

# Language for ...

## film and TV

**Age:** Adult



**Level:** Upper intermediate

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

**Language focus:** talking about film and TV

**Skills:** reading, speaking

**Materials:** audio + worksheet exercises, internet access preferable

**Aims:** to provide students with language to discuss film and TV viewing

### What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red, and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases.

- 1 As preparation for the lesson, ask students to find and read a review of a recently released film or television programme, note down five adjectives used to describe it, and check their meanings in the Macmillan Dictionary. Are the adjectives positive or negative?



**Teaching Tip:** If students have computer access, they could be invited to note their findings in a word cloud platform (e.g. <https://answergarden.ch/>), which could be displayed and informally looked at as the class begins.

- 2 Make a copy of the worksheet for each student.
- 3 The warmer looks at adjectives used in descriptions of films and TV programmes, some of which students will have hopefully come across in

preparation for the lesson. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the activity, reminding them to think back to how writers described what they did or didn't like in the reviews they read. Check the answers as a class, exploring meanings in the Macmillan Dictionary as necessary. You might want to explain that *predictable* is a 'thumbs-down' because it describes plots/storylines that develop exactly as expected and so are less interesting or exciting. Point out that not all adjectives in this context are necessarily positive or negative – words like *scary*, *shocking*, *harrowing*, *creepy*, etc can have varying interpretations depending on the viewer's perspective.

- 4 Tell students that they're now going to listen to four speakers talking about different TV programmes and films they have recently watched. Tell them to listen out for the adjectives in the box and think about whether or not the speakers are saying that they enjoyed the TV programme or film. Check answers as a class, explaining meanings if necessary. Can students add any other adjectives to the table?
- 5 Give students a couple of minutes to read through the questions in exercise 2b. Explain that the answers can be heard in order as they listen. Play the audio and give them time to note down their answers, then play it a final time so they can check. Check the answers as a class. Ask students if they know what is meant by the words *bingewatch* (= watching several episodes of a TV series one after the other) and *cliffhanger* (= an exciting end to a TV programme that makes you want to watch the next part).
- 6 Ask students to carefully read the sentences in exercise 3a and complete the exercise. Encourage them to first complete any answers they immediately know so that they can be eliminated. Check the answers as a class.

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- 7** Exercise 3b focuses on TV programme genres. Ask the students to work in pairs, encouraging them to look up options A–C in the Macmillan Dictionary if they need extra support. Check the answers as a class, inviting different students to read each of the descriptions aloud. Point out some of the language used, i.e. *series*, *episode*, *be set in* (a time or place), *play* (= have a particular part), *give it a go* (= try it), *wish I hadn't bothered* (= wish I hadn't watched). Note also that if people really like a TV programme, in English they often say that they *love* it. If time permits, have a brief discussion – which, if any, of these sorts of programmes do students regularly watch? Have they ever watched programmes like these on British (or US/ Australian) TV?

 **Teaching Tip:** As an extension activity, ask students to say a few sentences describing a TV programme they regularly watch, on the model of the examples in the exercise. The other students then have to guess what the genre is.

- 8** Exercise 3c focuses on the questions you might ask someone about a film they've seen (with the exception of c., the questions could also be used to ask about a TV programme). Tell students to complete the exercise, looking carefully at Jan's answers. You may wish to explain that *come out* and *be released* have the same meaning in this context (= become available to watch). Check the answers as a class.

 **Teaching Tip:** Further useful vocabulary on the theme of films can be found at: [www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/language-tip-of-the-week-films](http://www.macmillandictionaryblog.com/language-tip-of-the-week-films)

- 9** Divide students into pairs for exercise 4. Tell them to spend a few minutes noting down ideas and to then take it in turns to ask about or describe a

film or TV programme. Remind students to look at the language in earlier exercise material to help them, as well as the suggestions in the boxes.

- 10** As a wind-up discussion, ask students how they watch films or TV programmes. Do they go to the cinema? Do they watch TV programmes as they're broadcast, or do they record them? Do they use web-based platforms like Netflix? Are they ever tempted to 'binge-watch' like the speakers in the audio? Then focus their attention on the discussion questions and conduct a whole class discussion.

