

Film Vocabulary

We love watching **films** (= movies in American English) – either on TV, on DVD, downloaded onto our PCs or at the cinema. The film vocabulary on this page helps you talk about types of film, the actors – and how to give your opinion about the film.

General film vocabulary

What sort of films do you enjoy? You've got a lot of **genres** to choose from: westerns (set in the American Wild West) or spaghetti westerns (those filmed in Italy) to action films (fights, car chases etc), adventure, animated (cartoons), or horror (lots of blood or ghostly visits). Perhaps you prefer comedy (or "romcom" – romantic comedy) or dramas. Sometimes these are epics (long, historical dramas) and sometimes these are adaptations (adapted either from a previous film, or from a book or play). What about thrillers (or suspense), or musicals (with song and dance) and science fiction (set in a futuristic world)? Or maybe you prefer the old black and white films, or the classics.

Actors

In a celebrity-obsessed world, actors are as famous as politicians (maybe even more so!) We like to see our favourite actors playing a **character** – even a **minor character** – in films, whether these are in **lead roles** (=main roles), or **supporting roles** (not main roles). Every year, the Oscars gives **awards** to lead actors and supporting actors, but never to the **extras** (the actors who play people in a crowd, often without a speaking part.) We like reading the **film credits**, firstly to see who's in the **cast** (everyone who acted in the film) and if there's a **special appearance** by a famous actor who's only in the film for a couple of minutes.

More film vocabulary

Then we like to see who the **director** or **producer** is, the **screenwriter** who wrote the screenplay (the script that the actors speak) and who composed the **soundtrack** (the music background in the film). We'll read **film reviews** to find out more about the **plot** (or storyline) and how good the **lighting**, **cinematography** (art of shooting the film) or **costumes** are. We might even watch a **trailer** (short extract from the film) to see the **special effects**.

Telling a story about a film (in the Present Simple)

Here are some ways you can tell the story (plot) of a film you've seen:

It's set in...(New York / in the 1950's).

The film's shot on location in Arizona.

The main characters are ... and they're played by...

It's a mystery / thriller / love-story.

Well, the main character decides to... (rob a bank)

Giving your opinion

I thought the film was great / OK / fantastic...

The actors / costumes / screenplay are/is ...

The special effects are fantastic / terrible

The best scene / the worst scene is when...

The plot is believable / seems a bit unlikely

Not telling all

You don't want to spoil the film for your friends, so you can say something like:

"I don't want to spoil it for you, so I'm not going to tell you what happens in the end."

"You'll have to go and see it for yourself."

"I don't want to ruin the surprise for you."

Useful adjectives

All these are useful words and phrases to spice up your description:

true-to-life (a real story)

the real story of

remarkable (unusual, good)

masterpiece (the best work someone has done)

oscar-winning