

Top 100 Films – As voted by Channel 4

1 to 10

STAR WARS (1977), STAR WARS EPISODE V: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (1980)

Unable to procure the rights to Flash Gordon, George Lucas serves up his own homage to the Saturday-morning adventure serials he loved as a kid; somehow managing to create possibly the most revered and successful film series ever in the process.

GODFATHER (1972), THE GODFATHER PART II (1974)

Coppola's epic, operatic, bullet-ridden saga of a Mafia family at war with itself and its rivals. Murder, betrayal, ambition: it's all here, and utterly compelling, with Brando at his scene-stealing best.

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION (1994)

Mugged at the Oscars by Forrest Gump, this irresistible prison drama promotes the unquenchable human spirit with an intelligence that the goey Gump readily sacrificed.

PULP FICTION (1994)

Tarantino, the boy wonder pushed his storytelling powers to their limits to make this film every bit as BIG as the widescreen 70s hits that inspired him. An instant classic.

SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959)

Wilder and Diamond's script crackles with ideas and gags, and the performances are uniformly assured, with Curtis's triple characterization in particular a revelation. Monroe was reputedly at her worst on set, fluffing take after take, but whatever was necessary to achieve this brilliantly sustained gem was worth it.

GLADIATOR (2000)

Ridley Scott revives the Roman epic with computer generated imagery and a mighty performance from Russell Crowe. Not to mention the last stand of the late Oliver Reed.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (1946)

Capra's Christmas perennial is a lot darker than its status as prime festive schedule-filler would suggest. That's not to say it will have you hiding behind the sofa but, for a film that deals with missed opportunities and one man's dark night of the soul, it is all the more impressive it has garnered a feel-good reputation.

BLADE RUNNER (1982)

Dystopian thriller Blade Runner remains the most influential sci-fi masterpiece of modern cinema, notably for its immaculate visualisations of retro-futuristic urban decay.

SCHINDLER'S LIST (1993)

A heart-rending and redemptive Holocaust story, this Oscar-grabbing epic added to Spielberg's directorial credibility, showing he could handle controversial, sophisticated stories with real sensitivity.

GOODFELLAS (1990)

"As far back as I can remember, I've always wanted to be a gangster," Henry Hill opens his true story of 30 years in the mob in Scorsese's epic.

11 to 20

PSYCHO (1960)

The music, the setting, the shower scene, the mother in the cellar... everything about this iconic film has passed into cinema history. A genuine virtuoso classic and the granddaddy of all slashers.

JAWS (1975)

It left a generation of schoolkids afraid to go into a swimming pool, let alone back into the water. Wunderkind Spielberg's story is all the scarier for hardly ever showing the Great White that is most of the characters' nemesis

APOCALYPSE NOW (1979)

Martin Sheen journeys through Vietnam and Cambodia to terminate flipped-out renegade US colonel Marlon Brando. But his mission becomes a screaming trip into madness, stunningly realised by Coppola's hallucinogenic direction and a cast dragged from Hollywood's Narcotics Anonymous.

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (1975)

Jack Nicholson excels in this multi-Oscar winning, anti-authoritarian tale, the last of the great counter-culture Hollywood movies.

THE MATRIX (1999)

The Wachowski brothers' ground breaking, morphing and shattering sci-fi spectacular. Featuring Keanu Reeves and kung fu like you've never seen it before.

CASABLANCA (1942)

With nearly every line of its script engraved on the collective subconscious, and its central performances of Bogart and Bergman defining iconic cool, Casablanca is an exultant classic. "Here's looking at you, kid".

USUAL SUSPECTS, THE (1995)

One of the outstanding thrillers of the 90s boasts a screenplay that is both bewildering and utterly, brilliantly logical. A film that immediately makes you question what you have just seen and whether it can really have been as good as you think.

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON (2000)

A highpoint of martial arts cinema from Ang Lee no less, which blends the latest fight effects into a 19th century China epic of love and valour. Swashbuckling on the grandest of scales, with Chow Yun-Fat and Michelle Yeoh.

