

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

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-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: *An interracial couple falls in love despite their families.*

- 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 films have they made?
- Do you prefer watching movies at home using services like Netflix or going to the cinema? Why?

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. Then, find and highlight them to read them in context.

characters

cheating

comedian

episode

fake

1. A _____ is someone who makes people laugh for a living.
2. Something that is _____ is not real.
3. _____ means *doing something dishonest*.
4. An _____ is how a TV show or podcast is divided for broadcasting.
5. The people in stories such as in films and TV shows are the _____.

development

disinfected

scenes

stand-in

trust

6. A _____ is someone who takes an actor's place in a scene, especially when they don't show their face and don't have any dialogue.
7. If something is _____, it is cleaned so it cannot spread an infection.
8. _____ are the moments of a movie or a TV show when the action takes place.
9. To _____ someone means *to believe they will do what they say*.
10. A _____ is an important event that has happened recently.

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- 1 As a film, Netflix's *You People* raises many questions. But "Did they actually kiss?" probably shouldn't be one of them. Because, after all, we can see that they do. Right at the end, Jonah Hill and Lauren London get married and kiss. They definitely kiss.
- 2 But maybe they don't. On a recent episode of *The Brilliant Idiots* podcast, comedian Andrew Schulz said that the kiss was made using CGI. "It's CGI (Computer Generated Imagery)," Schulz said. "I was there, watching the wedding, and I saw them go in for the kiss, and their faces stopped before they touched."
- 3 If this is true, it's hard to know what opinion to have. On the one hand, of course you can make two characters "fake kiss" with CGI. But on the other hand, it does feel a bit like cheating. *You People* is a romcom (romantic comedy), after all, and people kiss romcoms.
- 4 Obviously, this is not the first time a kiss between actors has not been real. Last year, Netflix's big Lindsay Lohan film *Falling For Christmas* ended with a kiss between her co-star and what was very obviously Lohan's stand-in.
- 5 During the pandemic, when films didn't know if they could ever show kissing scenes again, film and TV show directors had to use 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 plastic screens. Some actors have even brought in their real-life partners to kiss.
- 6 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? There are a lot of important questions to be asked here because of this new development.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Fix any that are false.

1. The writer starts by believing that the actors, Jonah Hill and Lauren London, kiss.
2. Andrew Schulz says that they used a stand-in for the kiss.
3. A romcom usually is a type of film where people kiss.
4. Lindsay Lohan also used CGI to kiss her co-star.
5. The pandemic meant actors were using CGI to kiss each other.
6. CGI could show actors doing things they didn't do.
7. The writer believes CGI is a better thing to use than stand-ins.

4 Key language

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

1. (jeopardy / in) _____ – in danger
2. (many / questions / raise) _____ – mention something to discuss it
3. (hand, ... / hand, ... / on / on / one / other / the / the) _____ – used for giving two different opinions about something
4. (issues / many / raise) _____ – a topic of discussion that creates others

b. Write personalised sentences for each of the phrases on task A. Share with a classmate.

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 fake? How and why?
- Do you think CGI kisses will become more popular in films and TV shows? Why (not)?

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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.