

King Khan

1 QUICK QUIZ

Test your knowledge of the movies. Write the names of:

- a) An American movie star _____
- b) A British movie star _____
- c) An Australian movie star _____
- d) An Indian movie star _____
- e) A movie star from your country _____

Who do you think is the biggest movie star in the world today? _____

Compare your answers in class and then read paragraph 1 of the article.

2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Look at the article to find words that mean the following. The paragraph number will help you find the correct word.

- 1. someone that you look up to and admire very much _____ (paragraph 1)
- 2. very bright and colourful (not necessarily in an attractive way) _____ (paragraph 3)
- 3. cheap and in bad taste _____ (paragraph 3)
- 4. the first time that an actor appears in public or on screen _____ (paragraph 4)
- 5. someone who has been born again after their death as a different person _____ (paragraph 4)
- 6. the first public performance of a film _____ (paragraph 4)
- 7. when a film or song has its soundtrack replaced with one of a different language or using a different voice _____ (paragraph 5)
- 8. a type of company that makes films _____ (paragraph 7)
- 9. the freedom to do things without other people watching you _____ (paragraph 8)
- 10. is a sign or symbol of something _____ (paragraph 10)

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KING KHAN

by Irene Ridgeway

1 Do you know who the biggest movie star today is? Johnny Depp? Brad Pitt? No! His name is Shah Rukh Khan and he's not from Hollywood – he's the king of Bollywood! Shah Rukh has been in 60 films in the past 16 years. And although he's 43 years old, he's still a teen idol and the best-known movie star in the world.

2 But what is Bollywood? Bollywood is India's huge film industry in the city of Mumbai, on the western coast. The name *Bollywood* comes from Bombay – the old English name for Mumbai – and Hollywood. Every year, 900 films are made in India and 3.2 billion people watch them. Only 2.5 billion people watch Hollywood movies. "Cinema in India is like brushing your teeth in the morning," says Shah Rukh. "You can't escape it."

3 Shah Rukh, from Delhi, hadn't always wanted to become an actor. "For me, Indian films were loud and garish, quite tacky," he says. But after moving to Mumbai, Shah Rukh thought he could be a star – and he was right!

4 For his first film, *Deewana*, in 1992, Shah Rukh won the Indian Filmfare Best Male Debut Award. And he's been winning awards ever since. At the Berlinale film festival in February 2008, more than 20,000 fans saw Shah Rukh present his new film, *Om Shanti Om*, about the reincarnation of a Bollywood actor. The premiere sold out in less than seven minutes, and some people paid 500 euros for tickets.

5 To tell a story, Bollywood films use music, dance and the most poetic words from languages spoken in India – Hindi, Urdu and English. But English is becoming more popular because of Bollywood's success in Europe and America. Usually, Indian films also mix action, comedy and romance. Shah Rukh doesn't sing in his movies – his songs are dubbed. But he does do his own dancing. And he likes to play different roles – sometimes the good guy, sometimes the bad guy.

6 Shah Rukh says dream-like Bollywood films are more believable than "saving the world" stories from Hollywood. "I find our films the most realistic in the world. If England became world champions in football, you would see English people singing and dancing."

7 Acting in films like *Om Shanti Om* has helped make Shah Rukh world famous – and he wants the same thing to happen for the rest of Bollywood. That's why he started the production companies Dreamz Unlimited and Red Chillies Entertainment. "I want Indian films to be famous all over the world," he says.

8 Shah Rukh is different to many Hollywood actors – he loves the spotlight and he isn't worried about photographers. "I'm

proud that I am a movie star and have no privacy," he says. "Why would I want to be a star who no one knows?"

Here comes Bollywood

Bollywood films don't usually include helicopter chases or sex scenes. They are known for dramatic acting, brilliant colours and dancing that helps tell the story. Bollywood has become so popular around the world that you don't have to be in India to be in a Bollywood film. London has its own Bollywood acting school. Students learn from successful Indian actors and get the chance to act in Bollywood films that are made in Britain.

Om Shanti Om

"Om" is written here in Sanskrit, which is one of the oldest written languages.

Meditation and prayer in



many religions in India often begin and end with "om" – which represents the whole world and everything in it. "Shanti" is also a symbol and means "peace". So "om shanti om" is like a prayer for peace.

Shah Rukh's films

- *Om Shanti Om* (2007)
- *The Inner World and The Outer World of Shah Rukh Khan* (2005, documentaries about Shah Rukh)
- *Main Hoon Naa* (2004)
- *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003)
- *Devdas* (2002)
- *Dil Se* (1998)
- *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998)

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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

Choose the correct answer according to the information in the article.

1. Shah Rukh Khan has made ...
 - a) ... 43 films.
 - b) ... over 60 films.
 - c) ... less than 16 films.
2. The word Bollywood comes from ...
 - a) ... a forest on the west coast of India.
 - b) ... the Indian word for Hollywood.
 - c) ... the old English word for Mumbai plus Hollywood.
3. Bollywood films are ...
 - a) ... more popular than Hollywood films.
 - b) ... less popular than Hollywood films.
 - c) ... more expensive than Hollywood films.
4. Bollywood films contain a mixture of ...
 - a) ... music, dance and poetic words.
 - b) ... action, comedy and romance.
 - c) ... all of the above.
5. In his films, Shah Rukh Khan ...
 - a) ... dances but doesn't sing.
 - b) ... sings but doesn't dance.
 - c) ... always plays the hero.
6. Shah Rukh Khan says that ...
 - a) ... English people should dance more.
 - b) ... he doesn't like being famous.
 - c) ... Bollywood films are realistic.

4 TEEN TALK

Tacky. Shah Rukh Khan uses the slang word *tacky* to describe the way Indian films were in the past: cheap and in bad taste.

- a) What could you describe as being tacky? Give an example (think of jewellery, clothes, shoes, shops, toys, etc.).

- b) Complete this sentence: *I'm glad I didn't get _____ for Christmas / my birthday; it is / they are so tacky!*

5 DISCUSSION

Discuss these questions in groups and then give feedback to the class.

- How are Bollywood films different from films made in the USA or in your country?
- Which style of film do you prefer?
- Have you ever seen a Bollywood movie?
- What was the last film you saw at a cinema? What was it about? Did you enjoy it?

6 WEBQUEST

Make a poster that provides a short biography of Shah Rukh Kahn.

First write down questions you want to answer (e.g. *When was he born?*). Then go online to find the information.

There are many websites about Shah Rukh Kahn and Bollywood; here are just a few that may help you.

- www.shahrukhkhan.org
- www.facebook.com/IamSRK
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahrukh_Khan

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KEY

2

1. idol
2. garish
3. tacky
4. debut
5. reincarnation
6. premiere
7. dubbed
8. production
9. privacy
10. represents

3

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. c
5. a
6. c