

From Titanic to American Sniper: the biggest lies in fact-based movies

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The author describes inaccuracies in *The Blind Side*, *Captain Phillips*, *Titanic*, *Patch Adams*, and *American Sniper*.

Time: 90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Vocabulary (collocations with adjectives and adverbs)

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the topic of movies based on true events. Ask students to discuss the questions. Then, ask them to scan the article, find the names of the films, and predict what inaccuracies will be mentioned in the article.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The word *crass* is generally offensive when describing people. Most other words in this set are formal (except for *gaffe* – a more formal synonym would be *faux pas*). The word *prong* is often used with a number, as in 'two-prong plan/programme/campaign'.

Key:

1. *debunk, debunk(ed)*
2. *righteous*
3. *cobblers*
4. *depict, depicted*
5. *alleged*
6. *claim, claimed/claims*
7. *ostensibly*
8. *infest, infested*
9. *settle*
10. *aristocracy*
11. *portrayal*
12. *grievance, grievances*

13. *activism*

14. *unverified*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to scan the text quickly to find the paragraph that contains the information and then to read it carefully before they make their choice.

Key:

1. *IC (He was not formally adopted, he says.)*
2. *Fact*
3. *IC (He received emails about pirates and ignored them.)*
4. *NG (The number is not mentioned.)*
5. *IC (Kilts hadn't been invented.)*
6. *IC (He was an aristocrat.)*
7. *IC (He may have killed himself, but some saw him launching lifeboats.)*
8. *NG*
9. *Fact*
10. *IC (We don't even know they met.)*

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. The answers given are the phrases used in the text.

Key:

1. *accidentally wandered*
2. *historical fact*
3. *wildly popular*
4. *pirate-infested waters*
5. *historically accurate*
6. *gratingly funny figure*
7. *barely encountered*
8. *unverified claims*
9. *falsely reported*

- b. Ask students to complete the sentences. Encourage them first to identify the part of speech of the missing word.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>unverifiable</i> | 4. <i>infested</i> |
| 2. <i>historical</i> | 5. <i>barely</i> |
| 3. <i>falsely</i> | 6. <i>accidentally</i> |

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5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to reflect on the films they mentioned in the warmer. Have them choose a film and research its accuracy and the historical events the film is based on.
- b. Give students time to make notes and prepare to share with the class. They can then share their findings in small groups.