

TAPESCRIPT

One of the most remarkable developments in the recent history of film making has been the revival of the Historical epic. After lying dormant for almost forty years, this spectacular and lavish genre of film making made an unexpected reappearance with Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* in 2000. When it went on to win five Oscars and to earn over \$ 458 million at the box office, Hollywood was forced to re-examine this area of film making.

So, what exactly is a historical epic? To explain that we have to go back to the late 1950s and the film that marked the start of the brief Golden age of the epic, *Ben Hur*. *Ben Hur* had all the classic ingredients of the historical epic. It was long, it was set in a long distant period of history, it featured lots of battles, and it had big stars and even bigger sets. Directed by William Wyler and released in 1959, the film had taken six years to make and had cost \$15 million the most expensive film ever made at the time. But it went on to gain eleven Oscars and huge profits for MGM.

There followed a series of superb epic films. In 1960 there was legendary director Stanley Kubrick's powerful *Spartacus*, starring Kirk Douglas and Lawrence Olivier - the film that was in fact Ridley Scott's inspiration for *Gladiator*. The next year Charlton Heston, the star of *Ben Hur*, appeared alongside Sophia Loren in *El Cid*, the moving story of Spanish hero Rodrigo Diaz attempts to drive the Moors out of Spain, 1962, saw the release of perhaps the greatest epic of them all, David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, featuring a young Irish actor who had never appeared on screen before, Peter O'Toole.

The end of this short golden age came in 1963 with the release of *Cleopatra*, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz and starring Elizabeth Taylor, the film had cost a fortune to make and was never able to make a profit at the box office. By the early 1960s, television was beginning to eclipse films, cinema attendances were falling and the amounts of money film makers were earning were simply too small to cover the enormous production costs of historical epics.

This changed with the advent of computer generated imaging, or CGI as it is known. In the late 1990s. Suddenly it was possible to have as many soldiers and horses, Roman arenas and Trojan city walls as you wanted, without having to pay extras or build huge sets. But with the disappointing box office for Wolfgang Peterson's *Troy* of 2004 and Oliver Stone's *Alexander* of 2005, perhaps this second golden age of historical epic may also prove to be short-lived.

1. Total English.Upper -Intermediate. _Workbook. Pearson. Longman Group.
2. Ready for IELTS
3. v-olymp.ru 9-10 классы
4. <https://online.olimpiada.ru>
5. v-olymp.ru 11 классы