

Website and Interactive Learning App:

https://esl.institute/americancinema/

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### Agenda



- Website and Interactive Learning App
- American Cinema: An Introduction
- 3 Dialogues
- Additional Learning Resources





#### Pre-Cinema Era (1890s)

Key Characteristics: Early motion picture experiments and inventions Notable Developments: Thomas Edison's Kinetoscope, first public film screenings Key Figures: Thomas Edison, Eadweard Muybridge

Silent Era (1895-1929)

Key Characteristics: Films without synchronized sound, reliance on visual storytelling, live musical accompaniment Major Developments: Birth of Hollywood, star system emergence, development of film language Notable Films: The Birth of a Nation (1915), The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), Metropolis (1927) Key Figures: D.W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Mary Pickford

Classical Hollywood/Golden Age (1930-1960)

Key Characteristics: Studio system dominance, stardriven productions, genre conventions established Major Developments: Introduction of "talkies," Technicolor, Production Code enforcement Notable Films: Gone with the Wind (1939), Casablanca (1942), Singin' in the Rain (1952) Key Figures: Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford, Frank Capra, Orson Welles

Here are the major eras of American film history, each characterized by distinct technological, artistic, and industry developments:

#### New Hollywood Era (1960s-1980s)

Key Characteristics: Director-driven films, artistic experimentation, challenging traditional narratives Major Developments: Collapse of studio system, rise of auteur directors, MPAA rating system Notable Films: Bonnie and Clyde (1967), The Godfather (1972), Apocalypse Now (1979) Key Figures: Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas

#### Blockbuster Era (1970s-1990s)

Key Characteristics: High-concept films, massive marketing campaigns, franchise development Major Developments: Summer blockbuster model, special effects advancement, home video market Notable Films: Jaws (1975), Star Wars (1977), Jurassic Park (1993) Key Figures: Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, James Cameron

#### Independent Film Renaissance (1980s-2000s)

Key Characteristics: Low-budget artistic films, alternative distribution, Sundance Film Festival prominence Major Developments: Rise of indie distributors, digital filmmaking tools, festival circuit importance Notable Films: sex, lies, and videotape (1989), Pulp Fiction (1994), The Blair Witch Project (1999) Key Figures: Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, Kevin Smith, Miramax Films

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#### Digital Revolution Era (1990s-2010s)

Key Characteristics: CGI integration, digital projection, non-linear editing systems Major Developments: Computer-generated imagery, digital cameras, online distribution Notable Films: Toy Story (1995), The Matrix (1999), Avatar (2009) Key Figures: Pixar Animation, Wachowski Sisters, James Cameron

Streaming/Modern Era (2000s-Present)

Key Characteristics: Digital distribution, streaming platforms, franchise dominance, global markets Major Developments: Netflix originals, Marvel Cinematic Universe, international co-productions Notable Films: The Avengers (2012), Parasite (2019), Netflix originals Key Figures: Marvel Studios, streaming executives, international filmmakers

Contemporary Considerations:

Superhero Cinema Dominance (2008-present)

**Diversity and Inclusion Movement** (2010s-present)

Global/International Influence (2000s-present)

Virtual Production Technology (2020s-present)

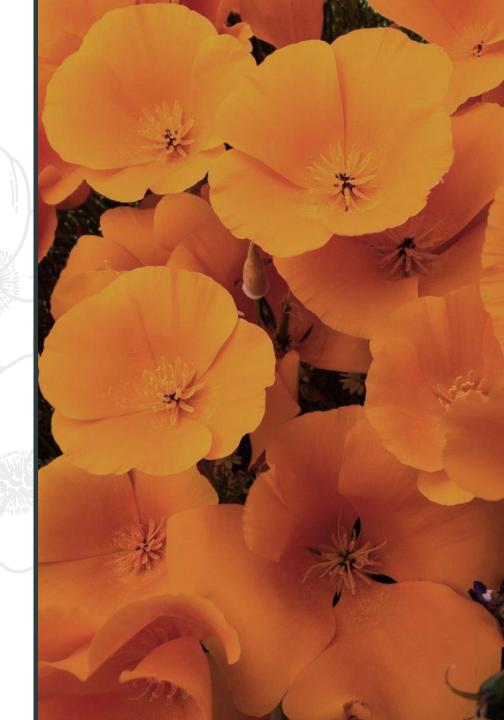
Each era reflects broader cultural, technological, and economic changes in American society, while also influencing and being influenced by global cinema movements. These periods often overlap, and different aspects of filmmaking (technology, storytelling, business models) can evolve at different rates.

