

Lights, Camera, Action. English in Film and Cinema

February, 27th, 2025

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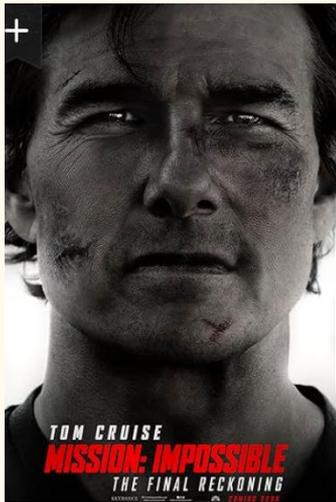
English Movie Magic

How to use films to improve your English



Side Note **Movie vs Film** **Theater vs Cinema**





Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning

eclap



Die Hard

Action

Action films are all about dynamic, visually captivating sequences that keep the audience on the edge of their seats.



The Harry Potter Franchise

Adventure



The Goonies

Adventure films are all about exciting journeys, **high stakes**, and the pursuit of goals, set against dynamic, often breathtaking **backdrops**.

Minority Report



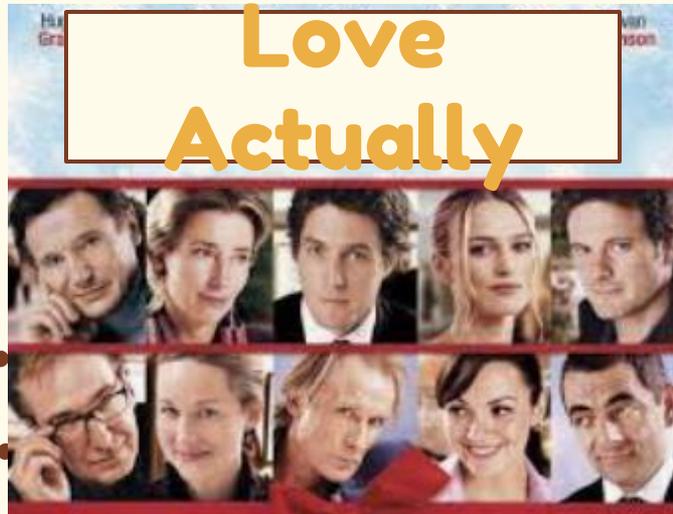
The Martian

Sci-fi

Science fiction explores futuristic tech, space, and imaginary worlds, often asking questions about science, society, and humanity's future



Shotgun Wedding

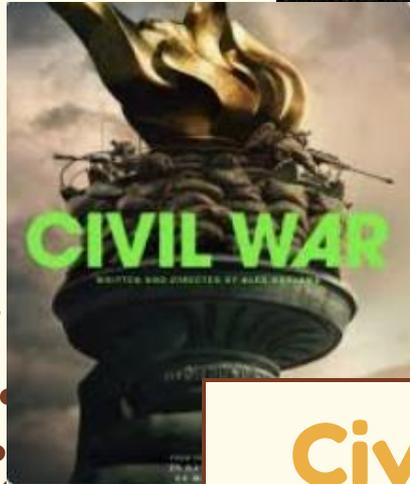


Rom-com

Romantic comedies (Rom-coms) combine love stories with humor, often featuring **quirky** characters and **happy endings**.



Rebecca



Civil War

Thriller

Thrillers are exciting, suspenseful stories that **keep you on edge**, often with surprises or danger.



Silence of the Lambs

Horror

DAVID



Scream

A horror film is a movie that is made to scare or frighten people. It often has scary scenes, **creepy** music, and strange or dangerous **characters** like ghosts, monsters, or killers.

