

Film and TV

Film / Action movies

Teacher's notes



Age: Teenager/Young adults

Level: Advanced (C1)

Time: 90 minutes

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. practise speaking about action movies;
2. improve listening comprehension of movie dialogues;
3. utilise new language to write and record a video trailer.

Language focus: speaking, listening, vocabulary

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student, a PC or projector, an internet connection in the classroom (the project will require dice; the optional 'make a trailer' activity will require the use of smartphones)

Notes:

1. **WARNING:** This lesson refers to two video trailers for famous action movies. While these videos don't contain explicit material, they do contain elements of violence and some mildly shocking imagery. You should watch them before the lesson to judge whether they are appropriate for the particular group of students.
2. This lesson contains exercises which focus on listening, speaking, reading and vocabulary. If you wish to maximise class time for listening and speaking, you could ask students to complete the reading and vocabulary exercises as preparatory homework before the lesson. It would then only be necessary to quickly correct these parts in class. The exercises which could be done as preparatory homework are marked with a symbol:

Optional lead-in:

Find five posters online for famous action movies. Display them on the board/screen as students enter the class. Ask students what the movies have in common. Elicit the genre 'action movies' then hand out the student worksheet.

1. Speak (5 minutes)

Aims: to develop interest in the topic of the lesson, to provide spoken practice, to identify target language related to action movies which students might already know

Procedure: Ask students to briefly discuss the questions in pairs. Monitor their responses. If there are students who are not interested in action movies, explain that the lesson will contain useful language which can be used in a variety of non-movie situations (e.g. talking about risk/danger). You could also encourage these students to explain why they don't like this genre. At the end of the activity give some feedback, drawing attention to good language which students used. Focus particularly on language that was used which will be useful for the lesson (movie vocabulary, adjectives of personality).

2. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to generate interest in the topic of the lesson, to provide listening practice of understanding dialogue from a movie, to provide spoken practice of movie-related language

Procedure: Play the trailer (www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLmKio67pVQ). Ask students to briefly compare answers to the three questions in pairs. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback. Focus on ideas which students have mentioned which will be relevant to the following reading activity (heroes, villains, explosions, etc).

Key:

- a. He says that despite trying to protect his family, his wife has just died and now he is afraid about what will happen to his child.
- b. He needs the woman to scream, so Tarzan will come to rescue her.
- c. She says that normal men are capable of doing impossible things in order to save the people they love.

3. Read and vocabulary (20 minutes)

Aims: to practice thorough understanding of a short text, to introduce new vocabulary related to action movies, to focus on the exact meaning of this new vocabulary

Procedure: Tell students they are going to read a short text which describes some of the usual elements of action movies. Ask them to skim the text to see if any of these elements correspond to their discussions from the previous task. Give students a time limit of about



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five minutes to complete the reading task. Monitor their progress. For students who are struggling, draw their attention to parts of the removed sentences which will help them (e.g. pronouns, ideas which contrast with the previous sentence, ideas which further develop the previous sentence). Ask students in pairs to compare their answers to the reading, then elicit the final answers. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the crossword. Give them a time limit of about five minutes. Remind them that all the words can be found in the reading text. Elicit the correct answers to the crossword. Focus on correct pronunciation.

Key:

a. Reading

- 1.d
- 2.b
- 3.e
- 4.c
- 5.a

b. Crossword

across → 4. *evil*, 6. *blow up*, 7. *special effects*, 8. *thrilling*, 9. *plot*, 10. *chase*

down → 1. *loved one*, 2. *despicable*, 3. *old-school*, 5. *stunt*

4. Listen and speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to provide further listening practice of understanding dialogue from a movie, to consolidate ideas and vocabulary from the previous task, to provide spoken practice of movie-related language

Procedure: Play the trailer (www.youtube.com/watch?v=joPveEKnxaw). Ask students to briefly compare answers to the three questions in pairs. Play it again and let students decide their final answers in pairs. Elicit the answers. Ask students to briefly discuss the final questions in pairs. Give feedback. As a class, identify the elements of the reading text which were shown in the trailer (though some may be subjective).

