

Total English

Intermediate

Iron Man



Reading

1 Look at the photo of a film poster.

- 1 Why do you think films and comic books about superheroes are so popular?
- 2 Who are the most popular comic book characters in your country? Why do you think this is?
- 3 What do you know about the superhero Iron Man?

2 Read the review of *Iron Man* quickly and tick which of the following are mentioned.

- the acting
- the directing
- the plot
- the special effects
- the soundtrack
- the screenplay

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The release of the new *Iron Man* movie this month has been widely anticipated by comic book fans worldwide. Even movie-goers who aren't comic book fans, however, will enjoy this **smart**, high-impact superhero movie. The film is based on one of Marvel Comics' oldest but least-known heroes and Iron Man is different from many of the other superheroes, like Spider-Man, in that essentially, he makes himself. Iron Man's alter-ego – billionaire weapons tycoon Tony Stark – creates his own body armour to fight the bad guys.

The movie begins as Stark is forced to radically examine his life when, after demonstrating his newest missile, he is captured and forced to make his captors an exact copy of the new weapon. Instead, he builds a suit that enables him to take on multiple opponents; a suit so advanced that it contains nanotechnology. This allows Stark to store parts of the armour in his own bones, as well as to control it through direct brain impulses. He no longer needs to waste valuable time changing in and out of his suit; he merely calls the larger pieces to him, as he gets ready to fight.

Iron Man has several advantages over many other superhero films. It features a solid cast, **snappy** dialogue and impressive special effects. But most importantly, it's fun. Director Jon Favreau makes some excellent choices that stop the film from being boring. The most notable of these is casting Robert Downey Jr. in the title role. Playing Tony Stark, Downey manages to find many ways of making the character just as **entertaining** as the superhero himself.

Another **remarkable** feature is that viewers actually have to wait a bit before Stark puts on his metallic armour. The fact that we don't mind too much about this is largely because of Downey. He can effortlessly elicit laughter or empathy, almost at will. With Downey providing the fun and the attitude, when the action does come, the calm, straightforward approach is perfect.

So, the film works, and it works well. Marvel Comics' giant, Stan Lee, who co-created Iron Man, knows that to make the character **intriguing**, he needs to be not only impressive, but also real, with genuine hang-ups and faults. Like Lee, director Favreau, knows that great visuals are essential, but good characters and stories can make those images even more **compelling**. Fortunately for both Lee and Favreau, the A-list cast – Terrence Howard, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jeff Bridges, and especially Robert Downey Jr. – are brilliant at translating all this into a must-see movie.



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3 Read the review again and for each question, choose the correct alternative A, B or C.

1 According to the writer, people who don't read comic books will probably
A enjoy different aspects of the film from those who do read them.
B like the film as much as those who do read them.
C understand very little of the film compared with those who do read them.

2 The thing that makes Iron Man different from other superheroes is that
A he is self-made.
B he looks very old-fashioned.
C he copies ideas from Spider-Man.

3 When he is taken prisoner, he is told to
A make himself some armour.
B make some armour for his captors.
C make a weapon for his captors.

4 The new technology Stark uses means that he can
A change his bones into iron
B use the power of thought to control his iron suit
C make the suit larger whenever he wants

5 In the third paragraph, the writer implies that
A Iron Man is occasionally boring.
B many superhero films are not very good.
C the character of Tony Stark is not very entertaining.

6 What does the writer say about Downey's acting?
A He is very good at showing many different emotions.
B He is especially good during the action parts of the film.
C He is brilliant at the comedy moments.

7 According to the last paragraph, one of the most important factors in making a good film is having
A a cast of well-known A-list actors.
B compelling visuals and special effects.
C interesting characters who show different sides of their personalities.



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Vocabulary

4 Replace the underlined words/phrases with the correct highlighted adjective from the text.

1 I don't think *Horton hears a Who!* is a great film but it's amusing and interesting.

2 *No Country for Old Men* is a very intelligent movie – the screenplay is particularly well-done.

3 The dialogue in *The Simpsons Movie* is just as short, clear and funny as in the TV series.

4 *The Kite Runner* is a good film but I found the book even more interesting and exciting that you have to pay attention.

5 *The Other Boleyn Girl* is a film which is really interesting because it's strange, mysterious and unexpected with many twists and turns in the plot.

6 12-year-old Abigail Breslin, star of *Little Miss Sunshine*, is surprisingly good and therefore deserving praise.

5 Complete these sentences with the phrases in the box. Find the phrases in the text to help you if necessary.

based on begins as which features must-see movie in the title role of the release of

1 Millions of people are looking forward to _____ the next *Harry Potter* film.

2 *La vie en rose* is a brilliant film _____ the life of French singer Edith Piaf.

3 Harrison Ford will be back _____ another *Indiana Jones* film this year.

4 *Juno* is an entertaining film _____ a brilliant screenplay and a very good cast.

5 *High School Musical 2* _____ the summer holidays are just starting.

6 *The Bourne Ultimatum* is a brilliant film – definitely **the** _____ of last year.



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Speaking

6 Think about a film you've seen and tell another student about it. Before you start, prepare what you're going to say by making notes for these headings. You can also use words and phrases from exercises 2, 4 and 5.

- Outline of what type of film it is
- Brief description of main characters and plot
- Particularly good things about the film
- Anything you didn't like about it
- Summary of your opinion

Writing

7 Write a review of the film you talked about. Use the plan and your notes in exercise 6 to help organise your writing.



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ANSWERS

2

They are all mentioned except the soundtrack.

3

1B 2A 3C 4B 5B 6A 7C

4

- 1 entertaining
- 2 smart
- 3 snappy
- 4 compelling
- 5 intriguing
- 6 remarkable

5

- 1 the release of
- 2 based on
- 3 in the title role of
- 4 which features
- 5 begins as
- 6 must-see movie



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