Biopic

Period film

Crime film

Drama

Animation

**Other
popular
genres**

Musicals

**Documentar
y**

Western

Family film

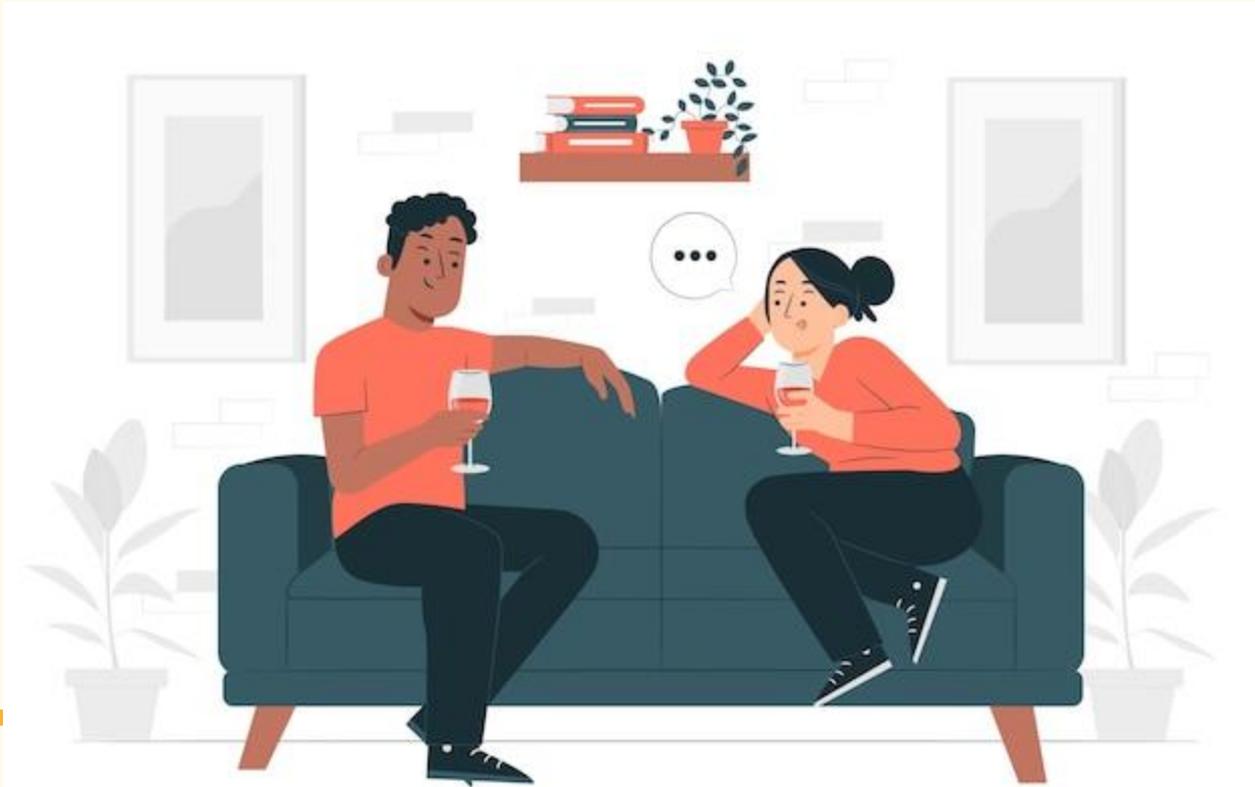


02



Talking about films

Dialogue about a film



Ali : Have you seen **A Complete Unknown**? It came out last week. 

Bel : No. To be honest, I know it was nominated for Best Picture but I don't really know anything about it.

Ali : It's amazing! It's got a brilliant cast. Not just because you've got A-listers like Timothy Chalamet in leading roles but there are some great supporting roles by Edward Norton and Elle Fanning also newcomers like Monica Barbaro. Boyd Holbrook even has a cameo as Johnny Cash. He's great.

Bel : What's it about?

Ali : Well, it's based on true events, although the plot isn't what makes the film. It's more interesting as a character study of Bob Dylan, the film's main character. It's set in Greenwich Village, during the early 60s and tells the true story of how Bob Dylan rose to fame.

Bel : Sounds interesting. Did you see a dubbed version or one with subtitles?

Ali : With subtitles. The dialogue is excellent and you can't really appreciate Chalamet's nuanced portrayal if it's been dubbed

to come out - estrenar

cast - reparto

A-listers - etrellas

leading role – papel principal

newcomers - nuevo

cameo – cameo

main character – protagonista

to be based on true events – se basa en hechos reales

plot - argumento

to make a film – hace la película

to tell the true story – conta la verdadera historia de

dubbed - doblando

with subtitles / subtitled – con subtítulos

Bel :It sounds awesome. Did it get **nominated** for anything apart from **Best Picture**?