Key:

- a. *She feels hope.*
- b. *He asks her if she wants a war; he threatens to kill her people and her family.*
- c. *She is told to forget her previous knowledge of the Games, to stay alive and to not forget who her enemy is.*

5. Vocabulary (10 minutes)

Aims: to introduce high-level compound adjectives related to action movies

Procedure: Ask students to give examples of common compound adjectives. If they aren't familiar with this term explain that a compound adjective is an adjective which is composed of (usually) two words which are connected by a hyphen. A typical example is the adjective 'open-minded'. Give students a time limit of about five minutes to complete the task individually. For students who are struggling, draw their attention to parts of the sentence which directly correspond with the correct answer (e.g. sentence 4: 'on the edge of our seats' = 'nail-biting'). After the time limit, ask students to compare answers in pairs. Elicit the correct answers. Focus on correct pronunciation.

Key:

1. *action-packed*
2. *thought-provoking*
3. *fast-paced*
4. *nail-biting*
5. *far-fetched*
6. *mind-blowing*
7. *big-budget*
8. *star-studded*
9. *family-friendly*
10. *mind-boggling*

6. Speak (15 minutes)

Aims: to provide spoken practice of action movie vocabulary studied in this lesson, to provide oral practice of story-telling when describing movie plots, to practise oral expression of personal opinions

Procedure: Ask students to work in pairs and to discuss action movies as outlined in the worksheet. You may wish to verbally model an answer for a movie which you have recently seen. Set a time limit for the speaking task (about ten minutes) and tell students that they must equally divide speaking time in their pairs. Encourage the use of new language which has been studied in this lesson. Monitor the speaking task. If you have students who haven't seen any action movies, suggest that they think of other similar stories (like fairytales). Provide feedback on speaking.

7. Project (20 to 60 minutes, depending on whether you decide to make a video trailer)

Aims: to consolidate new language from the lesson, to provide written practice of language related to action movies, to personalise the topic and possibly create video content which will aid long-term recall of language from the lesson

Procedure: Divide students into groups of four. Hand out dice. Tell students to follow the worksheet instructions for steps 1 and 2. Give them about five minutes to complete step 2. Monitor their progress and provide

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suggestions for groups who seem stuck for ideas. Ask each group to write their trailer script (as in step 3). This could be done in class. Alternatively, each student could individually write their script for homework to be handed in next class.

Optional activity – Project Step 4 (make a video)

Notes:

1. You will need to decide if this activity would be suitable for your group. As it will involve some acting and preparation of props, it may be more suitable for groups with teenagers and young adults. The activity will also require at least one smartphone per group.
2. If you wish to do this activity, it could be wise to advise students beforehand and suggest they download a free trailer-making app onto their phone (e.g. FilmoraGo). While an app is not entirely necessary (as explained in student worksheet), it does allow for a higher quality trailer which students can feel proud of.

Procedure: Follow the instructions on the student worksheet.



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Worksheet

1. Speak

Discuss the questions below with your classmate.

What have been the most popular action movies in your country in recent years?

Try to think of some famous heroes and villains from action movies.

What is your opinion of these types of movies? Explain.

2. Listen and speak

Watch the trailer for the action movie *The Legend of Tarzan*. Listen carefully, and then answer the questions below.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLmKio67pVQ

- At the start of the trailer, what information does the man give about his family?
- What does the villain need the woman to do? Why?
- At the end of the trailer, what theory does the woman express about men?

Discuss with your classmate:

- In what way is the story of this trailer typical of the stories represented in action movies?
- Would this trailer convince you to see the movie? Explain.



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Worksheet

3a. Read

Read the text and decide the correct position (1–5) for the missing sentences (a–e) below.

How to make an action movie

The plots of action movies can be complex or simple but they generally share the same basic elements. Most importantly, the movie needs a hero and a villain. The hero needs to be likable, perhaps unconventional and physically competent. Of course, it also helps if they have the full lips and defined bone structure of a fashion model.

