

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

US National Film Registry



NB: This is not a word for word transcript

Neil: Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil and with me today is Jennifer.

Jennifer: Hi Neil.

Neil: Now we're talking about films today. Are you **a film buff**, Jennifer?

Jennifer: A buff is someone who's very interested in a certain subject and knows a lot about it. I do like watching films both at the cinema and at home, but I wouldn't really say I'm a film buff because I don't have a lot of knowledge. What about you Neil?

Neil: Likewise, I do enjoy the cinema; though Hollywood movies aren't really my favourite. I do like a good **art-house** film though. The movies we're talking about in today's programme aren't any old films. We're talking about the United States National Film Registry. But before we get onto that I have a quiz question for you, Jennifer. Are you ready?

Jennifer: Go on then.

Neil: Taking into account inflation, which is the amount money loses value over time, which film has made more money than any other in the history of cinema? Is it:

a) Avatar

b) Gone with the Wind

c) Titanic

- Jennifer:** That's a difficult one but I think it will be 'Titanic'. I remember it coming out in the cinema around 1998 and everyone I knew would have to go and see it. So I think it must be that one.
- Neil:** Well, we'll find out the answer to that at the end of the programme. Now, before that question, I was talking about the United States National Film Registry. Every year it adds about twenty-five titles to its list.
- Jennifer:** The films aren't always famous **blockbusters** and sometimes haven't been seen for decades.
- Neil:** That's true, the films aren't always famous blockbusters – a blockbuster is usually an American film which makes lots of money.
- Jennifer:** But the films do have this in common: it's been decided that they are all of lasting cultural, historical and **aesthetic** importance.
- Neil:** Yes, the US National Film Registry has decided that all the films are of lasting cultural and historical importance for the United States. They're also beautiful and artistic – so they're 'of aesthetic importance'. Here's more from the BBC's Arts Reporter, Vincent Dowd

Vincent Dowd, Arts Reporter, BBC

Seventy years on the US National Film Registry has placed it on its list of historically important American films. The list's been going since 1989 and around 25 titles are added annually. In part it's to ensure they get the highest level of preservation: not really a problem with a much re-released Disney classic. But even well-known films sometimes need securing for posterity.

- Neil:** That was the BBC's Arts Reporter, Vincent Dowd. He was talking about 'Bambi' which is seventy years old but it's just been added to the Registry's list, although the list was started in about 1989. 'Bambi' is an animated film. You know, Jennifer,

I think it was one of the first films my parents took me to see – so for me anyway it's of historical importance!

Jennifer: Do you remember what you thought of it at the time?

Neil: Well for those listeners who haven't seen it, Bambi is a little deer who becomes **orphaned**, meaning its parents died. I was tiny, but I loved it and learned important lessons from it about **grief**, family and friends.

Jennifer: Grief is a feeling of great sadness. Well, perhaps I'd better watch it.

Neil: What, you mean you've never seen 'Bambi'?! I can't believe that! You've got to go home and watch it immediately!

Jennifer: OK I will, though it sounds like it might make me cry!

Neil: I think there's no shame in crying about Bambi! Now luckily for you, Jennifer, the US National Film Registry helps to make such old films available to future generations by looking after them in the best way possible. As the reporter Vincent Dowd said: films "get the highest level of preservation"

Jennifer: He says "even well-known films need securing **for posterity**".

Neil: That's right, even famous films need to be made safe – or secure - for future generations, or as the reporter said: "for posterity". And let's just listen to that clip from the BBC's Arts Reporter Vincent Dowd once again:

Vincent Dowd, Arts Reporter, BBC

Seventy years on the US National Film Registry has placed it on its list of historically important American films. The list's been going since 1989 and around 25 titles are added annually. In part it's to ensure they get the highest level of preservation: not really a problem with a much re-released Disney classic. But even well-known films sometimes need securing for posterity.

Neil: That was the BBC's Arts Reporter Vincent Dowd talking about the film 'Bambi'.

Jennifer: Well, we had a look at the list to find out which films were on it before the latest 2011 additions.

Neil: And Jennifer has a few titles for us, of films which caught her eye. Tell us about an early film memory.

Jennifer: Well, an early film memory for me is 'ET', which was made in 1982 and added to the registry in 1994. It's about an alien which lands on earth and befriends a young boy. I like it because it's a real heart-warming tale of friendship and it's a great story.

Neil: Anything else on the list you like?

Jennifer: 'The Sound of Music' from 1965. That was added to the registry in 2001. It's a musical about a nun that looks after a family and it's great fun. And then as a complete contrast there's 'Psycho' from 1960 which was added to the registry in 1992. It's a thriller and it's really scary.

Neil: Yes it's absolutely terrifying, isn't it? Well, we've just got time now for the answer to the quiz question I asked you at the beginning. It was: taking into account inflation, which film has made more money than any other in the history of cinema? Is it:

a) Avatar

b) Gone with the Wind

c) Titanic

Jennifer: Well I said, I thought it would be 'Titanic'.

Neil: And you were wrong, I'm afraid. The answer is 'Gone with the Wind', which didn't make as much money as 'Avatar', but if you take into account inflation it has.

Thank you for joining us and listen to more 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. Bye!

Jennifer: Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

a film buff	a person who is very interested in films and knows a lot about them
art-house	films which are made by small companies and are not usually seen by a wide audience
blockbuster	a very successful film financially
aesthetic	concerned with beauty and art and the understanding of beautiful things
orphaned	made parentless through death
grief	a feeling of great sadness, especially when somebody dies
for posterity	for all the people who will live in the future

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