Here are the major eras of American film history, each characterized by distinct technological, artistic, and industry developments:

# American Cinema: Actors and Actresses



These actors and actresses regularly appear in high-budget films that gross hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide and are recognizable faces in major Hollywood productions.



# American Actors



#### Actors:

- Chris Evans Known for Captain America in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Knives Out
- Chris Hemsworth Thor in Marvel films, Men in Black: International
- Robert Downey Jr. Iron Man, Sherlock Holmes franchise
- Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson Fast & Furious franchise, Jumanji films, Black Adam
- Ryan Reynolds Deadpool franchise, Free Guy, Red Notice
- Will Smith Bad Boys franchise, Men in Black, I Am Legend
- Tom Cruise Mission: Impossible franchise, Top Gun series
- Leonardo DiCaprio Inception, The Revenant, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood
- Mark Wahlberg Transformers franchise, Daddy's Home series
- Ryan Gosling La La Land, Blade Runner 2049, Barbie



# American Actresses



#### Actresses:

- Scarlett Johansson Black Widow in Marvel films, Lucy, Ghost in the Shell
- Jennifer Lawrence The Hunger Games franchise, X-Men films
- Emma Stone La La Land, Easy A, Cruella
- Margot Robbie Suicide Squad, Birds of Prey, Barbie
- Gal Gadot Wonder Woman franchise, Fast & Furious films
- Brie Larson Captain Marvel, Kong: Skull Island
- Amy Adams Man of Steel, Batman v Superman, Arrival
- Sandra Bullock Gravity, Ocean's 8, The Blind Side
- Charlize Theron Mad Max: Fury Road, Atomic Blonde, Fast & Furious franchise
- Zendaya Spider-Man films, Dune franchise

These actors and actresses regularly appear in high-budget films that gross hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide and are recognizable faces in major Hollywood productions.

# Top 20 Highest-Grossing American Movies (Domestic Box Office)

# Top 20 Highest-Grossing American Movies with their featured stars:

- 1. Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021) \$804.8 million Tom Holland, Zendaya, Benedict Cumberbatch, Tobey Maguire, Andrew Garfield
- 2. Avengers: Endgame (2019) \$858.4 million Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Hemsworth, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner
- 3. Avatar (2009) \$785.2 million Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver
- **4. Black Panther (2018) \$700.1 million •** Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o, Danai Gurira
- 5. Avengers: Infinity War (2018) \$678.8 million Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Benedict Cumberbatch
- 6. Titanic (1997) \$674.3 million Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet
- 7. Jurassic World (2015) \$652.3 million Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard
- 8. The Avengers (2012) \$623.4 million Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans, Mark Ruffalo, Chris Hemsworth, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner
- 9. Star Wars: The Force Awakens (2015) \$936.7 million Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac, Adam Driver, Harrison Ford
- 10. Top Gun: Maverick (2022) \$718.7 million Tom Cruise, Miles Teller, Jennifer Connelly

- 11. Shrek 2 (2004) \$445.0 million Mike Myers, Eddie Murphy, Cameron Diaz, Antonio Banderas
- 12. E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982) \$435.1 million Drew Barrymore, Henry Thomas, Dee Wallace
- 13. Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (2006) \$423.3 million Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, Keira Knightley
- **14. The Lion King (2019) \$543.6 million •** Donald Glover, Beyoncé, James Earl Jones, Seth Rogen (voices)
- 15. Toy Story 4 (2019) \$434.0 million Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Annie Potts, Keanu Reeves (voices)
- 16. Wonder Woman (2017) \$412.8 million Gal Gadot, Chris Pine
- 17. Incredibles 2 (2018) \$608.6 million Craig T. Nelson, Holly Hunter, Sarah Vowell (voices)
- 18. Jurassic Park (1993) \$407.2 million Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum
- 19. The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013) \$424.7 million Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Liam Hemsworth
- 20. Spider-Man (2002) \$407.0 million Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, Willem Dafoe