 **Teaching Tip:** Further reading on 'binge-watching' (aka 'chainwatching') can be found at: [www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/chainwatch.html](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/chainwatch.html)

### Answer key:

- 1** 'thumbs up' : action-packed, compelling, entertaining, feel-good, hilarious, moving, realistic, thought-provoking  
 'thumbs down' : boring, depressing, disappointing, predictable
- 2a** 'thumbs up' : compulsive, gripping, heartwarming  
 'thumbs down' : repetitive, slow-moving, tedious
- 2b** 1. c 2. a 3. b 4. b 5. c 6. a
- 3a** 1. f 2. g 3. b 4. c 5. h 6. d  
 7. e 8. a
- 3b** 1. A 2. C 3. A 4. B 5. C
- 3c** 1. c. When did it come out?  
 2. e. What kind of film is it?  
 3. a. What's it about?  
 4. f. Where is it set?  
 5. b. Who's in it?  
 6. d. Would you recommend it?
- 4, 5** students' own answers

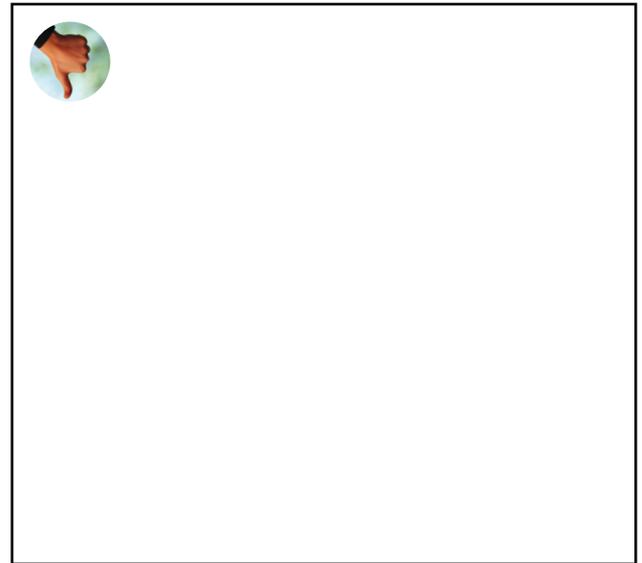
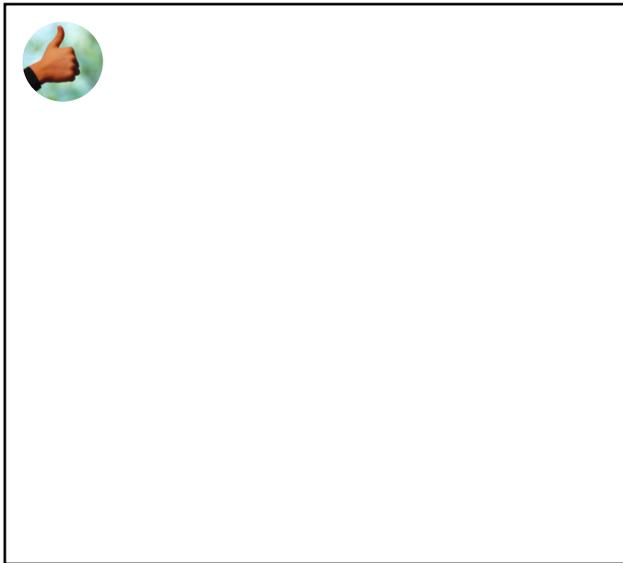
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### 1 Warmer

The adjectives in the box are often used to describe films and TV programmes. Put them in the correct column of the table.

action-packed	boring	compelling	depressing	disappointing	entertaining
feel-good	hilarious	moving	realistic	predictable	thought-provoking



### 2 Audio

- a.  You're going to listen to four people talking about some TV programmes and films they have recently watched. Look at some more adjectives below. Listen to the speakers and decide where in the table in exercise 1 the adjectives should go.



compulsive	tedious	heartwarming	repetitive	slow-moving	gripping
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- b.  Listen to the speakers again and choose the correct answer to the questions.
- What do you think speaker 1 means when he says that the show *Dexter* 'kept me on the edge of my seat ...'?
    - The show was terrible, but he continued watching.
    - The show was funny, and he couldn't stop laughing.
    - The show was exciting, and he wanted to keep watching.

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2. What did speaker 2 do before she watched the TV series *Line of Duty*?
  - a. She watched an earlier series.
  - b. She watched a programme about the police.
  - c. She watched the end of every episode.
3. What's the correct description of the programmes *Made in Chelsea*, *Terrace House* and *Big Brother*?
  - a. gossip TV
  - b. reality TV
  - c. chat TV
4. What happens in the show *Terrace House*?
  - a. A group of people live in the same house and work together.
  - b. A group of people live in the same house and work in different places.
  - c. A group of people live in the same house and don't go to work.
5. Why didn't speaker 3 like the film *Batman v Superman*?
  - a. He didn't like the way the film looked.
  - b. He didn't like the story.
  - c. He didn't like the way the film looked or the story.
6. Why did speaker 4 particularly enjoy watching *Planet Earth II*?
  - a. Because he lives in the city and doesn't often see animals.
  - b. Because it reminded him of when he was a child.
  - c. Because he could watch the entire series in one day.

