? Yeah, I loved it, even though it was super cheesy and over the top. It starts off as just a standard war movie, Washington and a team of elite commandos go on a mission to attack British tea ships as an act of revolution. In the real American Revolution, they did throw the cargo from British tea ships into the ocean, but that’s probably the only part of the film that’s historically accurate. Anyway, for some reason George Washington is basically a bad-ass killing machine. He kills all of the British soldiers, he doesn’t even need the help of the other soldiers, and then he and his men start celebrating with a rock and roll concert on one of the ships. Washington even plays the electric guitar, which.... well, an electric guitar in the American revolution? Sure, why not? At this point it seems like the movie is over, and then out of nowhere zombies start attacking! It’s super gory, but honestly, it’s not that bad because the CGI is so over the top that it’s not realistic. Anyway, one by one all of Washington’s men become zombies, and he has to fight them and everybody else, and for some reason he knows karate. I’m pretty sure George Washington didn’t know karate, but whatever.

The twist at the end is that the zombie virus was actually in the tea, like a biological weapon from England, and because they dumped it in the water everyone gets infected from drinking tainted water, which is a huge plot hole, because they dump the tea in the ocean, and nobody drinks seawater, but whatever. Apparently, they were going to make a sequel called “*George’s Tea Party*” where he goes to England and gets revenge, but it was cancelled because the first one was a massive flop, which is a shame. It might be the dumbest movie I’ve ever seen, but I like cheesy movies where you can just turn your brain off, so I give it two thumbs up.”



- a) What 3 things does Tom point out that make no sense? *Washington playing electric guitar, Washington knowing karate, and people getting sick from drinking a virus in sea water.*
- b) Why doesn’t Tom find the violence in the movie disturbing? *The CGI is so over the top*
- c) What is the surprise at the end of the movie? *That the virus was in tea.*
- d) Why didn’t they make a second movie? *It was a failure, a flop.*
- e) Why does Tom like the movie? *Because he can turn his brain off while watching it.*
- f) Do you know any movies or TV shows that are cheesy, but that you like anyway?

Present Simple or Past Simple

When discussing the plot of a movie or TV show, present simple, the tense for general truths, is often used. This is used because the story does not exist in the past or future, so it is explained in general terms.

Eg. *“Washington kills all the British soldiers, and doesn't need the help of his men”*

In present simple verbs in positive statements for he/she/it have an 's' at the end, and negative statements take the structure *'does not' + base verb*.

We can also use past simple to discuss the plot if we have seen the movie or show because we watched it in the past.

Eg. *“Washington killed all the British soldiers, and didn't need the help of his men”*

Note that in past simple 'does' and 'doesn't' become 'did' and 'didn't', and verbs in positive sentences are put in the past simple form.



3. Write a description of a well-known movie. Start with where and when the movie is set and describe the story using some sentences in present simple or past simple.

It's set in
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.....

4. Now read your description to the class and see if they can guess which movie you are talking about. The first student to guess correctly wins.



5. Look at the storyboard for the scene and make your own description of the story below. Try to use some present simple sentences.



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6. You are going to listen to a man talking about his taste in movies. He uses the words in the box. Complete the sentences below with the words in the box

gritty	hilarious	predictable	underrated
picky	hit or miss	cringy	have a soft spot for

- a) The special effects in superhero movies are good, but the plots are often incredibly *predictable*, if you've seen one, you've seen them all.
- b) Documentaries can be a bit *hit or miss*, sometimes they're absolutely amazing, but sometimes they're just boring as hell.
- c) I like war movies that are realistic and *gritty*, I really don't like movies that try to glorify war.
- d) Actually I *have a soft spot for* really cheesy reality TV shows, I know they're terrible, but I just can't stop watching them!
- e) Honestly, I think movies and shows from my country are very *underrated*, they're excellent but nobody outside of my country has heard of them.
- f) A lot of movies and shows made about teenagers are a little *cringey* because it's adults trying to write about teenagers, and it just sounds fake.
- g) The main reason the film industry is struggling is because audiences and critics have become too *picky*, if a film isn't amazing then nobody wants to see it.
- h) I think the most *hilarious* movies are actually horror movies from the 80s and 90s, they're so over the top that it stops being scary and is just silly and funny.




Which of the opinions above do you agree with and why?




7. Now listen to the audio and answer the questions.

- a) How has his taste in movies changed as he's gotten older? *He's become pickier, he doesn't like superhero movies and predictable spy movies anymore*
- b) What are the two situations in which he will watch superhero movies? *If a friend recommends it or if it gets good reviews*
- c) How many episodes did he watch of the Batman show, and why did he stop? *3, it was too predictable, lazy writing, and too many seasons.*
- d) What sci-fi movies does he recommend, and why does he like them? *Ex Machina, Children of men, more realistic sci-fi, he thinks they're underrated.*
- e) Why is he scared of clowns? *Because he watched Stephen King's IT*
- f) Why did he walk out of the last movie he saw in the cinema? *Too predictable, he could see the twist coming.*

 8. Read the descriptions of the six movies and then listen to [the audio](#) again. Which of the six movies would suit the man, and why? There is only one correct answer.