# 3 Interactive Movie Dialogues for Adult English Learners)

## Dialogue 1: Favorite Movie Stars

Setting: Two friends, Maria and James, are discussing their favorite actors while

waiting in line at a movie theater.

Maria: Hey James! I'm so excited to see the new Marvel movie. I love Chris Evans - he's my favorite Captain America!

James: Really? I prefer Chris Hemsworth. He's amazing as Thor! Did you know he was also in Men in Black: International?

Maria: No, I didn't! You know, I also really like Scarlett Johansson. She plays Black Widow so well. Have you seen her in other movies?

James: Yes! She was great in Lucy. But my absolute favorite actress is Zendaya. She's fantastic in the Spider-Man movies, and I heard she's in Dune too.

Maria: Oh, I love Zendaya! She's so talented and young. What about older actors? Do you like any classic movie stars?

James: Definitely! Leonardo DiCaprio is incredible. I've seen Inception three times - it's so confusing but amazing! And Tom Cruise never gets old. The Mission: Impossible movies are always exciting.

Maria: Tom Cruise does his own stunts, right? That's crazy! I prefer Sandra Bullock. She was wonderful in Gravity. It made me feel like I was in space!

James: That's a great movie! You know what's interesting? Many of these actors appear in franchise movies - like multiple films in the same series.

Maria: True! Like Dwayne Johnson in Fast & Furious and Will Smith in Bad Boys. They make so much money from these franchises!

James: Speaking of money, I wonder which movies made the most at the box office...

## Dialogue 2: Box Office Success and Movie Preferences

**Setting:** Lisa, a movie blogger, is interviewing David, a film enthusiast, about American cinema for her podcast.

- Lisa: Welcome to "Movie Talk," David! Today we're discussing the highest-grossing American films. What do you think makes a movie commercially successful?
- David: Thanks for having me, Lisa! Well, looking at the top earners like "Spider-Man: No Way Home" and "Avengers: Endgame," I'd say star power is huge. These films feature multiple A-list actors that audiences love.
- Lisa: Absolutely! "Spider-Man: No Way Home" made over \$804 million domestically. It brought together Tom Holland, Zendaya, and even previous Spider-Man actors like Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield. That's smart marketing!
- David: Exactly! Nostalgia sells. But it's not just superhero movies. Look at "Titanic" with Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet - it made \$674 million back in 1997. That's incredible staying power!
- Lisa: And "Top Gun: Maverick" proved Tom Cruise still draws crowds in 2022, earning \$718 million. But I'm curious about animated films. "Shrek 2" and "Toy Story 4" also made the top 20.

**David:** Animation appeals to families - that's a huge market segment. "The Lion King" remake with voices by Beyoncé and Donald Glover made \$543 million. Disney knows how to create box office gold!

Lisa: What about franchise films? I notice many sequels in the top 20.

David: Franchises are Hollywood's bread and butter now. Marvel dominates with multiple Avengers films, and we see Star Wars, Jurassic Park, and Pirates of the Caribbean. Audiences want familiar characters and worlds.

Lisa: Do you think this focus on blockbusters limits creativity in American cinema?

David: That's a great question. While blockbusters dominate box office numbers, independent films still thrive. The key is balance - we need both entertaining spectacles and meaningful artistic expression.

Lisa: Well said! Any predictions for future box office champions?

David: With the rise of streaming, theatrical releases face new challenges. But I believe superhero films, reboots, and franchise extensions will continue ruling the box office for years to come.

# Dialogue 3: The Evolution of American Cinema

Setting: Professor Williams and her adult education student, Ahmed, discuss how

American movies have changed through different historical periods.