CITIZEN KANE (1941)

The world's most acclaimed film, too often on the top ten lists with critics flexing their reflexes rather than their minds. Even so, it is mesmerising and the young Welles threw down a challenge to Hollywood from which neither fully recovered. A masterpiece.

RAGING BULL (1980)

A genuine moment of cinematic genius. The physical and emotional punches come so thick and fast, you have to check yourself for bruises.

21 to 30

ET (1982)

Before the likes of Independence Day and Evolution, there was a time when movie aliens were cute and nice and only wanted to be our friends. Essential Spielberg.

TAXI DRIVER (1976)

Stone-cold classic. Robert De Niro is electrifying as the Vietnam-scarred taxi driver with a frightening take on the justice system

LIFE OF BRIAN (1979)

History is rewritten and sacred cows are merrily sacrificed as the Python team unleash their alternative take on certain well-known events from 2,000 years ago.

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN (1952)

Gloriously exuberant and abidingly popular musical from the 1950s heyday. Stanley Donen's film sets the Gene Kelly/Debbie Reynolds romance against the fascinating backdrop of the coming of sound in movies.

LA CONFIDENTIAL (1997)

Brilliant adaptation of James Ellroy's detective novel about three cops facing corrupt businessmen, sleazy journalists and assorted trash in 50s LA.

THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939)

"Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore". Exuberant landmark of both children's entertainment and 1930s Technicolor filmmaking. Inventive, fantastical, colourful - and a surprisingly dark and complex tale about economics and the miseries of childhood.

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY (1968)

We know what the year 2001 looks like now, and it doesn't look much like Kubrick's vision. But 2001: A Space Odyssey itself still looks immaculate. Spectacular, trailblazing and philosophical, it's an undisputed masterpiece.

KES (1969)

Ken Loach's raw, truthful re-telling of Barry Hines's gritty story of a boy's alienation and brutal school life in 60s Yorkshire.

VERTIGO (1958)

The large man from Leytonstone delivers a literally dizzying thriller which achieves classic status courtesy of an ace, atypical performance from the legendary James Stewart.

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (1962)

Superlative multi-Oscar winning biography of T E Lawrence (played by Peter O'Toole), the Oxford-educated lieutenant, who united Arab tribes against the Ottoman Turks in WW1.

31 to 40

FARGO (1996)

Smart, stylish, frozen Midwestern noir from the Coen brothers that is assured, blacky funny and thoroughly thoughtful. Features a superb turn from Frances McDormand and top-quality support from Steve Buscemi and William H Macy.

GONE WITH THE WIND (1939)

The definitive Technicolor romantic epic. Rhett, Scarlett, burning sets and a whole slew of nostalgic and/or reactionary values, this is creator-producer David O Selznick's finest hour and a cornerstone of the Hollywood monolith.

TRAINSPOTTING (1996)

Anti-hero Mark Renton's philosophy drifts between choosing life and choosing drugs as he floats in and out of Edinburgh's junkie culture in this modern classic.

THE FULL MONTY (1997)

Gaz and his mates turn the bum steer of redundancy and recession into sure-fire crowd-pleasing entertainment in this classic Yorkshire comedy with a social conscience.

THE GRADUATE (1967)

Boy loves girl but has a fling with her mum in this classic comedy drama that turned Dustin Hoffman into a sex symbol.

ALIEN (1979)

The film that gave us the action heroine, in the shape of Sigourney Weaver's Ellen Ripley, and presented space travel as just another job. It's a tour-de-force of suspense, slasher antics and good old-fashioned sci-fi.

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS (1990)

The film that brought new meaning to having a friend round for dinner, raised Anthony Hopkins to iconic status and terrified a generation.

WITHNAIL & I (1987)

The foremost British cult comedy. Two aspiring actors go on holiday by mistake.

