

The Oscars

1) Pre-reading tasks

a) Talk to a partner and discuss the following questions.

- What do you know about the Oscars in general? What have you heard about this year's Academy Awards?
- Which of the four films listed below would you be most interested in watching? Say why.
 1. A thrilling action movie about soldiers facing impossible challenges in a huge war.
 2. A historical drama about family, love, and loss in Shakespeare's time.
 3. A modern retelling of the classic story about a scientist who creates life with dangerous consequences.
 4. A dark and suspenseful story about crime, secrets and revenge.
- Can you guess the film title (all of them are nominated in the Best Picture category at the 98th Academy Awards)?

b) Share your ideas with the class.

2) Reading tasks

a) After the Golden Globe Awards and the BAFTA Awards have finished, and with the Screen Actors Guild Awards coming soon, the 2026 Oscars are getting closer. Match the questions with the answers below. There are two questions you do not need.

- A. Who will present the awards?
- B. Who might be best-dressed?
- C. Where will the ceremony be held?
- D. Which films have the most nominations?
- E. When were the nominations announced?
- F. Which musical numbers will be presented live?
- G. Where can you watch the Oscars in Austria?
- H. How long will the ceremony last?
- I. When are the 2026 Oscars?
- J. Who will host the show?
- K. Who might win?

1. The ceremony will take place on Sunday, 15 March 2026, at 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT). This is at 01:00 (1 a.m.) in Austria on 16 March.
2. The awards will be presented at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, where the Oscars are usually held.
3. The host will be the comedian Conan O'Brien. He hosted the ceremony last year and is returning this year after taking over from Jimmy Kimmel.
4. The list of Oscar nominees was released on 22 January 2026. The final voting round will take place between 26 February and 5 March.
5. The film *Sinners* has received 16 nominations, more than any other film this year. It is followed by *One Battle After Another* with 13 nominations. The films *Frankenstein*, *Marty Supreme* and *Sentimental Value* each have received nine nominations.
6. Experts currently think that *One Battle After Another*, directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, could be awarded Best Picture and Best Director.

For the acting awards:

- Jessie Buckley (*Hamnet*) and Timothée Chalamet (*Marty Supreme*) are strong favourites for Best Actress and Best Actor.
 - In the supporting categories, the results are less clear. Teyana Taylor (*One Battle After Another*) may compete closely with Amy Madigan (*Weapons*) for Best Supporting Actress.
 - For Best Supporting Actor, Stellan Skarsgård, Jacob Elordi, and Benicio del Toro are among the main contenders.
7. Only two nominated songs will be performed live:
 - “Golden” from KPop Demon Hunters
 - “I Lied to You” from *Sinners*
 Other nominated songs, including music by Nick Cave and Bryce Dessner for *Train Dreams*, will not be performed live. Songs from *Viva Verdi!* will also only be shown in short film clips. This decision has been criticised by songwriter Diane Warren, who said it is unfair to the other nominees.
 8. The presenters have not all been announced yet. However, last year’s acting winners will return to present awards:
 - Mikey Madison
 - Adrien Brody
 - Kieran Culkin
 - Zoe Saldaña
 9. The ceremony can be watched in Austria mainly live on ORF 1 on television, as well as via streaming services such as Disney+ and Joyn.

b) Now complete the info boxes with names from task 2a. Use your background knowledge or do some online research if necessary.

Name: _____
Born: 18 April 1963, in Brookline, Massachusetts, USA
Occupation: comedian, television host, writer, producer
Famous for: hosting *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* (1993–2009), *The Tonight Show* (2009–2010) and *Conan* (2010–2021), writing for *The Simpsons*
Style: witty, self-deprecating humour; known for sketches and celebrity interviews
Fun fact: According to a DNA test he took, he is 100% Irish.

Name: _____
Born: 30 September 1982, in New York City, USA
Occupation: actor
Famous for: *Succession*, *Igby Goes Down*, *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*
Style: known for both comedy and drama, often plays witty or clever characters
Fun fact: Kieran is the younger brother of the actor who played Kevin in *Kevin Home Alone*.

