



AMERICA AT THE MOVIES

■ Oscar® Quiz

■ "... and the Oscar goes to ..."

1. What was the first Hungarian nomination that won an Oscar®?

- A. *Mephisto*
- B. *The Fly*
- C. *Cats' Play*
- D. *Colonel Redl*

2. Which country has had the most Foreign Language Film awards?

- A. Japan
- B. Argentina
- C. Italy
- D. Germany

3. Who was the youngest person ever to receive an Oscar® statuette?

- A. Haley Joel Osment
- B. Shirley Temple
- C. Tatum O'Neal
- D. Elijah Wood

4. Who has won the most Oscars®?

- A. Walt Disney
- B. Peter Jackson
- C. Clint Eastwood
- D. Alfred Hitchcock

5. Which movie received the most nominations in 2006?

- A. *Munich*
- B. *Good Night, And Good Luck*
- C. *Brokeback Mountain*
- D. *King Kong*

What are Oscars® exactly? Also called Academy Awards®, they are handed out annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences® (AMPAS), a professional organization comprised of almost 6,000 artists and craftsmen from the movie industry.

Each year, AMPAS mails the nomination ballots to its members, who vote secretly. Up to 5 nominations are made in most categories, with voting for these nominations restricted to members of the Academy branch concerned: directors, for instance, are the only voters for Achievement in Directing. Best Picture nominations and final winners in most categories are determined by vote of the entire membership.

Votes are counted by a professional firm. After the results of the nomination balloting are publicly revealed, the members mail their votes for the winners in each category. Only two partners of the firm will know the results until the famous envelopes are opened on stage during the Award Presentation.

The famous Oscar® statuette dates from the 1920s. It is a figure of a knight standing on a reel of film, hands gripping a sword. Initially Oscar® was made of gold-plated bronze; today it is gold-plated britannium. The origin of the nickname is not clear. A popular story says that an AMPAS employee thought the statuette resembled her Uncle Oscar. Although the Academy itself did not use the nickname officially until 1939, staff members and media did so much earlier.

Text adapted from the AMPAS web site: <http://www.oscars.org>.

See correct answers to the quiz questions on page 4.

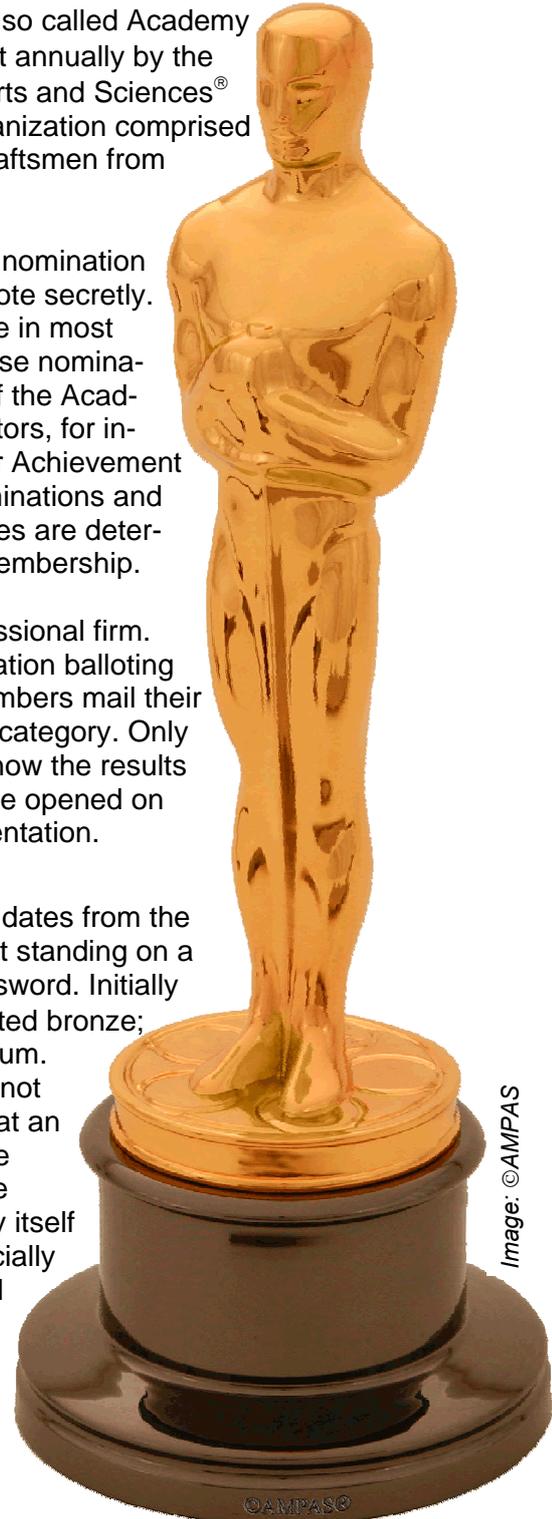


Image: ©AMPAS

■ Movies and Modern America

■ Big Bucks



Over the past 15 years, for every high-tech, stunt-filled *Mission Impossible*, there are serious and thought-provoking American films such as *American Beauty* and *The Hours*, as well as complex and sophisticated movies such as *Traffic*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Magnolia*, and *About Schmidt*. What is therefore remarkable about contemporary American movies is their diversity, their effort to explore the social and psychological dimensions of life, and their ability to combine entertainment with artistry.

