

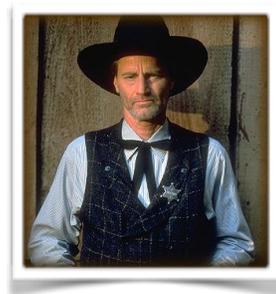


Unit 12:  
**Westerns**

**A Warm up**

1. Match the vocabulary from Western films with their pictures:

- bandit    gunslinger    posse    ranch house    saddle    saloon    sheriff    six-shooter**



## B Vocabulary

### 1. Match the words with their definitions.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| a) cinematic   | ___ moral rules or beliefs that help you know what is right and wrong                           |
| b) commercial  | ___ people who have broken the law and who is hiding or running to avoid punishment             |
| c) cattle      | ___ producing a large amount of something   |
| d) conflict    | ___ related to earning money  |
| e) inspiration | ___ a struggle for power, property, etc.  |
| f) outlaws     | ___ cows used for beef  |
| g) principle   | ___ related to movies   |
| h) prolific    | ___ something that makes someone want to do something or gives someone an idea about what to do |

## C Check your understanding

### After reading the article, answer the following questions:

1. When were Westerns most popular?
2. Who are the two most famous actors of the Western genre?
3. What genre of Japanese movies influenced Westerns?
4. ?
5. What genres of film have taken the place of Westerns?

### Western conventions:

- set on the western frontier in 1800's America
- small town main street, saloons, lonely ranches
- horses, guns, stagecoaches, trains and cows
- white hat = good guy, black hat = bad guy

### Top 10 Westerns

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 10. True Grit (2010)             | 5. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969) |
| 9. The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976) | 4. Once Upon a Time in the West (1968)       |
| 8. High Noon (1952)              | 3. Unforgiven (1992)                         |
| 7. The Magnificent Seven (1960)  | 2. The Searchers (1956)                      |
| 6. The Wild Bunch (1969)         | 1. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (1966)     |

# Cowboys and Indians

If you are younger than 25 years old, there's a good chance you have never seen a Western movie. By "Western" movie, we don't mean a Hollywood production, but rather a film that is set in the American "wild" west during the last part of the 19th century (1850-1900). Some people might call these "cowboy" movies.



Westerns have been around since the beginning of film. The silent film *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) is one of the first

\_\_\_\_\_ movies ever produced.

Westerns were \_\_\_\_\_ in the 1930s to the 1960s, but their popularity has declined over the years. So why should we study a genre that isn't very popular anymore?

Well, the classic Western has perhaps influenced modern films more than any other genre. Not only today's action movies, but also other genres such as science fiction use conventions and icons that were originally developed in Westerns. *Star Wars* has been called "Cowboys and Indians in space".

As the Western genre became popular in America, samurai films were becoming popular in Japan. These two genres had many similarities and influenced each other greatly. For example Akira Kurosawa's movie *Seven Samurai* was the \_\_\_\_\_ for the successful Western *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

Like samurai films, \_\_\_\_\_ is important to the plot of the western film: good vs. bad, villains vs. heroes, sheriff vs. outlaw, and farmer vs. industrialist.

Specific settings include small-towns at the edge of civilization, lonely ranches, and the saloon. Other iconic elements in Westerns include Indians, horses, guns, stagecoaches, trains, gamblers, long-horned \_\_\_\_\_.

The two actors that must be mentioned in any study of the Western are John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. These two actors were both famous for their war movies, but it was Westerns that first made them Hollywood heroes.

Western heroes are often local lawmen, cowboys, or a skilled, gunfighters. They are normally persons with \_\_\_\_\_ - brave, tough, and self-sufficient characters, having an independent and honorable attitude. The Western hero usually stands alone and faces danger by himself against \_\_\_\_\_, with a display of his skills with guns and horse riding.

As the Western genre (and its audiences) has gotten older, it has been replaced with modern action movies and more recently, superhero flicks. But movie fans should always remember where their favorite \_\_\_\_\_ icons and conventions come from.

## D Iconic Scene

### 1. Watch the following scene from the Western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966).

In this scene, three characters are involved in a "Mexican standoff". The winner is going to get a fortune in gold.

This scene has been described as "just two and a half minutes of three men standing around, but some of the best cinema ever made".

What country do you think this was filmed in?

How many shots were used in the scene?

### 2. Ask a partner the following questions.

1. How does the director build up tension and suspense in this scene?
2. Do you think spoken dialogue would have helped make this scene more effective?