

Longman English

Spark!



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1 Great storytelling



We all love a good story. Look at these pictures. What popular stories do they represent? Discuss with a partner.



Have you read any of these stories or seen film versions of them? What do you think of them? Why do you think they are popular?



What's your favourite story? Why do you like it?



In this unit, you will listen, read and talk about stories in books and films that keep you entertained, and write a review of a film that you have seen.



When we **SKIM**, we read quickly to understand the gist of something. Skim the text. What is it about?



When we **SCAN**, we look quickly for a particular piece of information in a text. Scan the text. What are the names of the three online series?

Today many people watch stories on the Internet instead of television.
Read about some popular online shows.

Text 1



Watching TV

- 1 On one channel, there's an exciting superhero show. There's an animated series about a hilarious cat on another, and a comedy about a crazy boy on a third. Before, you'd have to switch on the TV to watch a variety of programmes, but now you can simply find them on the Web. Best of all, you can watch them whenever you want. All you need is an Internet connection.
- 5 2 Every day, there are lots of new well-made programmes available to viewers on the Internet. A creative, independent film-maker only needs a smartphone, an editing program on a computer, a few talented friends and an account on a video-sharing website like YouTube. With all that (and a well-written script, which is important if you want to make a good film), it's easy to produce a short video cheaply that viewers can watch immediately.
- 10 3 One popular online show is **Nightwing: The Series**, which appears on the YouTube channel Ismahawk. The series is about Batman's former partner, Robin, who is now a crime fighter called Nightwing. The producers (Danny Shepherd and Jeremy Le) are two comic book fans. Although the show is low-budget, it's well-acted and has some amazingly good special effects.

Danny Shepherd is not only a producer, he is also an actor and plays Nightwing in the series.



on the Web



- 15 **4** Another online hit is **Simon's Cat**. This animated series is about a very demanding cat who causes trouble for its owner. It's produced, written and drawn by British artist Simon Tofield. The animation is done by Tofield on his home computer. The antics of the playful pet entertain millions of viewers and now they can be enjoyed in books too.
- 20 **5** With online shows becoming wildly popular, big studios are turning to the Web for new ideas. An example is Lucas Cruikshank's comedy **Fred**. Cruikshank was only thirteen when he started his self-produced comedy. He plays the main character, Fred, a boy with a squeaky voice who gets into incredibly silly situations. The show became an Internet hit and soon attracted interest from
- 25 Hollywood. Since then, Fred has appeared in several films and an animated series on Nickelodeon, a major US television network.
- 6** Thanks to the Internet, a new generation of indie film-makers can now reach a huge audience. If you enjoy their work, maybe it'll inspire you to create your own show.



Check your understanding

A Answer the questions using information from Text 1. For multiple-choice questions, blacken one circle only.

1 According to Text 1, what are TWO ways that people can watch shows?

2 Complete the sentence. The writer thinks that one disadvantage of watching _____
_____ is that the _____ are shown at fixed times.

 3 In line 2, what does 'a third' refer to? _____

4 Use information from paragraph 2 to complete the following steps.

To produce your own short video cheaply, you can:

- (1) ask _____ to act in the video.
- (2) use _____ instead of an expensive video camera.
- (3) use _____ to edit the video on your computer.
- (4) upload your video on _____ so people can watch it.

5 According to paragraph 2, what is one thing that all good films have in common?

6 Which of these statements can be used to describe *Nightwing: The Series*?
(Tick (✓) TWO statements only.)

- a) The actors gave good performances. ☐
- b) The main character has stopped fighting crime. ☐
- c) The series is about a comic book character. ☐
- d) The series used to be about Batman. ☐

7 According to paragraph 4, which of the following is NOT true about *Simon's Cat*?

- A It has been viewed millions of times online.
 - B It is about an artist who draws cats.
 - C It was created by a British artist.
 - D It was produced using a home computer.
- A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐

 8 Which word in paragraph 4 means 'amusing or silly behaviour'? _____

 9 What is the main idea of paragraph 5?

- A A popular Web series was created by a teenager.
 - B Film-makers of Web series are now attracting big studios.
 - C *Fred* has moved from the Web to a US television network.
 - D Lucas Cruikshank's comedy is a huge Internet success.
- A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐

10 Which word in paragraph 6 means 'independent and not part of a large company'?



Look at the pictures.
Can you **PREDICT**,
or guess, what the
text is about?