Name: _____
Born: 28 December 1989, in Killarney, Ireland
Profession: actress and singer
Nationality: Irish
Famous for: *Chernobyl*, *The Lost Daughter*, *Hamnet*
Fun fact: She trained as a classical singer before focusing on acting.

Name: _____
Born: 27 December 1995, in New York City, USA
Occupation: actor
Famous for: *Call Me by Your Name*, *Dune*, *Little Women*
Fun fact: A “ship name” for him and his girlfriend (i.e. combining their names) could be “Kylothée” or “Chalenner”.

Name: _____
Born: 26 June 1997, Brisbane, Australia
Profession: actor
Famous for: *Euphoria*, *The Kissing Booth*
Fun fact: He studied business before becoming an actor and almost missed his first big role because of school exams.

Name: _____
Born: 19 June 1978, in Passaic, New Jersey, USA
Occupation: actress, producer
Famous for: *Avatar*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Avengers* films
Style: versatile actress known for action, sci-fi and strong female roles
Fun fact: She trained in ballet from a young age and originally wanted to be a dancer.

3) Reading and speaking tasks

- a) Work in pairs. Student A gets text A and student B gets text B. Read your text carefully and do not show your text to your partner. Then explain your information orally to your partner. Ask questions if something is unclear. After exchanging all the information, complete the Oscar scandals timeline (see page 7) together. Finally, check with both texts.

Scandalous Oscar moments: From 1973 to 2022

Student A



1973 – Marlon Brando refuses his Oscar

Marlon Brando won Best Actor for *The Godfather*, but he did not go to the Oscars. Instead, he sent Sacheen Littlefeather, a Native American activist, to speak for him. She wore traditional Apache clothes and told the audience that Brando refused the award to protest the way Hollywood treated

Native Americans. Some people in the audience booed, but others clapped. Three months later, on *The Dick Cavett Show*, Brando said he had no regrets. He believed it was a great chance for a Native American to speak to millions of people.

1974 – A naked man takes the stage

During the ceremony, Robert Opel ran across the stage wearing only his moustache. He interrupted English actor David Niven, who was about to introduce Elizabeth Taylor. Niven joked, “Probably the only laugh that man will ever get in his life is by stripping off and showing his shortcomings.” Surprisingly, Opel was not arrested or removed. He even held a press conference after the event, saying, “People shouldn’t be ashamed of being nude in public.” Opel later disappeared from the public eye but tragically was shot in 1979.

2003 – Adrien Brody kisses Halle Berry

Adrien Brody won Best Actor for *The Pianist*. During the ceremony, when presenter Halle Berry was on stage, Brody suddenly picked her up, dipped her back and kissed her without asking. He then joked to the audience, “I bet they didn’t tell you that was in the gift bag.” Berry stayed composed but spent most of Brody’s speech wiping her lower face. This unexpected kiss made headlines immediately, and years later, it was discussed as an example of unwanted physical contact. Only then it was called out for being a violation of Berry’s personal space. In 2006, when a reporter asked Berry if Brody was a good kisser, she replied, “Since we didn’t really kiss, I can’t tell you how good he was, but I can tell you this: He was wet.”

Scandalous Oscar Moments – 1973 to 2022

Student B

2013 – Jennifer Lawrence falls

Jennifer Lawrence won Best Actress for *Silver Linings Playbook*. As she climbed the stairs to accept her Oscar, she tripped on her long dress and fell. The audience gasped, but she quickly got up and continued. Production designer Derek McLane, who was sitting in the audience, remembered thinking that something had spilled on the stairs, but then he realised it was her dress. She was able to laugh about herself and handled the situation gracefully.

2016 – Chris Rock addresses #OscarsSoWhite

In 2016, the Oscars had no major acting nominations for people of colour for the second year in a row. Host Chris Rock addressed the issue in his opening monologue. He called the Oscars “the White People’s Choice Awards” and made the audience laugh while pointing out the lack of diversity in Hollywood. His 11-minute speech was carefully prepared with 17 writers over six weeks, and it became one of the most talked-about moments in Oscar history.

