

How to Talk About Movies in English – Video

In this lesson, you can see how to talk about movies in English.

What was the last film you saw? What kind of film was it? Did you like it or not? In this lesson, you'll learn how to describe movies and films and give your opinion about different films that you've watched.

Let's start with a question: what kind of films do you like?

1. Talking About Kinds of Film

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/film-movie-cinema.webp>)

Daniel: Have you seen 'No Country for Old Men'?

Kasia: No. I've never even heard of it. What kind of film is it?

D: I guess you'd call it a thriller, but it's also kind of a modern western, because a lot of it takes place in the desert, or small-town America.

K: Is it scary? I can't do scary.

D: You might not like it, then.

K: I can't watch anything violent, horror films, anything like that.

D: So what kind of thing are you into?

K: I like dramas, historical films, things like that. I like stories that focus more on real people. I also have a weakness for cheesy rom-coms occasionally. What about you?

D: Yeah, I guess we have somewhat opposite tastes! I'm a big fan of horror films, thrillers, and so on.

In the dialogue, you heard a lot of words for different kinds of films. Do you remember any of the words we mentioned? We'll give you a few seconds; try to remember three. You heard:

thrillers

horror films

westerns

dramas

historical films

rom-coms

A western is a film set in 19th century America, often featuring cowboys. 'Rom-com' is a short form of 'romantic comedy'. Can you think of any other kinds of film which we haven't mentioned? Try to think of three more! Any ideas? Maybe you said:

action

comedy

cartoon

fantasy

musical

sci-fi

'Sci-fi' is a short form of 'science fiction'. Sci-fi films are set in the future, often in space, and usually feature very advanced technology, like time travel. The *Star Wars* films are probably some of the most famous sci-fi films.

Fantasy films often feature magic, dragons, monsters, and things like that. The *Lord of the Rings* films are good examples of fantasy films. Does your language have different words for 'fantasy' and 'sci-fi'? Some languages don't; if this is true in your language, be careful with the difference! If someone's talking about a film, and you want to know what kind of film it is, you can ask: 'What kind of film is it?' You could also say: 'What sort of film is it?' To answer, you can just say: 'It's an action film'; 'It's a thriller'; 'It's a comedy', and so on. With some words, you need to say 'film' afterwards, like:

action film

horror film

historical film

sci-fi film

With other words, you don't say 'film' afterwards, like:

drama

thriller

musical

western

So, don't say: 'It's a thriller film'; just say, 'It's a thriller.' If you want to ask someone about their taste in films, you can ask: 'What kind of films do you like?' Or: 'What kind of films are you into?' Asking 'are you into' is a more conversational way to ask 'do you like'.

So, what kind of films are you into? Can you answer this question with two to three sentences? Pause the video and try it now!

Next in learning how to talk about movies in English, let's look at how you can introduce one film which you've seen, and tell someone else about it.

2. How to Introduce a Film

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/english-conversation.webp>) Kasia: I saw a great film last night! I can't believe I didn't see it when it was on in the cinema.

Daniel: Oh really? What was it?

K: Blue Jasmine. Do you know it?

D: Hmm... Sounds familiar. Is that the Steven Spielberg film?

K: No, it was directed by Woody Allen.

D: No, I don't know it. What kind of film is it?

K: I guess I'd call it a drama, but it's a bit of a black comedy, too.

D: Who's in it?

K: Cate Blanchett plays the main character.

D: I'm guessing that if it's a Woody Allen film, it's probably set in New York?

K: No, although the main character is a New Yorker.

D: Is it based on a book or anything? I might be mistaken, but I think I read a book with a title like that.

K: No, I don't think so.

If you want to know more about a film which someone saw, what questions could you ask? You might ask things like:

Who was the director?

Who's in it?

Where's it set?

Is it based on a book?

Do you know what the question 'Who's in it?' means? This is asking about the actors. It's a short way to ask 'Which actors are in the film?' Think about a film which you know. It could be something you saw recently, or maybe a film which you particularly like. How would you answer these questions? You could say: 'It was directed by Stanley Kubrick.'

In conversational English, you can also use the name as an adjective, like this: 'It's a Stanley Kubrick film.' To talk about actors, you might say 'It stars Samuel L. Jackson and Kurt Russell.' This sounds quite formal, so if you want to sound more informal, you can say 'Samuel L. Jackson and Kurt Russell are in it.'

To say where and when the story takes place, you could say:

It's set in Paris in the 1920s.

It's set in the near future, in an imaginary country which is ruled by corporations.

Finally, if a film is an adaptation of something else, like a book or maybe a video game, you can use the verb 'based on'. For example: 'It's based on the book by Stephen King.' OK, now it's your turn to talk! Think about a film you know. Use the language from this section to make two to three sentences to introduce the film and give some basic information about it. Pause the video and do it now.

How was that? Remember that you can always review a section if you need more time to practise. Let's look at our next point in how to talk about movies in English.

3. Talking About a Film You Like

Kasia: What are you watching?

Daniel: Kung Fu Hustle. Do you know it?

K: No... Haven't you watched this before?

D: Yes, many times! It's one of my favourites.

K: It looks weird, almost like a cartoon.

D: Yeah, you could say that. It's really original, but mostly it's just good fun. You're not meant to take it too seriously.

K: Is it violent? I can't watch violent films.

D: Kind of, but the violence is also quite cartoonish (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/ish-and-y>). It has quite a touching storyline, too. It's silly, but sweet at the same time.

