

The business of film

Avatar has become the fastest grossing film in the history of the cinema. Will it change the future of the cinema?

1 Discuss these films with a partner. Which ones have you seen? Did you enjoy them? Why / why not?

Titanic	Paranormal Activity	Avatar	The Dark Knight
Spider Man 3	The Blair Witch project	Pirates of the Caribbean	A Christmas Carol

2 Scan the article. Complete the gaps (1–6) with the names of the missing films. All the names are in the box above.

Avatar – the future of film?

It made \$27 million on its opening day in the US and Canada; it made \$77 million on its opening weekend. When it was released internationally, James Cameron's (1) _____ made a staggering \$232 million worldwide within its first five days. It seems everyone is talking about this exciting new blockbuster. The figures speak for themselves, and the film has already become the second highest grossing film of all time, behind the director's own (2) _____ and catching up fast.

Why is *Avatar* proving so popular? After all, the pro-environment message is too strong for some critics; others think the plot is too simple. Well over half the film is computer-generated. Audiences need to wear special glasses to enjoy the 3-D effects, seen in other recent films like (3) _____, starring Jim Carrey. Still, there is no doubt that *Avatar* is a breakthrough in terms of technology, thanks largely to a new form of 'stereoscopic' film-making with specially-designed cameras. Along with 3-D movies, we now have a 3-D camera from Fuji, a 3-D computer from Acer and

of course 3-D television from the likes of Sony and Samsung! Is the world of entertainment going 3-D mad?

Can *Avatar*'s \$300million budget really be justified, not to mention a further \$150 million marketing spend? (4) _____ had a budget of just \$22,000, and yet made over \$248 million at the box-office. Last year's cult hit (5) _____ cost just \$15,000. Low-budget films are the opposite end of the spectrum to movies, like (6) _____; with its stars (Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst) and special effects, it cost around \$285 million. Just because a film has a huge budget does not guarantee it will be a good movie. Fortunately, there will always be room for other genres: the art-house movie and the low-budget, independent production. Apart from making money, and despite some cynics, Cameron's film is actually enjoying critical acclaim, taking home Best Drama and Best Director awards at the recent Golden Globe awards. It seems the director's technological and financial gamble will pay off, and all eyes will soon be glued on the forthcoming Oscars ... as well as those latest figures from the bank!

3 Read the whole article. What do critics say about the film *Avatar*?

4 Find words in the text from their definitions below.

- 4.1 a picture on a computer screen that represents a particular person or computer user (Paragraph 1)
- 4.2 something that is very successful, especially a film or show (Paragraph 1)
- 4.3 earning a particular amount of money before taxes or costs have been taken out (Paragraph 1)
- 4.4 the series of related events that make up the main story in a film (Paragraph 2)
- 4.5 particular styles used in cinema, which can be recognized by certain features (Paragraph 3)
- 4.6 will bring some benefit (Paragraph 3)

(Some definitions from or based on Macmillan English Dictionary online: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>)

5 You work for a film company and want to raise finance for your next project. It is a 3-D film. Prepare a short presentation for a group of investors, explaining why they should invest in your film. Cover the points below.

AMOUNT REQUIRED ANY STARS?	FILM TITLE PLOT SUMMARY	FILM GENRE REASON(S) TO INVEST
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