### 3 Language in use

**a. Read the sentences. Look at the words in bold and match them with their meanings a-h.**

1. The **soundtrack** to the film is being released by Peach Records.
2. It's got a complicated **plot** so you have to watch pretty carefully.
3. The **scene** where he died was incredibly moving – it made me cry!
4. The first film was really successful so it's not surprising that they've made a **sequel**.
5. There are some great **special effects**, particularly the bit where she lands on Mars.
6. I fell asleep in the last five minutes – did it have a happy **ending**?
7. The main **character** is Eve, a young scientist who's made an important discovery.
8. The film has an all-star **cast** including Dustin Hoffman and Robert De Niro.

- a. all the actors in a film, play, etc
- b. a part of a film or play in which events happen in one place for a period of time
- c. a film, play, etc that continues the story of an earlier one
- d. the way in which a story, film or play ends
- e. a person in a film, play, etc
- f. the music that's played during a film or television programme
- g. a series of related events that make up the main story in a film, play, etc
- h. an unusual image or sound in a film, created artificially using various technical methods

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**b. What kind of TV programme are these people describing? Read what they say and choose the best option A, B or C.**

1. 'Oh, I have to sit down with a cup of tea and catch up on *Behind Closed Doors* every week; I absolutely love it. It was really good on Monday – Becca has just told her parents that she's moving to Australia, and Dan has quit his job at the mobile phone company ...'  
A: soap    B: chat show    C: period drama
2. 'Yeah, I watched it last Saturday. Those two young boys who sang were brilliant – their voices sounded like classically-trained opera singers! The audience loved them. I'm not surprised they won.'  
A: reality TV    B: quiz show    C: talent show
3. 'Have you seen that new series *Brain Ache*? It's set in a waiting room at a doctor's surgery. The actor who plays the receptionist is so funny, and different characters come in and talk to each other about their families and illnesses – it's absolutely hilarious, I'd really recommend it.'  
A: sitcom    B: documentary    C: reality TV
4. 'I'm not normally interested in anything set in the 1800s, but Jeanne wanted to watch it so I decided to give it a go. I wish I hadn't bothered though – Ralph Gates puts in a good performance as Lord Harvey, and the costumes are beautiful, but it's terribly slow-moving. I don't think I'll be watching the next episode.'  
A: documentary    B: period drama    C: soap
5. 'Ah yes, it was a really fascinating programme. University researchers did this investigation into how diet affects sleep. Apparently, there's convincing scientific evidence that the more healthily you eat, the better you sleep.'  
A: game show    B: reality TV    C: documentary

**c. Mia is asking Jane about a film she has seen. Complete the dialogue with the missing questions a-f below.**

Jane: I went to see *Starting Afresh* on Friday night.

Mia: Oh, really – (1) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Jane: It was released a couple of weeks ago I think.

Mia: Remind me, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Jane: It's a romantic comedy.

Mia: Ah yes, that's right, so (3) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Jane: It tells the story of an American couple who decide to start a new life in Delhi.

Mia: (4) \_\_\_\_\_ ? In India?



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Jane: Mainly, though a couple of scenes are in New York.

Mia: (5) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Jane: Kelly Richards and Jake James – you know, the guy who was in *Love Me Don't*.

Mia: Ooh yes, I like him. It sounds great – (6) \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Jane: Definitely – it's one of the best films I've seen in ages!

- What's it about?
- Who's in it?
- When did it come out?
- Would you recommend it?
- What kind of film is it?
- Where is it set?

### 4 Communicate

Divide into pairs. Tell your partner about a film or TV programme you've seen recently. Your partner should ask questions about it. Then swap roles. Try to use some language from the exercises above and/or the suggestions in the boxes below.

It's about ...	It's a(n) fantastic/feel-good/action-packed ...
It stars ...	It was a bit slow/disappointing ...
It's set in ...	It's a really thought-provoking/inspiring ...
The main character is ...	The special effects weren't that good/were great.
It's based on ...	It's very watchable.
It came out on ...	I loved the scene/part/episode where ...

When's it on?	How many episodes are there?
When was it released?	What's the acting/plot/script like?
Who directed it?	Has it got (a) good special effects/cast?

### 5 Discuss

- How has the internet changed the way we watch films and TV programmes?
- Do you think cinemas will eventually disappear?



### Red Words

character \*\*\* drama \*\*\* ending \*\* episode\*\* film\*\*\*  
plot \*\* programme \*\*\* scene \*\*\* series \*\*\* show \*\*\*