**Professor Williams:** Ahmed, you mentioned wanting to understand American film history better. Let's start with a question: what's the oldest American movie you've ever seen?

Ahmed: I think it was a Charlie Chaplin film - a silent comedy from the 1920s. It was fascinating how they told stories without spoken dialogue!

Professor Williams: Perfect example! You experienced the Silent Era, which lasted from 1895 to 1929. Filmmakers like Chaplin and Buster Keaton revolutionized visual storytelling. They had to convey everything through expressions, gestures, and physical comedy.

Ahmed: It must have been challenging for actors. How did things change when sound was introduced?

**Professor Williams:** The "talkies" transformed cinema completely! The Classical Hollywood period from 1930 to 1960 became known as the Golden Age. Studios controlled everything - they owned theaters, managed star contracts, and perfected the Hollywood formula.

Ahmed: I've heard of classic films like "Casablanca" and "Gone with the Wind." Were those from this period?

**Professor Williams:** Exactly! Those represent Hollywood at its peak. But by the 1960s, younger directors wanted more creative freedom. The New Hollywood Era brought us auteur filmmakers like Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, who made "The Godfather."

Ahmed: "The Godfather" is incredible! When did special effects become so important?

**Professor Williams:** The Blockbuster Era really began with Steven Spielberg's "Jaws" in 1975 and George Lucas's "Star Wars" in 1977. These films proved that spectacular visuals and marketing could create massive global audiences.

Ahmed: And now we have completely computer-generated characters, right?

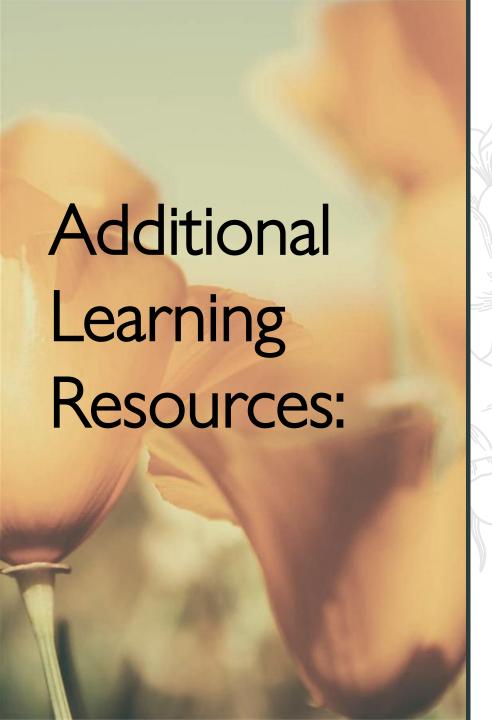
**Professor Williams:** Yes! The Digital Revolution started with "Toy Story" in 1995 - the first fully computer-animated feature film. Today, movies like "Avatar" and Marvel films rely heavily on CGI and digital technology.

Ahmed: What about the streaming services like Netflix? How are they changing movies?

**Professor Williams:** We're living through that transformation now! The Streaming Era has democratized filmmaking and distribution. Independent filmmakers can reach global audiences without traditional studio support. However, this also means competition for theatrical experiences.

Ahmed: Do you think movie theaters will disappear?

**Professor Williams:** Not entirely, but they're evolving. Big spectacle films like superhero movies still draw crowds, while intimate dramas often find success on streaming platforms. The industry is adapting to changing viewer preferences and technological possibilities.



#### **Key Vocabulary Terms:**

Box office: Money earned from ticket sales
Franchise: Series of related movies
CGI: Computer-generated imagery
Auteur: Director with distinctive creative vision
Blockbuster: High-budget, popular movie
Domestic earnings: Money made in home country
Genre: Category of film (action, comedy, drama, etc.)
Production budget: Money spent making the movie



#### Cultural Notes:

Hollywood is located in Los Angeles, California

The Academy Awards (Oscars) are America's most prestigious film awards

Summer blockbuster season typically runs May through August

American films often reflect and influence global popular culture

# Thank you

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