Ali : Yes, Timothy Chalamet is actually **the favourite** to win **Best Actor** this year and **it picked up 8 other nominations** in total. I think it might win **Best Adapted Screenplay** because the **script writers** did an excellent job or maybe **Best Costume Design** as the clothing was fantastic too.

to get nominated – recibí una nominación

Best picture – mejor película

the favourite – el favorito

Best actor – mejor actor

to pick up – obtener

other nominations – otras nominaciones

Best adapted screenplay - Mejor Guión Adaptado

scriptwriters - guionistas

Best costume - Mejor Vestuario

Side Note

V.O – Version Original
~~≡ Original Version~~

Foreign language films with subtitles





The Substance (2024)



Side Note

Actor or Actress?

fireman / firewoman = firefighter
policeman / policewoman = police officer
housewife / househusband = homemaker
air hostess / air steward = flight attendant
author / authoress = author
manager / manageress = manager

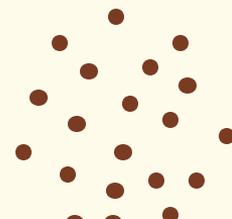




The Substance (2024)



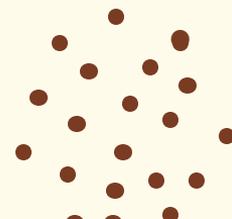
Here are some ways to talk about a film that you've seen (or want to see)

- **It's set in...**(present day Los Angeles)
 - **The film's shot on location in...**(France)
 - **The film stars...** (Demi Moore)
 - **The film is about...** (a fading Hollywood star who takes a mysterious drug promising to restore her youth and vitality)
 - **The main characters are ...** (Elizabeth Sparkle and Sue – Elizabeth's younger version created by the drug)
 - **It's a...** (body horror movie).
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 



Here are some ways to talk about the plot (story) of a film that you've seen



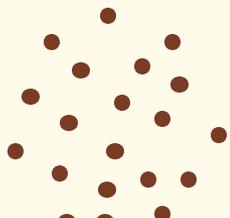
- It's set in...(time / place)
 - The film's shot on location in...(place)
 - The film stars... (Actors / Actresses)
 - The film is about... (summary)
 - The main characters are ... (characters + descriptions)
 - It's a... (movie genre).
- 
- 
- 
- 

Talking about the plot



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

- Well, the main character starts...
meets...
finds...
steals...
- But
- And....



More useful movie vocab



A series of short sections of a film that are shown to advertise it.

TRAILER

A high budget film that is very popular and successful (or is expected to be when it is released).

BLOCKBUSTER

A booth at the cinema where tickets are sold; used generically to also mean the cinema.

BOX OFFICE

The first showing of a film.

PREMIER

A piece of information that is revealed prior to watching a film (which you probably would rather have learned on your own).

SPOILER

A second film made to continue the story started in the first

SEQUEL (PREQUEL)



More useful movie vocab



The music that goes with a film (but not written specifically for the film).

SOUNDTRACK (NOT SCORE)

An unexpected change in the direction of the story.

PLOT TWIST

A list of people involved in making a film, usually shown at the end of it.

A test that measures how women are represented in films.

CREDITS

A person who loves films and knows a lot about them.

BECHDEL TEST

FILM BUFF



03

The Oscars

Who are the favourites, who will win?



Oscars



The Oscars **ceremony** will be **held** on March 2nd in Los Angeles

It is the **97th Academy Awards**.

Conan O'Brien is **hosting** for the first time.

The most popular **category** is always Best Picture and this year there isn't a clear **frontrunner**.

I'm Still Here **did better than expected** – with **nods** for Fernanda Torres as best actress, best international film and most unexpected of all best picture

Emilia Pérez received 13 nominations but Selena Gomez was **snubbed** for best supporting actress.

The Oscars has been **plagued by scandals** this year.