2017 – Best Picture mistake

During the 2017 ceremony, presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty announced the wrong winner for Best Picture. Their envelope said *La La Land* had won, and the producers even gave their acceptance speeches. After 2 minutes and 23 seconds, producer Jordan Horowitz interrupted and announced that *Moonlight* was the real winner. The cast and crew were shocked. Director Barry Jenkins said, “Even in my dreams, this could not be true.”

2022 – Will Smith slaps Chris Rock

During the ceremony, Chris Rock made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith’s shaved head (a result of hair loss) while presenting an award. Will Smith walked onto the stage and slapped him across the face. Smith then shouted, “Keep my wife’s name out of your mouth!” This moment became one of the most talked-about events of the year. It created countless memes and sparked serious discussions about violence and respect at public events.



b) Discuss the scandals with your partner. Which one do you find the most scandalous and why? Then share with the group.

4) Imagine that you have won Best Actress or Best Actor and give an acceptance speech for your award to your partner. Then take turns.

Think about:

- who you want to thank
- what you experienced while making the film
- how you feel about winning the award and what this success means for your future

You may also get some help online. Scan the QR code below and fill in the word prompts to get inspiration for your speech.

By the way, the longest speech is generally believed to be by Greer Garson in 1943, when she won Best Actress for the film *Mrs. Miniver*. Her speech reportedly lasted about five to seven minutes. The shortest speeches consisted of a simple "Thank you" (e.g. Patty Duke in 1962). Aim for one to three minutes!



<https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/oscars-2017-write-your-own-speech-by-filling-in-the-blank/>

OSCAR SCANDALS OVER THE YEARS

Marlon -----
refuses his Oscar. He
wants to protest against
the way Hollywood is
treating

at the time.



1974

A ----- man takes
the stage during the
ceremony. Afterwards he
says people shouldn't be
ashamed of being naked
in -----.



2013

----- Lawrence trips on
her long dress and falls while
climbing the stairs to accept
her Oscar for Best -----.



----- Brody kisses Halle
----- unexpectedly. When
asked about it three years later,
Berry says that the kiss wasn't a
real kiss - but very -----.



----- Smith
----- Chris
----- after a
joke about Jada
Pinkett Smith's
shaved head, a
result of hair
loss.



2017

Presenters -----
Dunaway and Warren
----- announce the
wrong winner for Best
----- "Moonlight" is
the real winner, not "La La
Land".




#OscarsSo-----: the
African American host Chris
Rock addresses the fact that
for the ----- year in a
row, there are no big
nominations for people of
colour.


The Oscars: Key

1a) **1.** *One Battle After Another*, **2.** *Hamnet*, **3.** *Frankenstein*, **4.** *Sinners*; **2a)** A–8, C–2, D–5, E–4, F–7, G–9, I–1, J–3, K–6, Not used: B, H; **2b)** Conan O'Brien, Kieran Culkin, Jessie Buckley, Timothée Chalamet, Jacob Elordi, Zoe Saldaña; **3)** see illustration below


1973
Marlon Brando refuses his Oscar. He wants to protest against the way Hollywood is treating Native Americans at the time.




1974
A naked man takes the stage during the ceremony. Afterwards he says people shouldn't be ashamed of being naked in public.




2013
Jennifer Lawrence trips on her long dress and falls while climbing the stairs to accept her Oscar for Best Actress.




2003
Adrien Brody kisses Halle Berry unexpectedly. When asked about it three years later, Berry says that the kiss wasn't a real kiss - but very wet.



2022
Will Smith slaps Chris Rock after a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith's shaved head, a result of hair loss.



2017
Presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty announce the wrong winner for Best Picture. "Moonlight" is the real winner, not "La La Land".



2016
#OscarsSoWhite: the African American host Chris Rock addresses the fact that for the second year in a row, there are no big nominations for people of colour.

