

Hello everyone!

Today our topic for conversation is: Talking in English about movies and TV shows.

A common topic of everyday conversation in American culture is talking about movies and TV shows. Let's get some tips and practice for participating in these conversations.

Activities:

1. Large Group - Review common dialogue methods for talking about movies and TV shows in English
2. Small Group – practice dialogue method with a partner
3. Large Group: Wrap-up, questions and comments



Talking in English About Movies and TV shows

If someone asks you, OR, you ask someone:

- Have you seen any good movies lately?
- Have you seen the new “name of movie” yet?
- Do you have any recommendations for a good binge-worthy TV show?
- Are you going to see “name of movie” ?
- What’s your favorite movie?



What is the expected response?

What is the expected response?

1. Your opinion
2. Identify the type (genre) of movie
3. Give a brief plot summary
4. Describe the main characters/actors
5. Do you recommend the movie?



1. Your Opinion. . .

Did you like the movie or TV show?

Did you not like the movie or TV show?

Did you have neutral feelings?



Sample responses:

It was great

I loved it

It was awesome

It was awful

I hated it

It was ok, but nothing special

2. Identify the type of movie ("genre")

Often we start by saying what type of movie it was –the "genre"

Sample Responses:

It's a comedy

It's a drama

It's a musical

It's a sci fi but also a comedy

It's a horror movie

It's a sit com

It's a reality show



3. Plot Summary and Setting



- What was the movie about?
- Share the plot and the setting (briefly, in a few sentences)

Sample response:

Plot: I watched the Steven Spielberg remake of the musical “West Side Story.” It’s about a young woman and man who are from different ethnicities who fall in love against the wishes of their families. She is an immigrant from Puerto Rico and he is from a white working class family.

Setting: It’s set in 1950’s New York City.

Plot = main idea

Setting = where and when

4. Describe the main characters

Who are the people in the movie –the characters and the actors playing them.

Sample responses:

- The main characters are a young woman named Maria, played by an actress I have never heard of. The young man is named Tony, played by Ansel Elgort who I have seen in other movies and I really like.
- Maria is a starry-eyed teenage girl newly arrived from Puerto Rico to join her family in New York. Tony is a working class guy who is trying to leave a life of New York street gangs.
- The movie also stars Rita Moreno as the drug store owner. She was amazing. Still singing and dancing at 90 years old!



Main Characters



Supporting Characters

5. Would you recommend the movie or TV show?

Sample responses:

Yes! I loved it. It was very romantic and a real tearjerker.

No, I thought it was dull. The main characters had no chemistry.

Yes, It was very exciting and had an amazing twist ending.

It was better than I expected. I think you might enjoy it.

It was ok, but nothing special. I would skip it if I were you.



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When talking about a movie or TV show
Don't Tell the Ending!



Unless you ask if it is ok to tell the ending.

Breakout Room Conversation

Ask each other one of these questions:

- Have you seen any movies or TV shows lately?
- Can you recommend a good movie or TV show?
- What is your favorite movie or TV show?

Follow the dialogue script

1. Give your opinion
2. Identify the type (genre) of movie
3. Give a brief plot summary
4. Describe the main characters/actors
5. Do you recommend the movie?



Here is a list of some English vocabulary and phrases commonly used in conversations discussing movies and TV shows. Thanks to our classmate Julie who helped compile this extensive list!

English Phrases to describe and talk about movies 🎬

😊 **Discussing the actors and actresses in the movie:**

- Who is in it?(Who are the actors in the movie?)
- What is her role in the movie?
- How was she in the movie?
- Did she do a good job in the movie?

😊 **We also need to ask other questions about the movie.**

- Where does the movie take place? (What is the setting of the movie?)
- When does the movie take place?(When does the story happen?)
- What is the story about?
- Is it a true story?

😊 **Asking questions about new movies.**

- When does it come out?
- When will it be in theaters?
- When will the movie be released?
- Has it gotten good reviews?
- What are people saying about it?

😊 **Asking for recommendations or about current movies**

- Are there any good movies out right now?
- Is there anything good showing at the theater today?
- Can you recommend a good horror movie for me?
- Do you know any good romantic movies?
- What action movie should I watch?

