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COMPELLING CONVERSATIONS

Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics

AN ENGAGING ESL TEXTBOOK FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS

Written, Compiled, and Edited by
Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson

Compelling Conversations:
Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics
An Engaging ESL Textbook for Advanced Students
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TALKING ABOUT MOVIES

CHATTING

You can also start a conversation by asking for movie suggestions. Talk with your partner, and share your movie experiences.

1. Do you like movies? Where do you usually see movies?
2. How often do you watch movies? At home? In theatres?
3. Where do you find movies to watch at home? Library? Cable? Blockbuster? Netflix?
4. Do you have cable television? Do you use on-demand features?
5. Do you own any movies? Which? Do you repeatedly watch them?
6. Have you figured out a way to see movies for free? How?
7. Can you compare movie houses in your homeland with theatres in the United States?
8. What might annoy you at a movie theatre? Using phones? Babies crying? Other?
9. Do you have a favorite movie theatre? A preferred place to sit?
10. Have you ever seen a celebrity or famous person? Where? Tell us about it
11. What movies have been blockbusters here? In your native country?
12. Can you think of some tourist sights related to the movie industry?
13. What movies have you seen that took place in Los Angeles? New York? Chicago?
14. Have you ever seen movies being filmed? Where? What was the atmosphere?
15. Have you ever acted in a play or movie? Can you describe your experience?

“Talking about dreams is like talking about movies, since the cinema uses the language of dreams; years pass in a second and you can hop from one place to another.”

Federico Fellini (1920–1993),
Italian film director

GENRES

- Adventure
- Animation
- Biography
- Comedy
- Detective
- Documentary
- Drama
- Fantasy
- Film Noir
- Foreign
- Historical
- Horror
- Musical
- Mystery
- Propaganda
- Romantic
- Science Fiction
- Silent
- War
- Western

VOCABULARY

With your partner, write definitions for five vocabulary words.

- blockbuster.....
- famous.....
- popular.....
- adapt
- word of mouth
- cast
- crush.....
- celebrity
- director.....
- genre
- film noir
- animation.....

MOVIE GENRES

1. Which types (genres) of movies do you enjoy most? Why?
2. Can you think of an example of a good movie in five different categories?
3. Can you think of an example of a bad movie in three categories?
4. What makes your favorite films special or memorable?
5. Name a few movies that you disliked. Why did you dislike them?
6. Can you think of some books that have been adapted into movies? Did the adaptations work?
7. Did you have a favorite movie as a child? Teenager?
8. Did you have a favorite star as a child or teenager? Who? Why?
9. Do you know anybody who had a “crush” on a famous actor or actress?
10. Have you ever seen a movie several times? Which? Why?
11. Do you have any favorite actors now? Why? Did they move you in any role?
12. What actors, actresses, or directors would you like to lunch with?
13. Do you have any favorite directors? Why? Which of that director’s films touched you?
14. How do you decide which movie to see? Word of mouth? Ads? Awards? Reviews?
15. Which movies would you suggest a tourist to your country watch? Why?
16. What movies have you seen this year? Which do you recommend?
17. Do you think movies influence society or reflect society? How?

QUOTATIONS

Circle four quotes that appeal to you. Discuss your choices.

1. “Movies are a fad. Audiences really want to see live actors on a stage.”
—Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977), British comedian and actor
2. “You know what your problem is? It’s that you haven’t seen enough movies—all of life’s riddles are answered in the movies.”
—Steve Martin (1945–), comedian
3. “I think nudity on screen is disgusting, shameful, and unpatriotic. But if I were twenty-two, with a great body, it would be artistic, tasteful, patriotic, and a progressive, religious experience.”
—Shelly Winters (1920–2006), actress
4. “Watch this if you like, and if you don’t, take a hike.”
—Clint Eastwood (1930–), actor, director, and producer
5. “It’s the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it.”
—Andy Warhol (1928–1987), American artist
6. “We need families to start taking more responsibility in understanding which movie is good for their children and which movie is not.”
—Jet Li (1963–), Chinese actor and martial artist
7. “Movies are fun, but they’re not a cure for cancer.”
—Warren Beatty (1937–), American actor, director, and producer
8. “I did a women’s movie, and I’m not a woman. I did a gay movie, and I’m not gay. I learned as I went along.”
—Ang Lee (1954–), film director born in Taiwan
9. “My movies were the kind they show in prisons and airplanes because nobody can leave.”
—Burt Reynolds (1936–), American actor
10. “Acting is not an important job in the scheme of things. Plumbing is.”
—Spencer Tracy (1900–1967), actor
11. “Maybe every other American movie shouldn’t be based on a comic book.”
—Bill Maher (1956–), American comedian
12. “Life is like a movie, write your own ending. Keep believing, keep pretending.”
—Jim Henson (1936–1990), American creator of the Muppets
13. “The difference between life and the movies is that a script has to make sense, and life doesn’t.”
—Joseph L. Mankiewicz (1909–1993), American screenwriter



ON YOUR OWN

Tell your classmates which movie you think should get a special Oscar for being the best movie ever made.