

French miss: is the future of movie kissing in jeopardy?

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Read the short film summary below. Answer the questions.

Movie: *You People*

Release Date: 27 January, 2023 (Netflix)

Starring: *Jonah Hill, Lauren London, Eddie Murphy*

Plot: *A new couple and their families experience modern love while dealing with cultural, societal, and generational differences.*

- Have you seen this movie? What did you think of it? If not, are you interested in it?
- Do you recognise the actors' names? What other movies have they been in?
- What do you think of films made directly by streaming companies and services like Netflix? Are they better or worse than those released in cinemas?

2 Key words

a. Complete the definitions below using the words in the box. Then, find and highlight them in the text to see them in context.

airbrushed	CGI	cheating	chemistry
comeback	co-star	disinfected	fake
leads	morph	perspex	physically
revealed	romcom	stand-in	streaming

1. A _____ is an actor who shares the 'lead' or 'star' role with another.
2. A _____ is a romantic comedy: a play, film or TV show that treats romance in a light-hearted way.
3. A _____ is a replacement for an actor during a scene, especially when their face isn't shown.
4. _____ stands for *Computer Generated Imagery*.
5. _____ refers to how well actors work together and portray real-life relationships.
6. _____ is watching or listening to audiovisual content through the internet.
7. A _____ is when somebody famous in the past becomes famous again.

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8. If something is _____, it is cleaned from all viruses and bacteria.
9. If something is _____, it is shown to people for the first time.
10. _____ is a clear plastic that is used instead of glass for windows and doors.
11. Something that is _____ has been enhanced using a computer program.
12. Something that is _____ is not real.
13. The _____ are the main actors of a film or a TV show.
14. _____ means *doing something dishonest*.
15. To _____ means *to change something's physical look*.

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Stuart Heritage

8 February, 2023

- 1 As a film, Netflix's *You People* raises all kinds of questions. Questions like "Should they be remaking the same old stories in 2023?" and "Shouldn't the leads of an expensive streaming romcom have more chemistry than Jonah Hill and Lauren London, two actors who, for most of the film, look like strangers who just met in a lift and don't particularly like each other very much?"
- 2 But the question "Did they actually kiss?" probably shouldn't be one of those questions. Because, after all, we can see that they do. Right at the end, Hill and London get married, and they kiss. Whatever you think about the film (it isn't very good), they kiss at the end. They definitely kiss.
- 3 Except maybe they don't. On a recent episode of *The Brilliant Idiots* podcast, comedian Andrew Schulz revealed that the whole kiss was a CGI creation. "It's CGI," Schulz said. "I'm there, I'm watching the wedding, and I see them go in for the kiss, and their faces stop like this far. And I wonder how they're gonna play that in the movie. Oh, they're probably just gonna cut right there. But in the movie, you could see their faces come close, and then you could see their faces morph a little bit into a fake kiss."
- 4 If this is true, it's hard to know what to make of it. On the one hand, of course you can make two characters fake kiss with CGI. You can do anything with CGI. CGI helped Thanos throw a moon at Iron Man, so it could make Jonah Hill kiss Lauren London. But on the other hand, it does feel a bit like cheating. *You People* is a romcom, after all, and people do kiss each other in romcoms.
- 5 Obviously, this is not the first time that a kiss between leads has been faked. Last year, Netflix's big Lindsay Lohan comeback film *Falling For Christmas* ended with a kiss between her co-star and what was very obviously Lohan's stand-in.
- 6 Post-Covid, this isn't really that much of a big deal. During the pandemic, when films didn't know if they could ever show regular kissing scenes again, film and TV show directors used all sorts of ways to show two characters kissing. Sometimes, actors disinfected their mouths after each kiss. Some TV dramas made their stars kiss through Perspex screens that were then airbrushed out. Some even brought in the actors' real-life partners to dress up and kiss.
- 7 So this has been done before. But at least all those examples were real kisses, whether through stand-ins or plastic. CGI is a whole new world. That's taking two people and making them do something that they did not, which raises many issues about the future of acting. If an actor is going to star in a project, how can they trust the director not to show them doing things they didn't do? Is the future of romantic scenes in Hollywood going to be CGI? There are a lot of essential questions to be asked here. How strange that it was 2023's dumbest romcom that started asking them.

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First published in *The Guardian*, 8/2/2023

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3 Comprehension check

a. Match the people with what they did, according to the article.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Jonah Hill and Lauren London | a. didn't like the film |
| 2. Stuart Heritage | b. have a CGI kiss in the film <i>You People</i> |
| 3. Andrew Schulz | c. spoke about the CGI kiss on a podcast |
| 4. Lindsay Lohan | d. used a stand-in for a kiss in a recent film |

b. Write down the four ways films can stage a kiss mentioned in the article.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

4 Key language

a. Reorder these phrases of the article next to their definitions.

1. (jeopardy / in) _____ – in danger
2. (all / kinds / of / questions / raise) _____ – mention things so they can be discussed
3. (it / hard / know / make / of / to / to / what) _____ – difficult to understand the meaning of something in a particular way
4. (hand, ... / hand, ... / on / on / one / other / the / the) _____ – used for giving two different opinions about something
5. (a / big / deal / isn't / much / of / really / that / this) _____ – used for showing that something is not very important
6. (a / issues / lot / of / raises) _____ – used to mention that there will be lots of things to discuss regarding the subject

b. Choose three of the phrases above and write personalised sentences.

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5 Discussion

a. Use the prompts to have discussions.

- Should the people who make films, like directors, use CGI for actions such as kissing? If not, what should they use CGI for?
- Should actors ask for the kisses they do with other actors to be faked? How and why?
- Do you think CGI kisses will become more popular in films and TV shows? Why (not)?

6 In your own words

- a. Use your phone or a computer to find a clip of the CGI kiss mentioned in the article. Discuss if you can tell if the kiss is real or fake.
- b. Find another famous CGI scene from a movie. Research how it was made and present it to your class.