



Unit 8:

Science Fiction

A Warm up

1. Look at the photos of famous movie aliens. What films are they from? Which would you like to meet?



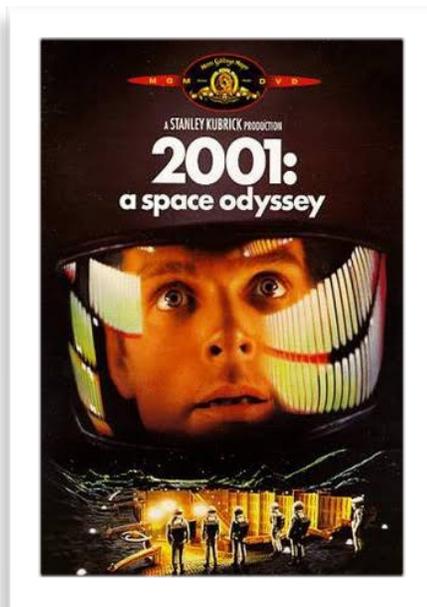
Science Fiction: a very wide genre

The Science fiction (SF) genre contains so many different kinds of movies, that it is a difficult genre to define. Sci-fi can be crossed with other genres to be funny (comedy), exciting (action) or scary (horror). But the one thing that all sci-fi films have in common is that they use _____, science-based themes in the plot of the film.

Apocalyptic films: The plot revolves around the end of the world or society. This usually involves an alien invasion, a nuclear war, a disease, or a natural disaster. While many films in this sub-genre center around the disaster, many focus on the post-apocalyptic state of the world.

Dystopian films: These films take place in the future and feature a world where everyone is unhappy and afraid. This sub-genre often has the same themes and characteristics of an apocalyptic film. But additional themes include the loss of _____ and human rights.

Time Travel films: These films can explore traditional time travel through futuristic machines or space-time travel. The time travel sub-genre can also explore the concept of _____ histories, alternate realities, and parallel universes.



Alien films: perhaps the most common sub-genre in Science-Fiction. These films can explore the existence of aliens and alien _____. A common theme in this sub-genre is the relationships between human beings and aliens.

Monster films: Unlike regular horror films, this sub-genre contains a monster that has a scientific explanation for its existence. These films sometimes contain a scientific _____ or accident that produces the monster.

Space operas: The best known of these films are the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* franchises. These films are set deep in space or on other planets and involve alien races and space battles.

Sci-fi films often _____ the dangerous and dark side of knowledge and technology, and issues about the nature of mankind. They also express society's worries about changes to _____ society.

While science fiction films are often _____, old-fashioned escapism is probably the main reason they remain popular. These movies capture the imagination of their audiences like no other genre (except perhaps for fantasy). As long as people keep dreaming about the future, this genre is going to remain popular.

B Vocabulary

1. Match the words from the article with their definitions, then fill in the blanks.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| a) alternate | ___ not real; imagined |
| b) contemporary | ___ show |
| c) invasion | ___ the quality that makes one person or thing different from all others |
| d) individuality | ___ different |
| e) experiment | ___ based on philosophy |
| f) hypothetical | ___ entering a place in large numbers, especially in a way that is harmful or unwanted |
| g) portray | ___ happening now |
| h) philosophical | ___ a scientific test |

C Check your understanding

After reading the article, answer the following questions:

1. What other genres of film are sci-fi movies often paired with?
2. What is the setting of a dystopian film?
3. What is the difference between a sci-fi monster movie and a regular monster movie?
4. What kind of worries do sci-fi films often express?
5. Why are science fiction films popular?

Sci-fi conventions:

- Usually set in the future
- often mixed with other genres
- use hypothetical science themes
- often take a philosophical view of technology and mankind

Science Fiction sub-genres

- Apocalyptic films
- Dystopian films
- Time travel films
- Alien films
- Monsters and Mutant films
- Space operas

D Discussion

Ask a partner the following questions:

1. What's your favorite science fiction movie?
2. Do you prefer funny or scary sci-fi movies?
3. Have you ever seen a science fiction movie that was difficult to understand?
4. Do you prefer Japanese or western science fiction movies?
5. Do you think males are more interested in science fiction than females? Why?