(1) _____ In some movies, the heroes and villains are entire groups of people. While this risks confusing the viewers somewhat, it does allow the movie studios to raise their merchandise profits – why include just one superhero when *The Avengers* had five? (2) _____ This could range from a hero's innocent loved one to an entire planet of people who are unaware that some villain is about to blow them all up.

Speaking of blowing people up, any well-made action movie is going to need explosions. Lots of them.

(3) _____ Unless, of course, it's directed by a more old-school type of director who rejects computer graphics in favour of stunt performers jumping out of burning cars. A good director will also make sure not to blow up the car until the end of a long pursuit. (4) _____ And at the end of it all, let's not forget the inevitable fight, the archetypal battle of good versus evil. (5) _____ Usually, yes, but that doesn't stop the audience from biting their nails as well as their popcorn.

- a) Will our hero win?
- b) Apart from righteous warriors, there also need to be victims to be saved.
- c) What would an action movie be without a thrilling chase, whether in cars, spaceships or through a forest on foot?
- d) As for the villain, well you've guessed it: the more despicable the better.
- e) To enable this, it's also going to need special effects.



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Worksheet

3b. Vocabulary

Find the action movie vocabulary from the reading text to complete the crossword below.

										1										
										2										
										4										
										3										
										5										
6										7										
										8										
										9										
10																				

Across

- 4. (noun/adj) the opposite of 'good'
- 6. (phrasal verb) to explode (4,2)
- 7. (compound noun) visual illusions created by computer graphics and cameras (7,7)
- 8. (adj) very exciting
- 9. (noun) the basic story of a movie
- 10. (noun/verb) the act of quickly following a person in order to catch him/her

Down

- 1. (compound noun) a person who you feel very close to (5,3)
- 2. (adj) a person who is very bad, even terrible
- 3. (adj) an expression to describe a person who prefers the traditions of the past (3,5)
- 5. (noun) a dangerous action which requires a lot of skill to complete



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Worksheet

4. Listen and speak

Watch the trailer for the movie *Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. This is the second movie in the *Hunger Games* series.

Listen carefully, then answer the questions below. www.youtube.com/watch?v=joPveEKnxaw

- How does the hero's little sister feel about the Games?
- How does the villain threaten the hero?
- What advice does the hero receive? (there is more than one answer)

Discuss with your classmate(s):

- Look back at the text entitled 'How to make an action movie'. How many elements from the text were included in this trailer?
- Would this trailer convince you to see the movie? Explain.

5. Vocabulary

This table contains words to create compound adjectives which describe action movies. Connect the words with a hyphen to complete the ten sentences below.

A.	B.
nail	blowing
fast	fetchd
action	budget
big	friendly
thought	studded
star	packed
family	boggling
mind	paced
mind	biting
far	provoking

- To tell the truth, I found the movie a little too action - packed towards the end. There were so many stunts and explosions that I sort of forgot the basic story.
- Despite all the explosions and special effects, I found *Inception* quite _____ - _____. It really made me reflect on where our society is going.
- The movie was so _____ - _____ that I was afraid to blink in case I missed something! The two hours just flew by.
- We follow James Bond through various adventures, leading the movie to a _____ - _____ finish which had the whole audience on the edge of their seats.
- I thought the ending was rather _____ - _____, to be honest. I mean, the car exploded with the hero inside – how can we believe that he survived?!
- The special effects in the new *Star Wars* were absolutely _____ - _____. I've never before seen a movie with such an amazing use of 3D technology.
- I'm not really a fan of _____ - _____ Hollywood productions. They spend all that money to create something so formulaic and boring. I much prefer small-scale, independent movies.



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8. I don't really care if a movie is _____ - _____ or not. Having big-name Hollywood actors is no guarantee that it's going to be actually enjoyable.
9. I wanted to see the new Tarantino film, but my 10-year-old brother decided to come to the cinema too so we needed to choose a more _____ - _____ movie.
10. I have to admit that I found the plot completely _____ - _____. There were so many characters and so many confusing sub-plots that I had no idea what was happening most of the time.