THE GREAT ESCAPE (1963)

Steve McQueen is brilliantly opaque in this ace war film, about a mass breakout from Stalag Luft - with a classic motorcycle chase sequence featuring the great man himself. The all-star ensemble includes James Coburn, Richard Attenborough, Charles Bronson, Donald Pleasence and James Garner.

TOY STORY (1995)

Toy Story remains one of the funniest and best children's films in a long, long time. The first animation to render its images wholly by computer.

41 to 50

THE THIRD MAN (1949)

Orson Welles' Harry Lime steals the show (and anything else he can get his hands on) in this stunning noir set amid the ruins of post-War Vienna, and featuring perhaps the most memorable chase sequence in cinema.

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (1994)

Hugh Grant is at his bumbling best in this feel-good farce about whether or not to tie the knot. British filmmakers showed Hollywood how to do romantic comedy and Oscar nominations followed.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965)

However much it may be ridiculed - its status as a Christmas TV film is legendary - there's no denying that the Andrews classic is one of the best screen musicals ever made.

FITZCARRALDO (1982)

An obsessive adventurer decides to build an opera house in the middle of the Amazonian jungle. Easier said than done? Yes. A potent team-up from enigmatic talents Werner Herzog and Klaus Kinski.

DELIVERANCE (1972)

A bunch of city slickers venture to an Appalachian river to shoot the rapids there - and find themselves farther from civilisation than they could possibly have imagined.

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY (1966)

Morricone's cheekily melodramatic score, and the physical interplay between the leading men all contribute to the film's (and Eastwood's) iconic status.

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS (1949)

Alec Guinness has a field day in this ultra-black Ealing classic, playing all the members of an effete, aristocratic family as they get bumped off, one by one.

CHINATOWN (1974)

Polanski's masterly film noir takes us back to the days when Los Angeles was a (relatively) small town - and Jack Nicholson was a proper actor.

THE EXORCIST (1973)

The most successful adult horror film of all time: still sicker than a post-curry vomit festival

ANNIE HALL (1977)

Woody Allen's best work, this early romantic comedy starring Diane Keaton remains his only movie to win a Best Picture Academy Award - beating Star Wars, no less.

51 to 60

THE ITALIAN JOB (1969)

Much-loved British crime caper starring Michael Caine, Noël Coward and, er, Benny Hill. Plus a whole fleet of Minis.

SUNSET BOULEVARD (1950)

Billy Wilder's sordid, angry classic is a razor-sharp dig at the Hollywood star system. William Holden plays a struggling writer who gets entangled with Gloria Swanson's silent era has-been.

THE JUNGLE BOOK (1967)

Family favourite Disney animated adventure fare with show-stopping tunes and hilarious characterisation of Mowgli the Man Cub, Baloo the Bear and, of course, King Louie - king of the swingers, that is.

TITANIC (1998)

Spectacular movie from James Cameron in which the central romance between Leonardo DiCaprio's poor artist and Kate Winslet's society girl is overwhelmed by the monumental recreation of the historical disaster

JEAN DE FLORETTE (1986), MANON DES SOURCES (1986)

A naive city dweller (Depardieu) inherits a farm - and the ill-will of his neighbours in this story of avarice and peasant unpleasantness in turn of the century Provence. Manon de Sources, the beautifully realised sequel to Jean De Florette, is a superbly crafted revenge story.

DR STRANGELOVE (1963)

High cynical satire from Stanley Kubrick, with Peter Sellers, playing three key protagonists in the end of the world, George C Scott and Sterling Hayden.

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (1955)

The film that established and immortalised James Dean as the ultimate icon for anguished youth. Charged, good looking and only slightly silly, this is a genuine teen classic.

THE SEVEN SAMURAI (1954)

A simple story of seven mercenaries hired to protect a village from marauding bandits becomes a unique and mesmerising action-packed epic of sustained tension and stoic humanity in Kurosawa's hands: an enduring classic.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (1946)

Originally commissioned by the wartime Ministry of Information to bolster relations between Britain and the US, Powell's compassionate and technically superb film about a pilot who cheats death has come to be regarded as a masterpiece in its own right.