 **To describe movies:**

- It is too violent. / It is very bloody. / It had a lot of fight scenes.
- It is not appropriate for children. / It is rated R.
- It was scary. / It was terrifying.
- It was very romantic. / It is a fantastic movie. / It is a great story. / It was moving
- It is a sad movie. / I couldn't stop crying. / It had many moving scenes.
- It is very interesting. / It was full of laughs. / It had a lot of dirty jokes.
- I think that it is the funniest movie I have seen in a long time. / I couldn't stop laughing. / It is constantly entertaining.
- I thought that it was confusing. / It was hard to follow.
- It was over 3 hours long. / It was boring. / It was only an hour and a half.

“The first movie was a hit but the sequel bombed.”: Describing a movie “a hit” means it’s popular and successful, and “bombed” means it was a failure. It was not popular or successful. A sequel is another movie that continues the story or theme of a previous movie.

“I was on the edge of my seat the whole time”: This idiomatic expression 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.

“My friend thought it was hilarious, but I thought they went a little overboard with the potty humor.”:
“**Potty humor**” (“toilet humor” or “off-color humor”) is humor that is rather gross or disgusting because it involves 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.”

Popcorn movies: one that you watch almost purely for entertainment.

While there are movies that will make you think and give you a new perspective on life, **popcorn movies** will not - nor are they made for that.

Live up to the hype: People think something will be good, and then they experience it to see if it was as good as they expected. If some show, movie, or music album is to **live up to the hype**, it has to be as good as people hope it will be.

Live up to: fulfill expectations / match up to / satisfy
His latest movie didn't **live (match) up to** fans' expectations.

Epic film: a style of movie with large-scale, sweeping scope, and spectacle.
The movie “Star Wars” is an example of modern-epic movies.

Exceed expectations: to be much bigger or better than expected / to be very good and impressive

Jump the shark: (of a television series or movie) reach a point where something stops becoming more popular or starts to decrease in quality. "The show *jumped the shark* a few years ago".

To steal the show: attract the most attention and praise / to be the most popular or the best part of an event or situation. "The child with the dog *stole the show*."

"The special effects were breathtaking, but the acting left something to be desired.": 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 and you wish it had been better.

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

“I have a hard time understanding the dialogue without subtitles.”

“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 “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. Another word for **“touching”** is **“heartwarming.”**

Vocabulary for describing movies:

Scene-stealer: an actor who outshines the rest of the cast, especially unexpectedly

Raise the stakes in movie(film): conflict. The more conflict a movie has and the more characters have to lose as a result of that conflict, the more the **stakes are raised**. And the more stakes are raised, the more invested audiences will be in the movie.

Over the top: to an excessive or exaggerated degree

Tone shifts (shifts in tone / tonal shifts): Within a story, there are shifts in tone as the story progresses. These tone shifts are what makes the story exciting, taking the audience (readers) through a wide range of emotions. This film *shifts its tone* too drastically.

Catch (someone) off guard: take (or be taken) by surprise
The twist of this movie caught me off guard.

Tearjerker: a sentimental story, movie, or song, calculated to evoke sadness or sympathy
I think the movie, "the Notebook," is one of the classic *tearjerker* movies.

Jumpscare: the sudden appearance of a shocking image, often accompanied by a burst of loud music
His sudden appearance in the movie was a *jumpscare* to me.

Vocabulary for describing movies:

Lame: bad, generally displeasing

The movie was ***lame***.

Sinister: giving the impression that something harmful or evil is happening or will happen / menacing / threatening / ominous / frightening

He stood staring vacantly at the dark and ***sinister*** picture

- For Positive:

first-rate / insightful / clever / charming / comical / charismatic / enjoyable / original / hilarious / absorbing / sensitive / intriguing / powerful / fascinating / pleasant / surprising / dazzling / thought provoking / imaginative / legendary

- For Negative:

second-rate / **third-rate** / violent / brutal / moronic / distasteful / disgusting / senseless / flawed / juvenile / boring / dreadful / ordinary / disgusting / senseless / static / confused / disappointing / bloody / silly / predictable / stupid / uninteresting / weak / incredibly tiresome / trite / uneven / cliché ridden / outdated / dreadful / bland

- For Neutral (?):

suspenseful / low-budget / big-budget / dramatic / highly-charged / spectacular / sentimental / fantasy / slow / fast-moving / romantic / satirical / wacky / epic