FILMS VOCABULARY

We love watching films (= **movies** in American English) – either on TV, on DVD, downloaded onto our PCs or at the cinema.

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**.

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.

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**.

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Describing a film

If you've just seen a great film, you might want to tell your friends about it. Here are some tips for doing that.

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.

You can tell the story of the film in the present simple tense.

Well, the main character decides to… (rob a bank)
But when he drives there…

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

Adjectives you can use: - Funny - Slow - Exciting - Cute - Boring - Fast moving - Frightening - Violent - Mostly for girls - Amusing - Colourful - Romantic - Too long - Lovely story - Wonderful - Interesting - Clever - Mostly for children but fun for all ages

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

http://www.english-at-home.com/vocabulary/film-vocabulary/