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID (1969)

Paul Newman and Robert Redford make one of cinema's greatest partnerships in this superb gangster Western.

61 to 70

SECRETS & LIES (1995)

Mike Leigh's superb comedy-drama of family relationships. Heart-rending, bitter and delightful by turn.

BLUE VELVET (1986)

One of Lynch's best and most controversial films, it gained particular notoriety for its depiction of Rossellini's dangerously dependent relationship with psychopathic kidnapper Hopper and their masochistic, oxygen-fuelled sex scenes.

LA DOLCE VITA (1960)

Fellini's unforgettable vision of beauty, decadence and the decline of a generation. A riveting classic.

SPARTACUS (1960)

The essential historical epic, and a forebear of Gladiator, this tale of a slave rebellion from Kubrick and producer/star Kirk Douglas is a true classic, despite its length.

METROPOLIS (1926)

Original version of Fritz Lang's spectacular, highly-influential vision of a teeming, politically dubious urban future.

BONNIE AND CLYDE (1967)

Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway pepper the American Midwest with bullets in this intelligent, amoral, genre-busting gangster movie.

KING KONG (1933)

With two iconic 'performances' - Kong's and Fay Wray's - and one of the all-time climaxes: at the Empire State building, this has 'classic' written all over it.

GET CARTER (1971)

British gangster classic starring Michael Caine as the eminently quotable, ultimately tough Jack Carter.

THE SEARCHERS (1956)

A moody, intelligent Western starring John Wayne in his most complex role as Ethan Edwards, the eternal outsider.

THE SEVENTH SEAL (1957)

Affectionately referenced/spoofed in many movies since - most famously Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey - the great Ingmar Bergman's The Seventh Seal features as its central motif a knight taking on Death at a game of chess. The prize? His life.

71 to 80

DON'T LOOK NOW (1973)

Chilling but moving classic of British cinema. Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland star as a couple who move to Venice after the death of their daughter, only to encounter forebodings of death amid its dank off-season canals.

BRIEF ENCOUNTER (1945)

David Lean breaks out the stiff upper lips for his restrained, yet emotionally charged, examination of forbidden passions in 1940s England.

M*A*S*H (1970)

Anti-establishment comedy from Robert Altman set during the Korean War but satirising the US Vietnam war effort. Stars Donald Sutherland, Elliot Gould and Robert Duvall.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION (1971)

The cop thriller that has been much copied but rarely matched, featuring one of the best car chases ever committed to film. And Gene Hackman isn't bad, either.

TOP HAT (1935)

Arguably the classiest and funniest of the RKO Astaire-Rogers musicals. Top Hat offers something close to perfect cinematic escapism.

THE PRODUCERS (1968)

Quite possibly Brooks's finest hour (although Blazing Saddles gives it a run for its money), The Producers blends out-and-out slapstick with satire daring enough in its subject matter to raise a few eyebrows even today.

THREE COLOURS: BLUE(1993), THREE COLOURS: WHITE (1993), THREE COLOURS: RED(1994)

Extraordinary classic films of modern European cinema. Breathtaking cinematography, a magnificent score and mesmerising performances create a truly superlative experience.

CABARET (1972)

Fosse's extraordinary adaptation of the Kander-Ebb musical won eight Academy Awards including those for Best Director (Fosse), Best Actress (Minnelli) and Best Supporting Actor (Grey).

GOLDFINGER (1964)

James takes on nasty Auric Goldfinger, who has a dastardly plan to irradiate the US gold reserves with the help of Pussy Galore, in the best of the early Bond movies.

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (1937)

One of the all-time great Disney animations, and an unexpectedly resonant story, with oh-so-demure Snow White brilliantly counterpoised by the Wicked Queen and those great character 'actors' - the dwarves.

