

Level: Intermediate
Lesson: 20
Title: "The History of the Oscars"

Summary:

Vanessa, Alexander and Nick talk about the history of the Oscars.

In this broadcast Vanessa, Alexander and Nick are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.

Dialogue:

Vanessa: In tonight's show Nick will be reporting on the history of the Oscars. Nick do you know when the first Oscars were handed out?



Alexander: Oh let me answer this question Nick.

Nick: Ok, go ahead Alexander.



Alexander: Any movie fan knows the answer to this question ...it was sometime in the thirties when talkies I mean talking movies had just begun.

Nick: That was really **close** Alexander but actually, the first Academy Awards **were handed out** on May 16, 1929.



Vanessa: Was there a ceremony back then?

Nick: Yes! And it was held at a hotel in Hollywood. And, even though it wasn't so important back in those days, it was still pretty glamorous.



Vanessa: In Hollywood, of course. **Where the action is**, where else!

Alexander: How many people attended the ceremony, Nick?

Nick: More than 270 and the tickets for guests cost \$5.

Vanessa: Wow, that's a lot of people considering it was the year the Great Depression started.

Alexander: Right! The great depression started in 1929; I'd never **made the connection** before! Anyway ... was it as full of suspense as it is now?



Nick: No, not really.

Vanessa: What do you mean Nick?

Nick: Well, the winners were known before the big night. You see the results had been given to the newspapers in advance!

Alexander: So the results were not sealed in an envelope..?

Nick: No, no. They started that the next year.

Vanessa: Was it popular in the beginning?



Nick: **You bet.** In the second year enthusiasm for the Awards was so high that an L.A. radio station covered the ceremony live.

Vanessa: Now they're on TV, with millions of people watching from all over the world. And the paparazzi sharks and tabloid reporters get **fodder** for their papers the next day.



Now answer the following question...

What are Vanessa, Alexander and Nick talking about?

They're talking about the history of the Oscar Awards

Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on the details...

Part 1

Vanessa: In tonight's show Nick will be reporting on the history of the Oscars. Nick do you know when the first Oscars were handed out?

Alexander: Oh let me answer this question Nick.

Nick: Ok, go ahead Alexander.

Alexander: Any movie fan knows the answer to this question ...it was sometime in the thirties when talkies I mean talking movies had just begun.

Nick: That was really **close** Alexander but actually, the first Academy Awards were **handed out** on May 16, 1929.

Vanessa: Was there a ceremony back then?

Nick: Yes! And it was held at a hotel in Hollywood. And, even though it wasn't so important back in those days, it was still pretty glamorous.

Vanessa: In Hollywood, of course. **Where the action is**, where else!

Now answer some questions...

1. Nick says: "That was really **close** Alexander." What does "close" mean?

Close means "almost correct."

2. Nick says "The first Academy Awards **were handed out** on May 16, 1929." What does 'hand out' mean?

'Hand out' in this case means to give an award.

3. Vanessa says: "In Hollywood, of course. **Where the action is**, where else!" What does "where the action is" mean?

"Where the action is" is used to describe an important place, where important things take place." So here Vanessa is trying to explain to her listeners that Hollywood is an important place for actors.

Now listen to the second part of the dialogue...

Part 2

Alexander: How many people attended the ceremony, Nick?

- Nick:** More than 270 and the tickets for guests cost \$5.
- Vanessa:** Wow, that's a lot of people considering it was the year the Great Depression started.
- Alexander:** Right! The great depression started in 1929; I'd never **made the connection** before! Anyway...was it as full of suspense as it is now?
- Nick:** No, not really.
- Vanessa:** What do you mean Nick?
- Nick:** Well, the winners were known before the big night. You see the results had been given to the newspapers in advance!
- Alexander:** So the results were not sealed in an envelope..?
- Nick:** No, no. They started that the next year.
- Vanessa:** Was it popular in the beginning?
- Nick:** **You bet.** In the second year enthusiasm for the Awards was so high that an L.A. radio station covered the ceremony live.
- Vanessa:** Now they're on TV, with millions of people watching from all over the world. And the paparazzi sharks and tabloid reporters get **fodder** for their papers the next day.

Now answer some questions...

1. Alexander says: "I'd never **made the connection** before!" What does "make the connection" mean?

"Make the connection" means to think of the similarities; here Alexander is trying to say that he hadn't realized that both of these two events started the same year.

