

## 'It made him an A-lister': John Ford's breakthrough film *The Iron Horse* at 100

### Level 2: Intermediate

**Article summary:** The article describes the film career of the director John Ford on the centenary of his silent classic, *The Iron Horse*.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Vocabulary

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the general topic of films. It focuses on six of the best-known English-language films over the last five decades. (Note that these are US release dates and dates in other countries may vary.)

**Key:**

1. e, 2. f, 3. d, 4. b, 5. c, 6. a

#### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The term *star-crossed lovers* was first used by Shakespeare to describe Romeo and Juliet.

**Key:**

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>genre</i>        | 7. <i>ambush</i>   |
| 2. <i>takings</i>      | 8. <i>vicious</i>  |
| 3. <i>storyline</i>    | 9. <i>pass</i>     |
| 4. <i>trace</i>        | 10. <i>crooked</i> |
| 5. <i>star-crossed</i> | 11. <i>mourn</i>   |
| 6. <i>spike</i>        | 12. <i>adore</i>   |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in context.

**Key:**

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>vicious</i>      | 4. <i>lauded</i>       |
| 2. <i>star-crossed</i> | 5. <i>inextricably</i> |
| 3. <i>arduous</i>      | 6. <i>clout</i>        |

#### 3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested answers, and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 1, they may say, 'He won them for some of his other films' or similar.

**Key (suggested answers):**

1. *False. Oscars did not exist in 1924.*
2. *True*
3. *False. They were 'star-crossed lovers', meaning they had a lot of bad luck.*
4. *True*
5. *False. He was murdered by Deroux dressed as a Cheyenne Indian (Native American).*
6. *True*
7. *True*
8. *False. He made about 140 films.*

#### 4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Encourage them to do the exercise without looking in the text but to check their answers in the text.

**Key:**

1. d, 2. f, 3. a, 4. e, 5. c, 6. b

- b. Give students a few minutes to use some of the expressions from task A to complete the sentences.

**Key:**

1. *over budget*
2. *old master*
3. *feature film*
4. *freezing cold*
5. *childhood memories*

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions and statements and provide reasons for their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

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#### 6. In your own words

a-b. This task could be done as a homework assignment. Have students do their online research and answer the questions. The following class, save some time for students to give their presentations. If you have a large class, students can present in pairs or small groups.