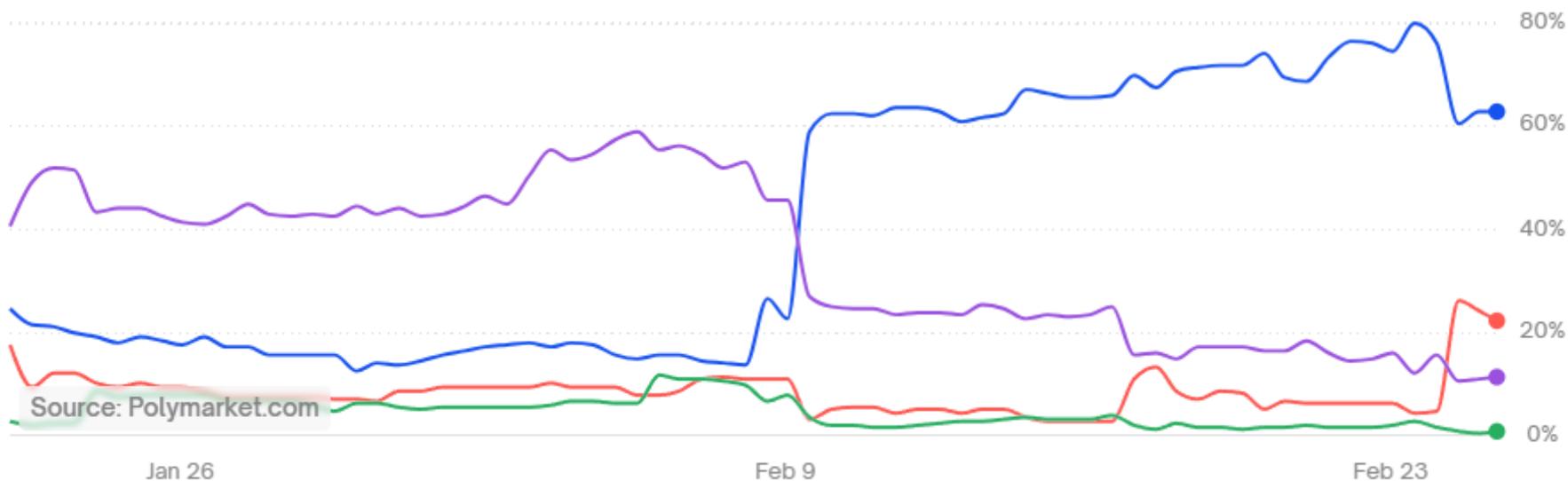
Oscars: Best Picture



\$2,439,912 Vol. ⌚ Mar 2, 2025



● Anora 63% ● Conclave 22.3% ● The Brutalist 12% ● A Complete Unknown <1%



Source: Polymarket.com

Ways to talk about successful movies



a box office hit – *Wicked* was a **box office hit** grossing \$160m in its opening weekend

critically acclaimed - *Anora* was **critically acclaimed** and even won the Palme d'Or at Cannes

a crowd pleaser - *Deadpool & Wolverine* was a **crowd pleaser**, combining action and humor to create a highly anticipated film that thrilled audiences

Ways to talk about unsuccessful movies



a flop – despite an all-star cast *Cats* was a complete **flop**

to bomb - *The Marvels* **bombed** at the box office and is the lowest-grossing film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe

a razzies contender – the *Joker* sequel was widely panned by critics and is a **razzies contender** for this year's award

04

Idioms from the movies





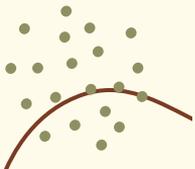
Groundhog day



Meaning: A situation that feels repetitive and never-ending.

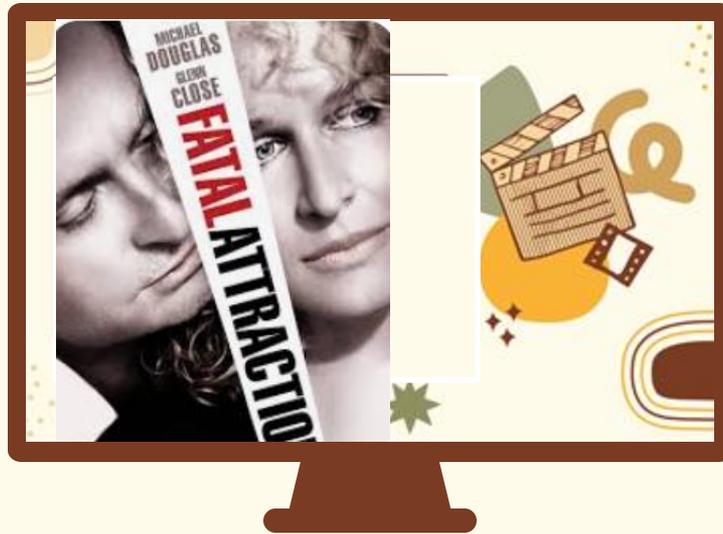
Origin: From the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, where the main character relives the same day over and over

Example: Every time we meet, we talk about the same topics—it's like Groundhog Day.