6. Speak

Talk to your classmate about action movies. Choose two action movies that you have seen (if you need help, look at the suggested movies in the box below). For each movie, talk about as many elements as possible from the following:

Characters	Story	Your opinion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hero • The villain • The victim(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hero's objective • The pace • The action: stunts, battle, chase, special effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the movie that you liked • Parts that you disliked • Rate the movie out of 5

Suggested action movies

Superhero movies:	<i>Batman / The Avengers / Iron Man / Captain America / Thor / Superman / Spiderman</i>
Action movie series:	<i>Indiana Jones / Die Hard / Terminator / Divergent / Star Wars / James Bond / Mission Impossible / The Fast and the Furious</i>
Stand-alone action movies:	<i>Gladiator / Inception / Kill Bill / Charlie's Angels</i>



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Worksheet

7. Project

You are going to create your own action movie trailer. Work in groups of four.

Step 1

In each group, roll the dice and highlight the corresponding description in each of the four areas.

e.g. hero = 2; villain = 1; victim(s) = 4; key content = 1

<p>Your hero</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trixie: a 7-year-old girl with a kung-fu obsession 2. Pete: a shy, nervous Chemistry student in his early 20s 3. Helga: a former Olympic weightlifter who now lives alone with her cats 4. Gregory: an 85-year-old pensioner who likes cups of tea and international espionage 5. Casandra: supermodel by day, astrophysicist by night 6. Percy: former member of a world-famous boyband with a secret power 	<p>Your villain</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henry: the spoiled 10-year-old son of the President of the United States 2. Cristiano: a handsome billionaire businessman whose only love is money 3. Dorothy: a sweet, 90-year-old lady who has a secret obsession with starting fires 4. Stephanie: an aspirational young banker who would do anything for designer shoes 5. Bob: an ex-policeman who now believes that he can communicate with trees 6. Daphne: a nature-loving hippie who would do absolutely anything to protect the planet
<p>Your victim(s)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. younger brother 2. a famously cute internet cat: Lovely Cat 3. the entire population of the world 4. the residents of east-side New York 5. the Queen of England 6. popstar Justin Bieber 	<p>Key plot content</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the mafia 2. a tattoo with a secret message 3. Formula 1 car racing 4. a billionaire's yacht 5. an earring with magic powers 6. telepathic shark

Step 2

In your group, imagine what the movie will be like. Brainstorm the items below.

- Basic plot
- Movie title
- Famous actors who will star in it.



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Worksheet

Step 3

Write a short script for the trailer of your movie. Your trailer will only last for 30–60 seconds, so the script only needs to be a short paragraph. Try to use some of the vocabulary from this lesson.

Example: (e.g. hero = 2; villain = 1; victim(s) = 4; key content = 1)

Title: Chemical Catastrophe

'Pete is just an ordinary Chemistry student, excited by things like molecular structure and trips to the library. That is until one day when he accidentally creates a substance with the power to blow up the entire east side of New York City! He tries to hide the deadly chemical, but suddenly the mafia find out about it. They steal it and give it to their secret leader, Henry, the despicable ten-year-old son of the President. Can Pete stop Henry before it's too late? Andrew Garfield stars as Pete in this mind-blowing adventure. Chemical Catastrophe. Release date, 30th May.'

Step 4 (optional)

Make the trailer using the video camera on your phone.

- a. In your group, decide what scenes the trailer will include. Act out the scenes and record them. You might want to include some props (e.g. if your trailer requires a dinosaur, you could draw one on the whiteboard before you start filming).
- b. How to add your script (from Step 3):
 - If you are simply using the video function on your phone, one member of the group will need to read the script as the trailer is being filmed.
 - Alternatively, there are many free apps (e.g. FilmoraGo) which allow you to film the trailer and then add a voiceover afterwards.
- c. When you have created your video, show it to the rest of the class. If you wish, you could upload your video to social media. Make sure to tag it #onestopactionmovies so that students around the world can compare it with their own trailers.