Scan the text. What
four films are
mentioned in it?

Tyler likes to blog about his favourite things. Read about some of his favourite films.

Text 2



Tyler's blog



I animation

10th September 20__

VIEW



Have you ever seen *Shaun the Sheep Movie*? It's a brilliant comedy that was produced by Aardman Animations in 2015.

- Shaun is a sheep who takes a day off in the big city and quickly gets into lots of trouble. It's fast-paced with lots of action, and nobody speaks any dialogue at all! I've just finished watching it on DVD and I totally loved it!



Shaun looks different from most other animations because it's a stop-motion animated film. The characters are models made from plastic clay. The animators very carefully move the models slightly each time that they photograph them. It's a slow process but when the photos are put together, the models appear to move by themselves. The effect is fascinating.



I first fell in love with animated films when I saw *Finding Nemo*. Nemo, a clownfish, is captured and his father, Marlin, bravely sets out to find him. The plot is simple but the characters are lovable, especially Marlin's hilarious companion, a forgetful blue fish named Dory. She's the funniest character in the film!



Finding Nemo, a 2003 Pixar production, is a CGI (computer-generated images) film. Most CGI films are boring because although they look great, the stories don't interest me. However, *Finding Nemo's* story is fantastic and the undersea world looks incredibly beautiful. The 2016 sequel, *Finding Dory*, is also good but I prefer the original!



5 Finally, there's my all-time favourite: Disney's *Pinocchio*. It's a classic example of traditional animation. Everything is drawn by hand. Released in 1940, *Pinocchio* isn't outdated at all. It's the heartwarming tale of a wooden puppet who wants to become a real boy. The songs are very catchy and the main character is unforgettable. Anyone who loves great animation should see it.

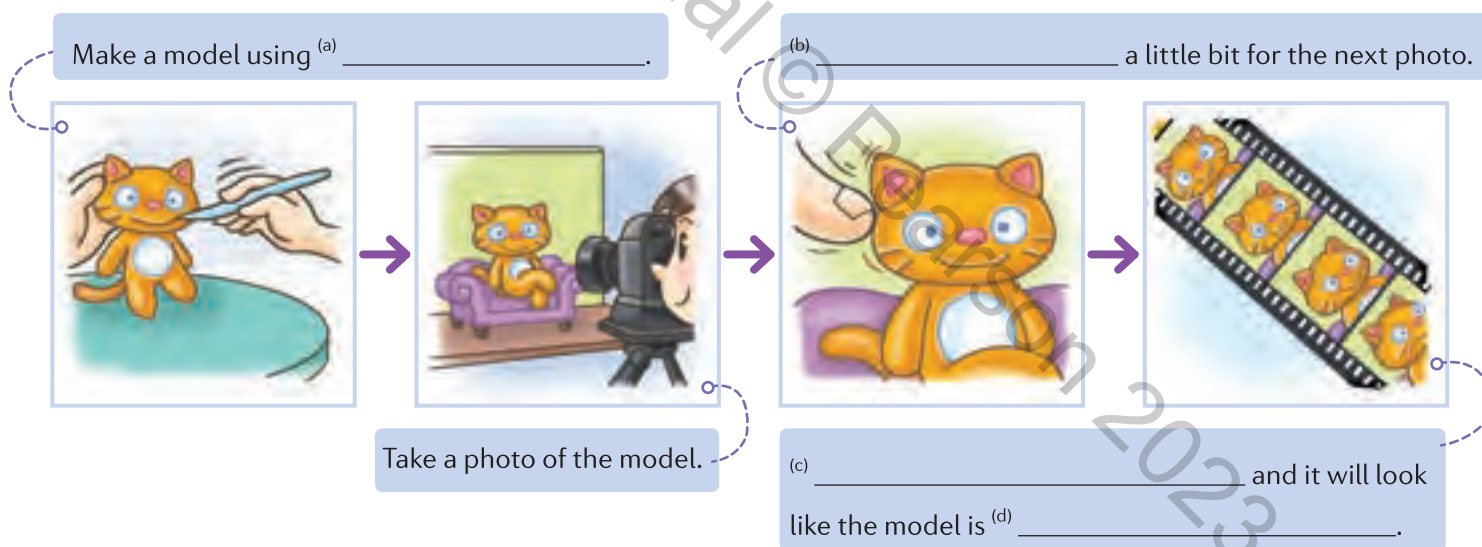
30 6 OK, that's enough about my favourites. Tell me about yours!