E Iconic Scene

1. Watch the following scene from the science fiction movie *The Matrix* (1999)

In this scene, Neo is asking Morpheus what the Matrix is. He is about to find out...

Morpheus: Do you want to know what it is? The matrix is everywhere. It is all around us, even now, in this very room. You can see it when you look out your window, or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.

Neo: What truth?

Morpheus: That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, and to a prison you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the matrix is. You have to see it for yourself.

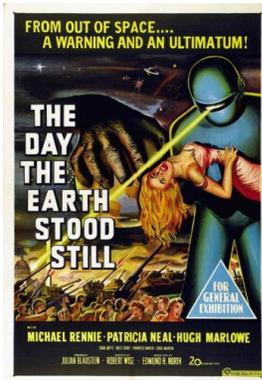
This is your last chance; after this there is no turning back. You take the blue pill, you wake up in your bed and you believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.

Remember, all I am offering is the truth, nothing more.

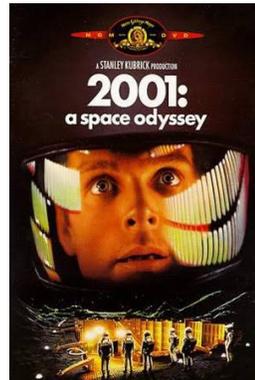
2. Ask a partner the following questions.

1. Have you seen the Matrix
2. What does Neo find out about the Matrix?

1. Have you seen any of the “must-see” sci-fi movies listed below? Which ones?



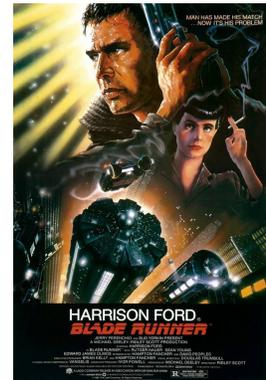
1951
Robert Wise



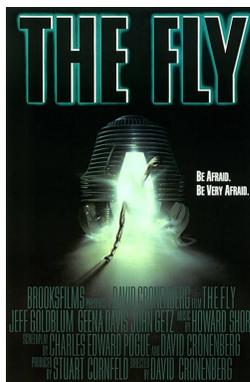
1968
Stanley Kubrick



1980
Irvin Kirshner



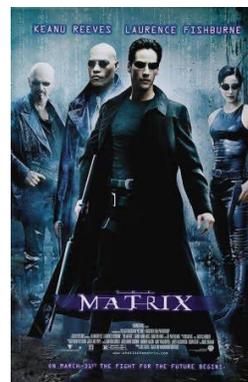
1982
Ridley Scott



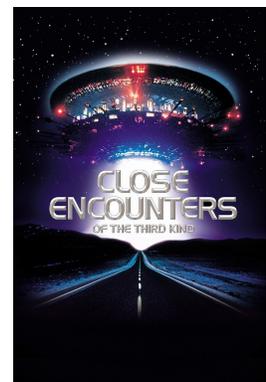
1986
David Cronenberg



1982
Steven Spielberg



1999
Lana Wachowski



1977
Steven Spielberg

2. Match the one line synopses with the movie posters above.

1. Luke Skywalker takes advanced Jedi training with Master Yoda, while his friends are pursued by Darth Vader
2. A man must try to find and destroy robot humans who have come to Earth to find their creator.
3. A child summons the courage to help a friendly alien escape Earth and return to his home world.
4. After an encounter with U.F.O.s, a man feels drawn to an area in the wilderness where something spectacular is about to happen.
5. A scientist begins to transform into a giant man/fly hybrid after one of his experiments goes horribly wrong.
6. An alien tells the people of Earth that they must live peacefully or be destroyed as a danger to other planets.
7. Humanity finds a mysterious object and, with an intelligent computer, sets off on a quest.
8. A computer hacker learns from mysterious rebels about the true nature of his reality and his role in the war against its controllers.