K: Was it popular when it came out?

D: Yeah, I think so. It got really good reviews, and I think it won some awards, too. Want to sit and watch it together?

K: Sure!

If you enjoyed a film, you could use positive adjectives (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/adjective-order-in-english>) to describe it, like:

original

good fun

touching

sweet

'Sweet' describes a film which makes you feel happy and warm. Often, romantic films are sweet. 'Touching' describes something which makes you feel strong emotions. You can also say 'moving', which has a similar meaning. If a film is 'touching' or 'moving', you'll probably be thinking about it for some time after it finishes.

Can you think of any other positive adjectives you could use to describe a film which you liked? Try to think of three, and write them down. Pause the video if you want more time.

Ready? What did you get? Of course, there are many possibilities, but here are some suggestions. If a film really makes you think, or if it makes you see things in a new way, you could describe it as 'thought-provoking.' A film which has a realistic story and good acting could be described as 'believable.' If a film is believable, you feel like you could be watching real people in a real situation. A good comedy film could be 'hilarious.' 'Hilarious' describes something which is extremely funny.

Get more practice with this adjective order (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/adjective-order-in-english>) Oxford Online English lesson.

What else could you say about a film which you liked? You might give some details or reasons as to why you liked it. For example:

The story was really interesting and original.

The acting was amazing—really believable.

It had great special effects and incredible action scenes.

You could also mention what kind of reviews the film got, and whether it won any awards. For example:

It got really good reviews.

It was nominated for eight Oscars.

It won several awards at the Cannes festival.

OK, now it's your turn. Your job is to talk about a film you like. Try to make three to four sentences describing the film and why you like it. If the film won any awards (<https://www.therichest.com/richest/most-popular/top-10-most-prestigious-movie-awards-in-the-world/>) or prizes, you could mention that, too! Pause the video and make your answer now. Here's a tip: it's always better to practise as much as possible.

So, if you really want to improve your English, don't just practise once, make several answers to talk about movies in English. Say each answer out loud several times, to practise your pronunciation and fluency. Ready? Let's look at one more point.

4. Talking About a Film You Dislike

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/gross-out-1.webp>) Daniel: How was the film?

Kasia: Urggh... Awful! I wanted to walk out.

D: Why? What was so bad about it?

K: Everything! It was so slow and boring. Plus, it was so predictable that I could even guess what they were going to say next.

D: That's surprising. It got quite good reviews.

K: They must have seen a different film than I did. Also, it was dubbed, and they only used two voice actors: one for the males, and one for the females.

D: I never understand why they dub films like that. Why not just use subtitles?

K: Yeah, I agree, but I guess people don't like reading.

D: Was it scary?

K: Not at all! It was quite gory, but it was all done so badly that it wasn't believable at all. The special effects looked like they were made on a laptop in twenty minutes.

D: That's a shame. So, why did you stay to the end?

K: My friends didn't want to leave.

In the dialogue, you heard several adjectives to describe a film you don't like. Can you remember any of them? You heard:

*awful
slow
boring
predictable*

'Slow' means that the story doesn't develop quickly, or that scenes in the film go on for too long. What other adjectives could you use to describe a film which you don't like? You can also take positive adjectives and make them negative (<https://www.enchantedlearning.com/wordlist/negativewords.shtml>); for example: 'unoriginal' or 'unbelievable'.

Can you think of a film which you didn't like? Why didn't you like it? As before, you should try to give reasons to explain why you didn't like something. You could say something like:

The lead actor was really bad; he was completely emotionless.

The plot was stupid. Nothing made any sense.

It was completely unfunny. No one in the whole cinema laughed once.

Now, it's your chance to practise! Think of a film which you saw which you didn't like. Make two to three sentences to describe the film and say why you didn't like it. Pause the video and say your sentences aloud now.

Finally, let's see how you can put all of this language together into a longer answer when you talk about movies in English.

5. Making a Longer Answer

Your job is to make a longer answer using language from this lesson to talk about a film which you've seen. You need to say what kind of film it is, give some basic information about it, say if you like or dislike (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/likes-dislikes-english>) it, and explain why. Before you do that, let's do some examples together! Here's one:

I'm going to tell you about the film Gravity, which is one of my favourite films from the last few years. It's kind of a sci-fi film, but it's set in the present day and it doesn't feature aliens or anything like that, so you could say that it's more of a thriller. It was directed by Alfonso Cuarón, and it stars Sandra Bullock and George Clooney as two American astronauts. Most of the story takes place in space, in orbit around the Earth. I really like it because the visuals and the special effects are incredible; it's really atmospheric, and it gives you a good sense of the loneliness and terror of being stranded in space. I would say it's one of the best space films I've ever seen.

What do you think? Could you make an answer like this? Before you try, let's do one more example together:

I never saw Titanic until quite recently. Everyone raves about it like it's the best film ever made, but honestly I wasn't impressed. The cast was good; Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet are great actors, but I found it boring. The biggest problem is that it's predictable. You know the story beforehand, so there can't be any surprises. I also thought it was too long and slow; it's over three hours, but there's not enough plot to fill so much time.

OK, now it's your turn. Use the language from this video, and look up any other words you need. Then, make your longer answer and say it aloud, or write it down, or both! Don't forget that if you really want to practise effectively, you should make many different answers, and also practise saying each answer aloud multiple times.

Thanks for watching!