 Comments

Check your understanding

A Answer the questions using information from Text 2. For the multiple-choice question, blacken one circle only.

- 1 What kind of films is Text 2 about? _____
- 2 What is paragraph 2 mainly about? _____
- 3 Complete the following flow chart with information from paragraph 2. You should make sure your answers are grammatically correct.



- 4 Which of the following does the writer NOT give as a reason for why he likes *Finding Nemo*?

A the animation
B the characters
C the songs
D the story

A B C D
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

- 5 Which phrase in paragraph 5 shows that the writer likes *Pinocchio* more than any other animated films?

- 6 Complete the sentence: Traditional animation is animation that is _____.

Word families

A word family is a group of words that have the same base word. The words in the family are formed by adding prefixes or suffixes to the base word. For example, *view*, *viewing*, *viewer* and *review* are all formed from the base word *view*.

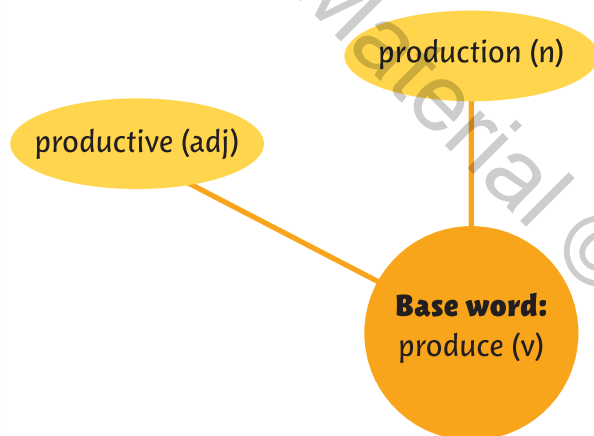
- Scan Text 1 and Text 2 for words that are formed from the following base words. Write the words in the spaces provided.

1 write (Text 1) _____

2 forget (Text 2) _____

You can increase your vocabulary by learning words in word families.

- Work in pairs. Look at Texts 1 and 2 and find more words for the word family of 'produce'. Add them to the mind map. Then think of a few more words to add to the family. Note down the part of speech for each word.



- Work in groups of three. Choose a base word from below. On your own, make a word family mind map for it. Label the parts of speech as above. Use a separate sheet of paper.

create	direct	entertain
amuse	excite	bore
act	animate	love

- Now compare your mind maps. Who has thought of the most number of correct words? You can use a dictionary to help you check the words.

Describing what happens in a story

We usually use **the simple past** to talk about things that happened in the past.

Pixar Animation Studios **produced** 'Finding Nemo'.

I **watched** 'Fred' on YouTube but I **didn't like** it.

However, when we describe what happens in a story, such as the plot of a film that we have seen or a book that we have read, we often use **the simple present**. This makes the story seem more immediate and dramatic.

At the beginning of 'The BFG', it **is** the middle of the night and Sophie **is** unable to get to sleep. She **goes** to look out the window and **sees** a tall, dark figure heading straight towards her.



Grammar in text

Find examples of the simple present to describe what happens in a story in Text 2.

Why is the simple present more effective than the simple past in these examples?

Let's practise

You can use these verbs:

- be
- decide
- drop
- enjoy
- escape
- finish
- leave
- see
- survive
- visit

Complete the following extract of a story description. Use the given verbs in either the simple present or the simple past. Make sure you use the correct forms of the verbs.

Jurassic Park is a 1993 film that's based on a novel by Michael Crichton. Last month,

I ⁽¹⁾ _____ it on DVD for the first time. I really ⁽²⁾ _____ it,

so I ⁽³⁾ _____ to read the novel. The book was so good that I

⁽⁴⁾ _____ it in one weekend!

In both the book and the film, a group of people ⁽⁵⁾ _____ an island to

see a theme park with living dinosaurs. Then the most dangerous dinosaurs

⁽⁶⁾ _____ from their cages. Suddenly everyone ⁽⁷⁾ _____ in

terrible danger!