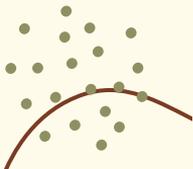
Bunny boiler



Meaning: A person (usually a woman) who becomes obsessively and dangerously attached to someone, often in a romantic context.

Origin: the 1987 movie *Fatal Attraction*, where a woman becomes obsessed with a man and boils a bunny rabbit as an act of revenge

Example: Don't get too close to her; I heard she's a bit of a bunny boiler.





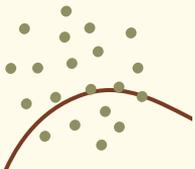
The Dark Side



Meaning: Refers to the evil or dangerous side of someone or something.

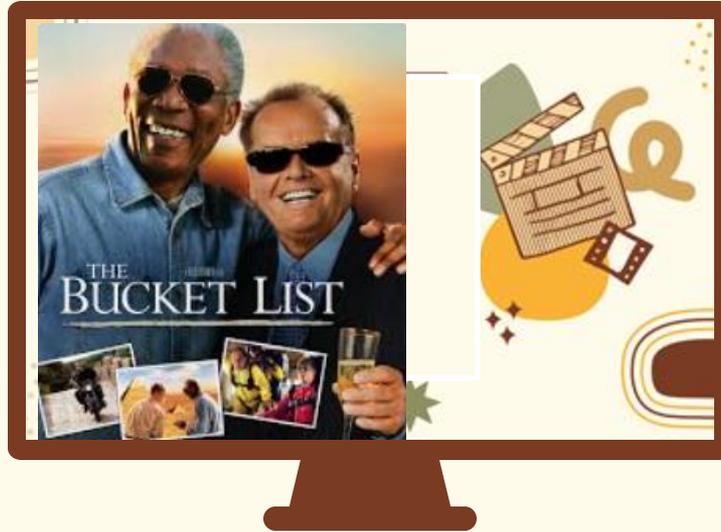
Origin: From *Star Wars*, where "The Dark Side" represents the evil forces opposed to the good ones.

Example : I left the public sector and started working for the Dark Side.





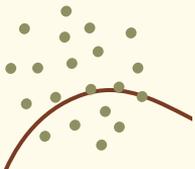
Bucket List



Meaning: A list of things you want to do before you die

Origin : from the 2007 movie *The Bucket List*. The title refers to things the characters want to do before they "kick the bucket" (die).

Example : He finally crossed off skydiving from his bucket list."





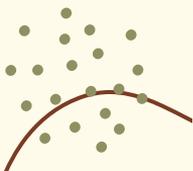
My Bad



Meaning: An informal way to admit that you made a mistake or are responsible for something bad.

Origin: From the 1995 teen comedy *Clueless*

Example : I forgot to bring sugar for your coffee. My bad.



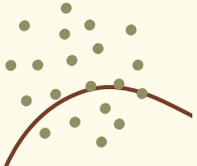
To know where the bodies are buried



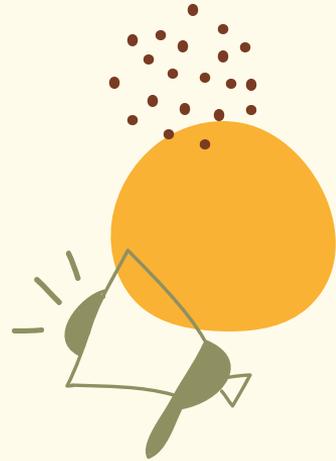
Meaning: To have secret or crucial information that can give you power or control over a situation.

Origin: First popularised in Citizen Kane

Example : He's been in the company for years, so he knows where all the bodies are buried.



Gaslight someone



Meaning: To manipulate someone into questioning their own reality or sanity.

Origin: The term comes from the 1944 movie *Gaslight*, where a husband manipulates his wife into doubting her perception of reality.

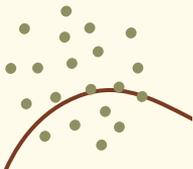
Example: The politician tried to gaslight the public into believing the scandal wasn't real.



(to be) Toast



- Meaning:** To be in serious trouble or about to fail or be defeated or even die.
- Origin:** 1984 film Ghostbusters when Bill Murray says “This chick is toast” about a ghost he’s about to defeat
- Example:** When the teacher caught him cheating, he knew he was toast.



