

A

Useful adjectives for describing works and performances

That TV series is **overrated**. [not as good as people say]

The plot was so **hackneyed**! [done so often it is boring]

The play was **disjointed** and difficult to follow. [unconnected and not in a clear order]

The film *Green Aliens from Mars* was a bit **far-fetched**. [impossible to believe]

The play was a bit **risqué**, and some religious leaders criticised it. [/rɪ'skeɪ/ against accepted social standards and likely to shock some people]

It was a **gripping** film from start to finish. [exciting and keeping your attention the whole time]

It was a **harrowing** documentary about war and refugee camps. [extremely upsetting]

It's a **moving** story about a child whose mother dies. [making you feel pity or sadness]

What a truly **memorable/unforgettable** performance. [you remember it long after]

The ballerina's performance was **understated**. [done or expressed in a simple but attractive style]

The play was long and **tedious**. [boring]

That new stand-up comedian is **hilarious**. [extremely funny]

Language help

The adjectives above can also be used about writing, e.g. *The plot of the novel is far-fetched/hilarious/gripping, etc.*



B

Success and failure

The audience clearly loved the play – the **applause** was deafening. [clapping to show enjoyment] So it's not surprising that it got **glowing reviews**. [excellent reviews]

The audience called for several **encores** after his concert. [/ɪŋkɔːz/ calls from the audience to perform some more]

She got a **standing ovation** as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. [the audience stood up and applauded at the end of the performance]

Her latest album has already won three **awards**. [prizes/honours, e.g. 'Best album of the Year']

Sam Dell won the award for 'Best **up-and-coming** actor'. [likely to become very successful]

The critics generally agree that her new symphony is a **masterpiece**. [very great work of art]

She has become **typecast** as a middle-aged mother in TV drama series. [always associated with that type of role]

His latest opera was **panned/slated** by the critics, which is strange, since all his previous works have been universally **lauded**. [very negatively criticised] [highly praised]

The play **bombed** in London's West End, although it had been really successful in New York. [was a failure]

The show was **booed** on the first night. [got disapproving noises from the audience]

The new TV soap has turned out to be a **total flop**. [complete failure]

Novak **was** definitely **miscast** as the father in that film; he was very **unconvincing**. [was the wrong person for the role] [not seeming real or true]

C

Nouns relating to performing

Megan did well in the **audition** and is now busy going to **rehearsals** for the play. [short performance where actors show what they can do, hoping to get a role] [practice performances]

I liked her **interpretation** of the song 'Yesterday'. [way of understanding and performing it]

I prefer the original **version** by the Beatles. [one of several performances that exist] None of the **covers** are as good, in my opinion. [versions of songs that are not the original]

The actor's **portrayal** of the mother in the film was very tender. [the picture she created]

Exercises

20.1 Give an adjective from A which is *opposite* in meaning to the following words.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 credible, believable | 4 exaggerated |
| 2 original, innovative | 5 coherent, smooth-flowing |
| 3 underrated | 6 fascinating |

20.2 Now use other adjectives from A instead of the underlined words in these sentences. Make any other changes that are necessary.

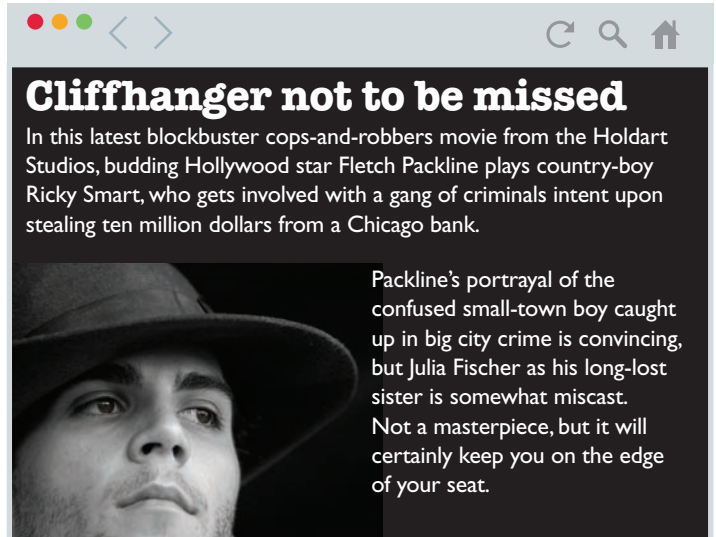
- The musical shocked some people because they thought it was immoral and was attacked by several politicians and religious figures.
- Her dance performance was one of those you will never forget, simply marvellous.
- I can't remember the last time I saw such a film that keeps you in suspense and totally absorbed all the time.
- It was a play that aroused very deep emotions in me.
- It's a film that is difficult to watch without getting very upset.
- His first stand-up routine had the audience falling off their seats with laughter.

20.3 Fill the gaps in this paragraph with words from the opposite page. The first letter is given to help you.

Two new musicals opened last week. The first, Dogs, turned out to be a total ¹f..... It was loudly ²b..... by the audience and ³p..... by critics, who had praise only for the male lead's ⁴i..... of his role. The other show, Danger, has, however, received ⁵g..... reviews and has been given a standing ⁶o..... at every performance so far.


20.4 Read the text and underline the words or phrases that match the eight definitions. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- the way an actor creates a picture of a person
- he/she is the wrong actor for that part
- a film/book/play that keeps you in suspense
- keep you in suspense / constantly excited
- up-and-coming
- a film which huge numbers of people will go and see
- a police or crime theme
- a very great work of art



Cliffhanger not to be missed

In this latest blockbuster cops-and-robbers movie from the Holdart Studios, budding Hollywood star Fletch Packline plays country-boy Ricky Smart, who gets involved with a gang of criminals intent upon stealing ten million dollars from a Chicago bank.



Packline's portrayal of the confused small-town boy caught up in big city crime is convincing, but Julia Fischer as his long-lost sister is somewhat miscast. Not a masterpiece, but it will certainly keep you on the edge of your seat.

20.5 Over to you

Think about performances that you have seen. What words from this unit could you use to describe them or to talk about them?