At the end of the film, the people ⁽⁸⁾ _____ the island and the

dinosaurs ⁽⁹⁾ _____. However, at the end of the book, an aeroplane

⁽¹⁰⁾ _____ bombs on the park to kill all the dinosaurs.



TASK

Write a review

Are there any films that you really like ... or really *don't* like? Write a film review for *The Scene*, a teen magazine, and tell everyone about a film you love ... or hate!



A First look quickly at these extracts from film reviews. Which extract is the title of a review? Which one is about an animated film? Have you seen any of the films in the extracts?



Overall, *Captain America: Civil War* is full of action-packed battle scenes among superheroes, but it's also about loyalty and responsibility. If you like great action and big ideas, this film is for you.



Many films are based on books, but we don't often see a book featured in a film. In *Beijing Meets Seattle II*, written and directed by Xue Xiaolu, the main characters share an interest in the 1970 novel *84, Charing Cross Road*.



The Martian is more than just another space film



In *The BFG*, an orphan named Sophie (Ruby Barnhill, in her film debut) sees a giant (Mark Rylance) and runs. He catches the terrified girl and carries her off to the Land of the Giants.



The incredibly gorgeous 3-D animation of *Finding Dory* shows the beauty of its undersea world. Unfortunately the script is fairly predictable and the direction is not terribly well-paced. The film seems to swim aimlessly for a long time.

Grammar in text

Find examples of the simple present, the passive voice and adverbs of degree in the film review extracts.

Use what you have learnt to form similar examples for your own film review.



Work in pairs. Take turns to ask and answer questions about the review extracts above. You can ask questions like these. Give reasons for your answers.

Which reviews would you like to read in full?

Which extracts do you think are from mostly positive reviews? Which are from mostly negative reviews? Are there any without a clearly expressed opinion?

VOCABULARY ROUNDUP



Types of films

action film (*n phr*) p. 16

drama (*n*) p. 18

romance (*n*) p. 18

(stop-motion) animated film (*n phr*) p. 6

comedy (*n*) p. 2

fantasy film (*n phr*) p. 18

science fiction film (*n phr*) p. 18

superhero film (*n phr*) p. 18

Add more!

What other useful words and phrases have you learnt? Add them to the appropriate lists.

Elements of a film

computer-generated image
(*n phr*) p. 6

ending (*n*) p. 13

script (*n*) p. 2

visual effects (*n phr*) p. 17

costume (*n*) p. 5

plot (*n*) p. 6

special effects (*n phr*) p. 2

dialogue (*n*) p. 6

scene (*n*) p. 15

twist (*n*) p. 12

Making a film

direct (*v*) p. 9

star (*v*) p. 18

play (*v*) p. 2

voice (*v*) p. 17

produce (*v*) p. 2

write (*v*) p. 3

release (*v*) p. 7

People related to films

actor (*n*) p. 2

film-maker (*n*) p. 2

audience (*n*) p. 3

main character (*n phr*) p. 3

director (*n*) p. 16

producer (*n*) p. 2

fan (*n*) p. 2

viewer (*n*) p. 2

Describing (elements of) a film or story

action-packed (*adj*) p. 15

brilliant (*adj*) p. 6

disappointing (*adj*) p. 13

excellent (*adj*) p. 12

fast-paced (*adj*) p. 6

hilarious (*adj*) p. 2

low-budget (*adj*) p. 2

predictable (*adj*) p. 15

skilful (*adj*) p. 13

traditional (*adj*) p. 7

well-acted (*adj*) p. 2

all-time favourite (*exp*) p. 7

catchy (*adj*) p. 7

dramatic (*adj*) p. 10

fantastic (*adj*) p. 6

gorgeous (*adj*) p. 15

hit (*n*) p. 3

moving (*adj*) p. 13

realistic (*adj*) p. 13

strong (*adj*) p. 13

unforgettable (*adj*) p. 7

well-paced (*adj*) p. 15

boring (*adj*) p. 6

clever (*adj*) p. 12

entertaining (*adj*) p. 13

fascinating (*adj*) p. 6

heartwarming (*adj*) p. 7

lovable (*adj*) p. 6

outdated (*adj*) p. 7

simple (*adj*) p. 6

suspenseful (*adj*) p. 13

weak (*adj*) p. 13

well-written (*adj*) p. 2