2. Nick says: **"You bet!"** What does "you bet" mean?

"You bet" is an informal expression and it means "certainly."

3. Vanessa says: "And the paparazzi sharks and tabloid reporters get **fodder** for their papers the next day." What does "fodder" mean?

"Fodder" here means "material."

Please visit our site at www.hau.gr to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.

GLOSSARY

Attend (verb, formal): to go to an event, place, etc.
e.g. Over two hundred people attended the funeral.

Ceremony (noun): a formal public event with special traditions, actions, or words.
e.g. An awards ceremony

Glamorous (adjective): attractive in an exciting and special way.
e.g. a glamorous woman/outfit

Hand out (phrasal verb): to give something to each person in a group or place.
e.g. The teacher asked her to hand out the worksheets.

Hold (verb): to make something, especially a meeting, event, party or an election happen.
e.g. Could we hold a meeting to discuss this tomorrow afternoon?

In advance: before a particular time, or before doing a particular thing.
e.g. If you're going to come, please let me know in advance.

Make a connection: link or join two facts, ideas etc.
e.g. The police have made a connection between the missing diamonds and my stolen car.

Seal (verb): close a container or space by covering it with something so that air or other substances cannot get in or out.
e.g. seal the envelope

Suspense (noun): the feeling of excitement or anxiety which you have when you are waiting for something to happen and are uncertain about what it is going to be.
e.g. She kept him in suspense for several days before she said that she would marry him.

Tabloid (noun, adjective): a type of popular newspaper with small pages which has many pictures and short simple reports.
e.g. The story about her divorce made the front pages in all the tabloids.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

Practice using the words in the glossary. Choose the most appropriate word from the glossary to complete the following sentences.

1. A _____ to honor those who gave their lives in the war will be held next Sunday.
2. Being a model is not as _____ a job as it may appear.
3. Being a _____ journalist means invading people's private lives.
4. I had never made the _____ between Easter and the phases of the moon until someone pointed it out to me.
5. Please _____ the documents and mail them to the President.
6. The election will be _____ on 8th of August.
7. Fortunately we had booked the tickets _____ or we would never have found a seat.
8. The meeting is on the fifth and we're hoping everyone will _____.
9. The _____ is killing me. I can't wait to find out who won!
10. They stood on the street corner _____ leaflets.

Activity 2

Read the following text about the Oscars which contains 8 errors in the passive voice. Can you correct the errors?

The Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars, presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to recognize excellence of professionals in the film industry, including directors, actors, and writers. The formal ceremony at which the awards are being presented is among the most prominent and most watched film awards ceremonies in the world. The 1st Academy Awards ceremony is being held on Thursday, May 16, 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood to honor outstanding film achievements of 1927 and 1928. It hosted by actor Douglas Fairbanks and director William C. DeMille. Most recently, the 79th Academy Awards ceremony was been held on Sunday, February 25, 2007 at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood to honor outstanding film achievements of 2006. It was hosted by day-time television talk show host Ellen DeGeneres. The 80th Academy Awards ceremony is schedule for Sunday, February 24, 2008 and will hosted by Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* host, Jon Stewart. Votes for Oscars have be

counted and certified by the auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers for the past 72 annual awards ceremonies.



KEY TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1. 1. ceremony 2. glamorous 3. tabloid 4. connection 5. seal 6. held 7. in advance 8. attend 9. suspense 10. handing out

Activity 2.

The Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars, **are presented** annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to recognize excellence of professionals in the film industry, including directors, actors, and writers. The formal ceremony at which the awards **are presented** is among the most prominent and most watched film awards ceremonies in the world. The 1st Academy Awards ceremony **was held** on Thursday, May 16, 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood to honor outstanding film achievements of 1927 and 1928. It **was hosted** by actor Douglas Fairbanks and director William C. DeMille. Most recently, the 79th Academy Awards ceremony **was held** on Sunday, February 25, 2007 at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood to honor outstanding film achievements of 2006. It was hosted by day-time television talk show host Ellen DeGeneres. The 80th Academy Awards ceremony **is scheduled** for Sunday, February 24, 2008 and **will be hosted by** Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* host, Jon Stewart. Votes for Oscars **have been counted** and certified by the auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers for the past 72 annual awards ceremonies.