<p><u>Jim Bond: Dying to Live</u> Genre: Action, thriller Length: 115 mins <i>Not this, doesn't like spy movies.</i> When a diabolical tech billionaire threatens global chaos with a mind-controlling app, only one spy can stop him. Bond. Jim Bond. Armed with explosive gadgets, terrible puns, and a martini that never spills, 009 races against time across exotic locations, flirts shamelessly, and dives headfirst into danger... usually in a tuxedo. Full of action-packed explosions and twists and turns, you won't want to miss this blockbuster!</p>	<p><u>Penguins: A Family Saga</u> Genre: Documentary Length: 246 mins <i>Too long</i> Follow the heartwarming story of a penguin family as they brave the frozen wilderness of Antarctica. This intimate documentary captures the daily struggles and triumphs of a family of penguins in one of the planet's harshest environments, and follows them from the day they hatch to their final days. Stunning cinematography and first-class narration bring you closer than ever to the icy footsteps of these remarkable birds.</p>
<p><u>Nose-less in New York</u> Genre: Rom-com Length: 104 mins <i>This is the correct answer, funny rom-com.</i> In the bustling chaos of New York City, two strangers, Ava, a quirky food critic with a secret, and Ben, a charming perfume salesman, cross paths in the most unlikely way. The twist? Neither of them can smell a thing. <i>Nose-less in New York</i> is a hilarious, offbeat romcom that will have you roaring with laughter.</p>	<p><u>The Incredible Rock-Man</u> Genre: Superhero, action Length: 134 mins <i>Doesn't like superhero movies anymore</i> When a mysterious comet collides with earth, a humble miner is turned into an unstoppable man of living stone, and he must learn to control his newfound strength before an evil villain destroys his city. He's tough, he's unbreakable, and he's just getting started. With a star-studded cast and award-winning soundtrack, this is must-see TV for Rock-Man fans!</p>
<p><u>Laser Force</u> Genre: Sci-fi Length: 108 mins <i>Doesn't like sci-fi with too many special effects</i> In the distant future where empires clash among the stars, a handsome pilot and a rebellious princess must unite rival factions to stop an evil villain from unleashing a weapon that could destroy galaxies. Packed with explosive space battles and blinding laser fights and explosive blinding space laser battles, <i>Laser Force</i> is a non-stop sci-fi thrill ride where the fate of the universe hangs in the balance... and every shot counts.</p>	<p><u>Blood Baker: Pastries of Death</u> Genre: Horror Length: 96 mins <i>Doesn't like horror that is over the top gory.</i> When baker Harold Crust loses the town's annual baking competition for the tenth year in a row, something inside him just snaps. Fuelled by rage, butter, and a twisted sense of justice, Harold begins a gory revenge spree, picking off judges and rivals one by one in a film so shockingly violent that it was banned in 17 countries. In this chilling blend of flour and fear, <i>Blood Baker</i> serves terror fresh out of the oven.</p>

 9. With a partner or group imagine that you are going to a cinema that is showing the movies on the previous page. Which of the 6 movies will you choose and why?



10. Optional task/homework: find a film online which you are interested in seeing. Research the film and present it to your class in the next lesson. The presentation should contain the following information.

Title:

Main Actors:

Genre:

Setting:

Reviews:

Why you think it looks good:

Basic Plot (no spoilers!):

Audio Transcript

Well I'm a bit of a film buff, so I usually watch 3 or 4 movies a week. I used to be happy to watch pretty much anything, but I've become a bit more picky as I've gotten older. For example I used to watch every single marvel movie that came out, superman, spiderman, wonder woman, you name it, I watched them all, but these days I can't stand them. I feel like they used to be way better written and acted, but then again maybe I've just become more picky as a viewer, but it kind of feels like the studios just pump out superhero movies like a factory, so now I only ever see one if a friend recommends it to me, or if it gets really good reviews. But even if they get good reviews, superhero movies are still hit or miss. A friend recommended a TV show to me about Batman, and I could only watch three episodes before I quit, it was just too predictable and the writing was super lazy. Also it had 17 seasons, and I have no intention of watching 17 seasons of any show, even if it's good! The other thing is, for some reason a lot of superhero movies are incredibly long these days. I don't have the patience to watch anything for more than 2 hours, let alone some cheesy CGI superhero movie.

Speaking of which, I'm also not a huge fan of too much CGI in movies, especially sci-fi movies. I love a good sci-fi, but not if it's just full of lasers and spaceships like star wars, I prefer something a bit more grounded in the reality, like Ex Machina or Children of Men, which, in my opinion, are must-see films, and I think are highly underrated.

I do have a bit of a soft spot for rom-coms, but I prefer if they are more comedy than romance. A little bit of romance is fine, but it can get cringey pretty quickly if 90% of the movie is just two people falling in love, fighting about some dumb misunderstanding, making up and falling in love again. I think the romcoms from the 90s were the best for that, they were romantic and heart-warming, but mostly they were just hilarious.

I'm also really into horror movies, but not over the top gory ones. I like horror movies that are more psychological, movies that can scare you with ideas rather than just constant over the top blood and guts. I feel like horror movies in the last decade have gotten a bit lazy in that regard. I saw Stephen Kings IT in the cinema when I was 17, which is a movie about a psychotic killer clown. To this day I'm still scared of clowns! Most of the horror movies these days are more disgusting than scary, and that's not really my style.

I also used to be a huge fan of spy movies, but I think they've just become boring for me. There is always a twist at the end in every single movie, and more often than not the twist is super predictable. Oh wow, the head of the FBI is actually a bad guy. Again. How shocking. The last film I saw in the cinemas was a thriller spy movie, and I actually walked out half way through because it was so obvious who the real bad guy was. When I was younger I would've sat through the whole thing, but now I feel like I don't have time to waste watching bad movies.