

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

Level 3: Advanced

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 (collocations)

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 word *laud* is usually only used today in journalism to describe achievements that are praised. A *pass* is normally a place where the route between two mountains leads to the other side. The term *star-crossed lovers* was first used by Shakespeare to describe Romeo and Juliet. The adverb *inextricably* is most often used with the verb *link*, as in 'The name Gandhi will always be inextricably linked to the independence movement in India.'

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>lauded</i> | 7. <i>spike</i> |
| 2. <i>citation</i> | 8. <i>pass</i> |
| 3. <i>genre</i> | 9. <i>vicious</i> |
| 4. <i>clout</i> | 10. <i>plot</i> |
| 5. <i>arduous</i> | 11. <i>manipulate</i> |
| 6. <i>star-crossed</i> | 12. <i>inextricably</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 other contexts.

Key:

1. *vicious*
2. *star-crossed*
3. *arduous*
4. *lauded*
5. *inextricably*
6. *clout*

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 9 they may say 'the old west' or 'the scenery of the west' or similar.

Key (suggested answers):

1. *Jack Ford*
2. *six*
3. *none of them*
4. *two and a half hours*
5. *the construction of the American transcontinental railway*
6. *the final spike being hammered in, and the two lovers embracing*
7. *Deroux*
8. *Union Pacific*
9. *the landscape of the old west*
10. *because westerns were no longer popular*

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs.

Key:

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

- b. Give students a few minutes to write personalised sentences using the collocations from task A. Elicit examples for each of the phrases and check for accuracy.

Key:

Students' own answers

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5. Discussion

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

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.