The Usual Suspects



- Meaning:** The typical or expected people (used humourously)
- Origin:** From Casablanca, 1942, when Captain Louis Renault tells his police to “round up the usual suspects”
- Example:** Who is going to be at your party? Oh you know, the usual suspects

05

Using Movies to Learn English

You can enter a subtitle here if you need it



The background is a light cream color with various decorative elements: vertical lines in shades of green and yellow at the top left; brown and orange abstract shapes and a play button icon in the upper center; brown four-pointed stars on the left; a yellow starburst on the right; and a cluster of green dots at the bottom right. A large, thin brown circle is partially visible at the bottom left.

Watch Films in English!

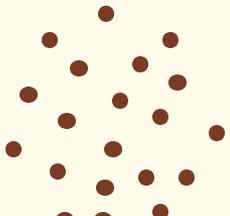
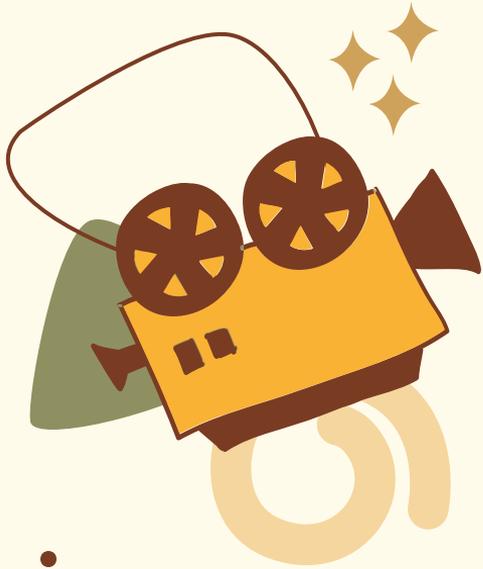
Crazy, right?

Voice of America



<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/z/4691>

- Two-minute movie clips
- Subtitled
- Slow speed
- Show expressions in context
- Mini-quiz with answers



Anatomy of a Scene (New York Times)

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4CGYNsoW2iBup_LVjhX7C9qceoMpiLEL

- 346 Videos
- 2-5 minutes long
- Directors talk about specific scenes
- Explain artistic and technical decisions



A clapperboard with a black and white striped top bar and a film strip with sprocket holes extending from its right side. The clapperboard has some illegible text on it.

Ted Talks

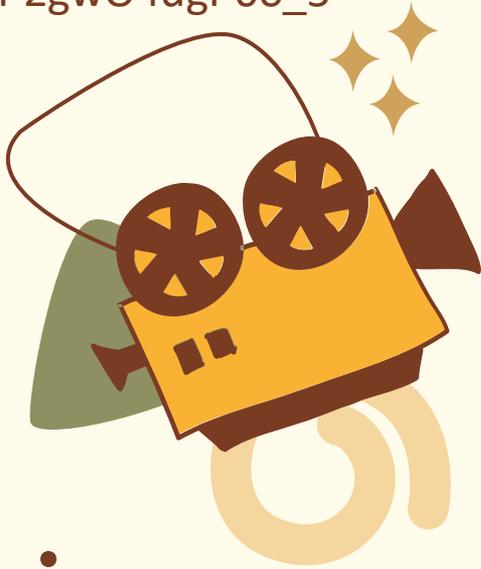
https://www.ted.com/playlists/373/how_visual_effects_bringing_movie

https://www.ted.com/talks/tasos_frantzolas_everything_you_hear_on_film_is_a_lie

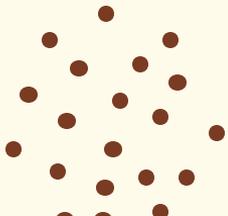
Learn English with Movies



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FikAJxtVgOY&list=PLlpAWCqcstzpkZomfDM5P2gwO4dgP0o_5



- Twenty minute videos
- Covers movies, series, interviews etc
- Vocab highlighted
- Culture explained
- Mini quizzes





Vox – Movies, explained

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJ8cMiYb3G5eDlsvzFygkss75zJiF3HtT>

A clapperboard with a black and white striped top bar and a film strip with sprocket holes extending from its right side. The clapperboard has some illegible text on it.

Wired – Technique Critique

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvDvESEXcgE&list=PLibNZv5Zd0dzmgAyav3R8SfXc-64Oly_k



THANKS!

DO YOU HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS?

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