

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

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-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.

Key:

1. epic	6. transcontinental
2. genre	7. pass
3. harsh	8. ambush
4. location	9. vicious
5. A-lister	10. adore

- 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. vicious
2. A-lister
3. harsh
4. transcontinental
5. ambush

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to work individually to answer the questions and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The answers given are just examples. Students may say something different that is correct. For example, in item 4 they may say 'on location in Nevada', or similar.

Key (suggested answers):

1. six
2. none of them
3. two and a half hours
4. Nevada
5. 30
6. to find a pass for the railroad
7. Deroux
8. the old west
9. 1973
10. about 140

4. Key language

- a. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs. Then ask them to check their answers in the text.

Key:

1. with
2. on
3. at
4. of
5. for

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

Key:

1. on location
2. at the age of
3. a lot of influence
4. an award for
5. combine with

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the 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.