

12 English Phrases For Describing Movies

“I HAVE CLASS TONIGHT, SO LET’S GO TO A MATINÉE INSTEAD.”

A matinée is a showing of a movie in the daytime – usually in the afternoon. Matinéés are often cheaper than shows at night.

“WHAT’S IT RATED?”

Many countries have a system for rating movies – evaluating how appropriate the movie is for various ages. This is the movie rating system in the United States:

G – General Audience = Appropriate for all ages

PG – Parental Guidance Suggested = May contain some mild violence and implied sexual activity

PG13 – Parents Strongly Cautioned = Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13 years old (moderate violence, strong language, sexual situations)

R – Restricted = Kids under 17 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, because the film has strong violence, sex, drug use, and/or very crude language.

NC-17 – Adults only = Extremely explicit violence or sex, extreme horror, etc.

“THE FIRST MOVIE WAS A HIT, BUT THE SEQUEL BOMBED.”

Describing a movie is a “hit” means it’s popular and successful. A sequel is another movie that continues the story or theme of a previous movie – for example, Toy Story 2 is the sequel to Toy Story. If you say a movie “bombed,” it means it was a failure; it was not popular or successful.

“I WAS ON THE EDGE OF MY SEAT THE WHOLE TIME!”

This is an idiomatic expression that means the movie was very interesting and exciting; you were so involved with the movie that you sat on the edge (the front part) of your seat to get closer to the action.

“THE SPECIAL EFFECTS WERE BREATHTAKING, BUT THE ACTING LEFT SOMETHING TO BE DESIRED.”

Special effects are the effects created by computers, and acting is the performance of the actors and actresses. If you say something is breathtaking, it means it was amazing and incredible. The expression “left something to be desired” means it was not very good; you wish it had been better.

“HAVE YOU SEEN THE TRAILER FOR THE FINAL PART OF THE TRILOGY?”

A trailer is a 2-3 minute video summary of a movie, showing a few scenes that will interest people in seeing the entire movie. A trilogy is a series of 3 movies (like Lord of the Rings).

“I HAVE A HARD TIME UNDERSTANDING THE DIALOGUE WITHOUT SUBTITLES.”

“I have a hard time” is a common way to say “I have difficulty” in everyday spoken English. Subtitles are the written words on the bottom of the screen.

“ALTHOUGH THE PREMISE WAS INTRIGUING, THE PLOT WAS COMPLEX AND A LITTLE HARD TO FOLLOW.”

The premise is the idea or concept of the movie, and intriguing is a word that means interesting, something that gets your attention. The plot is the story of a movie or book, and if it was “hard to follow” it means it was difficult to understand or confusing as you were watching the movie.

“THE COMPLETELY IMPLAUSIBLE TWIST AT THE END RUINED IT.”

A twist is an unexpected turn of events. If you describe it as implausible, it means it was too unlikely, not probable, too difficult to believe that it could really happen in that way. The word ruined means made it bad.

“IT’S THE FEEL-GOOD MOVIE OF THE YEAR – I FOUND IT VERY TOUCHING.”

A “feel-good” movie is one that makes you feel good, obviously! The word touching means that it affected you emotionally in a good way. Another word you can use is heartwarming – it made your heart feel positive emotions.

“MY BOYFRIEND THOUGHT IT WAS HILARIOUS, BUT I THOUGHT THEY WENT A LITTLE OVERBOARD WITH THE POTTY HUMOR.”

The word hilarious means extremely funny. “Potty humor” (also called “toilet humor” or “off-color humor”) is humor that is rather gross or disgusting because it involves sex or bodily functions. The expression “went a little overboard” means “there was a little too much.”

“TO BE HONEST, I LIKED THE REMAKE BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL – THE CAST WAS MUCH STRONGER.”

You can start a phrase with “to be honest” when you want to give your honest opinion. Sometimes filmmakers take a movie from the past and re-create it – the new version is called a remake. The word cast refers to all the actors and actresses who participated in the movie.