Films of the past 15 years also introduced to their audiences a fresh generation of actors. Kevin Spacey, Russell Crowe, Brad Pitt, John Cusack, Matt Damon, Edward Norton, Frances McDormand, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Julianne Moore do not conform to the classic notion of a Hollywood star, but they have given performances as vivid and as distinctive as their predecessors. Unlike the stars of Hollywood's classic era, who always seemed to be playing themselves (Cary Grant, John Wayne, Elizabeth Taylor), contemporary American actors disappear into their roles, playing parts that differ from one movie to the next.

American movies have focused on human relationships and private feelings, not just on problems of a particular time and place. They tell tales about romance (*High Fidelity*), intrigue (*L.A. Confidential*), success and failure (*Chicago*), and moral conflicts (*The Insider*). This approach to filmmaking reflects, in part, the traditional American faith in the importance of the individual.

Text adapted from: *Film: Movies and Modern America* by Richard Pells available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0403/ijse/ijse0403.htm>

American movies are of course not only about art but also about money.

The U.S. motion picture industry produces much of the world's feature films and is dominated by several large studios, based mostly in Hollywood, California.

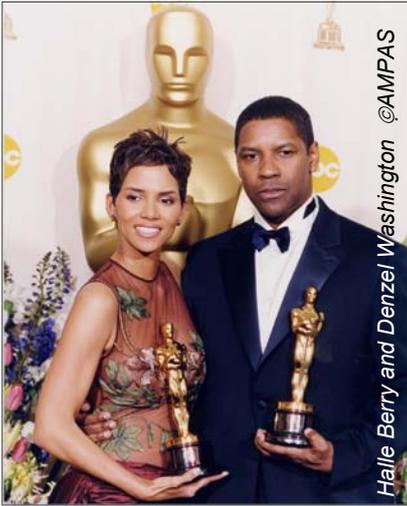
Although thousands of movies are produced each year, only a small number of them account for most box office receipts. Most films do not make a full return on their investment from domestic box office revenues, so filmmakers rely on profits from television and DVD sales and rentals. Major film companies are also receiving a growing portion of their revenue from abroad.

Still, all of the top-ten all-time worldwide box office successes were produced in America. According to the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) *Titanic* sets the record with \$1.8 billion worth of receipts, followed by *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* with \$1.1 billion and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (\$968 million).

Text based in part on Bureau of Labor Statistics information.

Image: Melanie k. (stock.xchng)

February Is African-American History Month



Halle Berry and Denzel Washington ©AMPAS

In 2002 for the first time in the 74-year history of the Academy Awards® ceremonies, a pair of African-Americans captured the Best Actor and Best Actress awards.

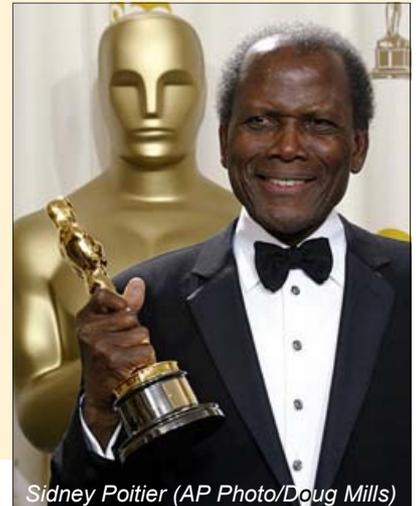
Halle Berry won for her performance in "**Monster's Ball**" and is the first African-American to win the Oscar® for Best Actress.

"Oh, my God," Berry sobbed between words when her name was announced. "This moment is so much bigger than me. This moment is for Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne, Diahann Carroll. ... This is for

every nameless, faceless woman of color who now has a chance because this door has been opened."

Denzel Washington, who previously had won Best Supporting Actor in 1989 for his role in the movie "Glory," won Best Actor for his role as a rogue cop in the movie "**Training Day**." Washington was the second African-American to win the top award.

Sidney Poitier won the Oscar® for Best Actor in 1963 for his role in the movie "**Lilies of the Field**." He was given an Honorary Award in 2002.