81 to 90

THE GOLD RUSH (1925)

The Tramp ventures into the Klondike in search of romance and riches, but finds only misery and munched footwear in an all-time favourite from one of Britain's most gifted sons.

HIGH NOON (1952)

Marshal Will Kane (Gary Cooper) awaits the arrival of a killer in this minimalist but powerful western. A devastating rehearsal of what would come to be one of the genre's major concerns.

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (1977)

Classic 70s disco movie with a star-making turn from John Travolta that explores the simmering frustrations of youth to the most memorable of soundtracks.

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (1938)

A massive (by 30s' standards) budget ensured the sets, costume and colour were as spectacular as the swordfighting. An inspiration for later blockbusting epics such as Star Wars and Indiana Jones and as the tagline said, 'Only the rainbow can capture its brilliance!' Quite.

ENTER THE DRAGON (1973)

In the film that saw Bruce Lee finally achieve true global stardom, the Dragon takes on an entire army on a remote island. And wins. The chop-socky film to beat them all.

BREATHLESS (A BOUT DE SOUFFLE) (1960)

Paris never looked more romantic than in this fractured, amoral tale of a Bogart-obsessed fantasist who shoots a cop and takes up with an old flame.

ICE COLD IN ALEX (1958)

Fondly remembered as a Sunday TV fixture, this WWII yarn about the crew of an army ambulance stuck in the desert achieves classic status through its powerfully straightforward storytelling and a quality supporting cast.

BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN (1925)

Eisenstein's celebrated documentary style re-creation of the 1905 anti-Tsarist uprising by Russian sailors is a meticulous exercise in montage, stirring visuals - and propaganda.

THE AFRICAN QUEEN (1951)

C.S. Forester's straightforward adventure story became a beautifully understated yet unforgettably steamy and tense thriller in the hands of John Huston. Sizzles with the chemistry between stars Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn.

THE GENERAL (1926)

There's love, locomotives and laughs in this great silent comedy set during the American Civil War starring, co-written by and directed by the inimitable Buster Keaton.

91 to 100

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT (1964)

The Beatles' first movie, documenting a fictional day in the life of John, Paul, George and Ringo. Madcap adventures and classic songs abound.

WAY OUT WEST (1937)

The finest comic duo in cinema venture to the Wild West, with hilarious results. A parade of perfect gags are given a human dimension by Ollie and Stan's inimically immature antics.

HENRY V (1944)

Definitive screen version of the Bard's most patriotic work, featuring an amazing man-of-the-match performance from Laurence Olivier who somehow fitted directing and producing duties around his sensational leading turn.

EASY RIDER (1969)

Drug-runners (Fonda, Hopper and Nicholson) take to their choppers and discover an intolerant America on the proceeds of a coke deal. The film that became an anthem for the 60s cultural dialogue on freedom, individualism and patriotism.

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1985)

One of only a handful of homegrown 80s hits, this touching film, scripted by Hanif Kureshi, introduced Daniel Day-Lewis and broke barriers with its central gay romance.

BELLE DE JOUR (1967)

A stunning psychological drama about a bored housewife's bizarre sexual fantasies from director Luis Buñuel, featuring a career-best performance from Catherine Deneuve.

THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)

A tour-de-force of gothic expressionism from an early master of horror. Although the film is already parodying the genre, there's plenty of pathos and intelligence in this beautifully crafted and moving story.

THE TERMINATOR (1984)

The sci-fi thriller that launched the careers of James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger into the stratosphere is still endlessly entertaining.

SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING (1960)

A very young Albert Finney makes his debut as a prototypically Angry Young Man in this ground-breaking piece of social realism - experimental for its times, and still a fascinating study of youthful post-war disaffection

DO THE RIGHT THING (1989)

Tempers finally boil over in Brooklyn, NY, after a long, stiflingly hot summer day of racial and familial tension in Lee's deft mix of comedy and acute social observation.

(Document created by Adam).