Sidney Poitier (AP Photo/Doug Mills)

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE for the creative independent artists

exhibition of their new work. Since its inception in 1981, the Institute has grown into an internationally recognized resource for thousands of independent artists through its Film Festival and artistic development programs for filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, writers, playwrights, and theater artists. Each of the Sundance Institute's programs is guided by the primary aim of supporting artists whose work reflects an original, compelling vision.

The **Sundance/NHK International Film Award** is presented annually to four filmmakers (one each from the U.S., Japan, Latin America, and Europe). The Award provides a range of support to directors as they begin work on their new feature film projects, and helps to assure that the original new work by independent filmmakers reaches its audience. In 2004, writer/director György Pálfi was one of the recipients of the Award for his project *Taxidermia*.

To encourage the exhibition of outstanding new independent films, the Institute sponsors the annual **Sundance Film Festival**, which is held in Park City, Utah, each January. The Festival is now considered the premier showcase for American and international new independent cinema. This year, *Before Down*, a 12-minute film by Bálint Kenyeres, won an award in the Shorts Program category.

Rooted in the recognition of a rich tradition of story telling and artistic expression by Native Americans, the Institute established a **Native American Initiative** as a means of supporting the development of Native filmmakers and the exhibition of their work. The Institute tracks and provides support to 2-4 projects and four producers a year, as well as established the Native Forum at the Sundance Film Festival.



Photo by Park City, UT Chamber & Visitors Bureau

Text adapted from the Sundance Institute web site: <http://www.sundance.org>

Activity Page

Win a Prize!

To win a prize answer this question:

Since when has AMPAS officially used the nickname "Oscar" for the Academy Award?

Send your answer to zoom@usembassy.hu

Please give your name and address.

Deadline:
March 31, 2006

Good Luck!

ZOOM
in on america

Zoom is available online at

<http://www.usembassy.hu/zoom.html>

Please send comments and requests for subscription to:
zoom@usembassy.hu

Regional English Language Office
relomail@usembassy.hu

Information Resource Center
infousa@usembassy.hu

Mailing address:
U.S. Embassy
Public Affairs Section
1054 Budapest
Szabadság tér 12.

■ Oscars® Quiz Answers

1—B: *The Fly* by Ferenc Rófusz in 1980 in the Short Film (Animated) category. *Mephisto* also won an Oscar® in 1981 in the Foreign Language Film category.

2—C: Italy has had 10 Oscars® in the Foreign Language Film category.

3—B: Shirley Temple received a juvenile Academy Award® at the age of 6.

4—A: Walt Disney received 26 Academy Awards®.

5—C: Brokeback Mountain with 8 nominations (Good Night, And Good Luck—6; Munich—5; King Kong—4)

More statistics at <http://awardsdatabase.oscars.org>

■ Word Formation

In the text below use the word given in capitals at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the space in the same line. See the 2 examples at the beginning.

Academy Awards® are presented for <u>outstanding</u> individual or	STAND OUT
<u>collective</u> efforts in the movie industry in up to 25 regular	COLLECT
categories. In _____ to the regular annual awards	ADD
conferred by vote of the _____, the AMPAS Board of	MEMBER
_____ can vote for a number of other awards including	GOVERN
_____ Awards. Those particular Awards may be given	HONOR
for outstanding _____ not otherwise recognized by the	ACHIEVE
regular awards. They may be given for _____ distinction	EXCEPT
in lifetime achievement or exceptional _____ to the state	CONTRIBUTE
of _____ picture arts and sciences. They have been	MOVE
_____, for instance, to Blake Edwards for his	AWARD
extraordinary body of film work, to _____ Jack Cardiff	CINEMATOGRAPHY
for his distinguished _____ of light and color and to	MASTER
Chuck Jones for the _____ of his classic cartoons.	CREATE

Find correct answers at: http://www.usembassy.hu/quiz_key.html

■ Glossary — With page numbers where the words appear

ballot - a vote (1)

box office - an office in a cinema where tickets are sold (2)

buck - a dollar (colloquially) (2)

compelling - attractive; captivating (3)

to comprise - to consist of; made up of (1)

to confer - to give; to grant (4)

craftsman - a highly skilled worker (1)

intrigue - a secret scheme (2)

inception - start; beginning of something (3)

juvenile - a) young or youthful; b) an actor who plays youthful roles (4)

nickname - an additional name or a familiar form of a proper name (1)

notion - general idea; belief; opinion; view (2)

reel - a spool for film (1)

to resemble - to look similar to (1)

revenue - income, amount of money received in a period of time (2)

rogue - rascal; scoundrel; a wicked person with no principles or scruples (3)

showcase - anything displaying someone or something to good advantage (3)

stunt - a difficult act requiring great skill or courage, especially in movies (2)