

## A twist in the tale as Netflix goes hunting for Oscars

Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

### 1 Warmer

These words are all associated with the film industry. Complete each word.

1. the American word for *film* m \_\_\_\_\_
2. the centre of the US film industry H \_\_\_\_\_
3. a video-streaming company N \_\_\_\_\_
4. another term for *Oscar* A \_\_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_\_
5. an American television award E \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers will help you.

subscriber

exclusive

nominated

strategy

convention

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a plan or method for achieving something, especially over a long period of time. (para 1)
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who pays money to receive something regularly. (para 1)
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a way of behaving that is generally accepted as being normal and right. (para 2)
4. If something is \_\_\_\_\_, it is limited to a particular person or group and not shared with others. (para 2)
5. If a film is \_\_\_\_\_ for an award, someone officially suggests that it should win a prize. (para 3)

revive

streaming

exploit

newcomer

consecutive

6. \_\_\_\_\_ days are one after the other in order with nothing in between. (para 3)
7. If you \_\_\_\_\_ a situation, you use it so that you get benefit from it, even if it is wrong or unfair to do so. (para 4)
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who has recently started to do something. (para 7)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a technology that enables sound or video to be received by your computer through the internet as a continuous stream. (para 8)
10. If you \_\_\_\_\_ something, you make it successful or popular again. (para 9)

### 3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. How many subscribers does Netflix have?
2. What is Netflix's annual content budget?
3. For how many days does a film have to be shown in Los Angeles before it can be nominated for an Oscar?
4. How many cinema screens are there in the US?
5. How many Emmy nominations did Netflix get in September, 2018?
6. How many Oscars has Netflix won?

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#### Cinema release – a twist in the tale as Netflix goes hunting for Oscars

Mark Sweney

21 November, 2018

- 1 Netflix's film *Roma* was shown in cinemas around the world recently. It is a film that many people think will win an Oscar. Showing a film in cinemas is a change of strategy for Netflix because it hopes to use the marketing power of the Academy Awards to attract more subscribers. The film has received good reviews and is one of three films that Netflix is releasing in cinemas before its 140 million subscribers can watch them.
- 2 In the past, Ted Sarandos, the man in charge of Netflix's \$8 billion annual content budget, has criticized the film industry convention of giving films an exclusive run in cinemas before they can be shown on TV or the internet or sold as DVDs. But that was before Netflix decided that it wants Oscars.
- 3 For a film to be nominated for an Academy Award, it must play in a Los Angeles cinema for a minimum of seven consecutive days. *Roma* was released in LA, New York, Mexico and London, before opening worldwide on Netflix on 14 December. But it will get just three weeks in US cinemas – the other two films will disappear after only a week each – as Netflix meets the minimum requirements.
- 4 "At the moment, Netflix is perhaps exploiting the system a little bit and it is taking advantage of rules for entry. This suggests the situation is benefiting Netflix more than the Oscars," said Richard Broughton, a media analyst. "They are simply meeting the minimum requirements."
- 5 Apart from the Oscar rules, cinema owners have agreed with Hollywood studios that films should be shown in US cinemas for 90 days before they can be shown on TV or the internet or sold as DVDs. The subscription video-on-demand sector, where Netflix operates, was traditionally seen as less important. There are similar agreements in most other countries around the world but with different time limits.
- 6 *Roma* was shown on more than 100 screens around the world. It means it will probably be more successful than Netflix's biggest cinema release before that, *22 July*. But it is very far from the level of a mass-market Hollywood film: the US has more than 40,000 screens and the UK over 4,000.
- 7 It is well known that winning awards sells cinema tickets – or in Netflix's case, attracts new subscribers – but for Netflix, success at the Oscars is also about confirming its position as the digital newcomer that broke the old Hollywood model. It has already taken control of TV. In September, 2018, Netflix broke the record for the most Emmy nominations by winning a total of 112.
- 8 So far, Netflix has achieved 14 Oscar nominations with two wins: *White Helmets* and *Icarus*. But Amazon became the first streaming company to win a best picture Oscar nomination for 2017's *Manchester by the Sea*.
- 9 The 2018 Oscars television broadcast attracted its smallest ever audience, partly because of the streaming revolution. Some people say that Hollywood needs Netflix to revive interest in its awards.
- 10 "This is a changing situation that both sides still need to work out," says Paul Dergarabedian, another media analyst. "But the problem for Netflix is that they want to be considered for the Oscars, but their small-screen distribution model goes against the movie-theatre release convention. Amazon Studios has shown that it is possible to do both."

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#### 4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings to the endings to make statements about the text.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Netflix is showing three of its new films ...                               | a. ... usually sell a lot of cinema tickets.                                    |
| 2. Films can only be nominated for an Oscar ...                                | b. ... after they have been shown in US cinemas for 90 days.                    |
| 3. Films can generally only be shown on TV or the internet or sold as DVDs ... | c. ... to win a best picture Oscar nomination.                                  |
| 4. Films that win awards ...   | d. ... in cinemas before its subscribers can see them on its streaming service. |
| 5. Amazon was the first streaming company ...                                  | e. ... a smaller television audience than in previous years.                    |
| 6. In 2018, the Oscar ceremony attracted ...                                   | f. ... if they have been shown in a Los Angeles cinema.                         |

#### 5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- minimum seven days of a consecutive for
- because revolution the of streaming
- picture best a Oscar nomination
- around other world in the countries most
- before on they TV can shown be
- minimum the meeting requirements

#### 6 Prepositions

Complete the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

of for with of on in

- \_\_\_\_\_ charge
- take advantage \_\_\_\_\_ something
- nominated \_\_\_\_\_ an award
- video \_\_\_\_\_ demand
- a change \_\_\_\_\_ strategy
- \_\_\_\_\_ different time limits

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### 7 Word-building

Complete the table using words from the text.

	verb	noun
1.	agree	
2.	require	
3.	subscribe	
4.	subscribe	(person)
5.	own	(person)
6.	analyse	(person)

### 8 Discussion

- Do you prefer to watch films at the cinema, on the internet or on TV? Why?

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### KEY

#### 1 Warmer

1. movie
2. Hollywood
3. Netflix
4. Academy Award
5. Emmy

#### 2 Key words

1. strategy
2. subscriber
3. convention
4. exclusive
5. nominated
6. consecutive
7. exploit
8. newcomer
9. streaming
10. revive

#### 3 Find the information

1. 140 million
2. \$8 billion
3. seven
4. 40,000
5. 112
6. two

#### 4 Comprehension check

1. d
2. f
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. e

#### 5 Chunks

1. for a minimum of seven consecutive days
2. because of the streaming revolution
3. a best picture Oscar nomination
4. in most other countries around the world
5. before they can be shown on TV
6. meeting the minimum requirements

#### 6 Prepositions

1. in
2. of
3. for
4. on
5. of
6. with

#### 7 Word-building

1. agreement
2. requirement
3. subscription
4. subscriber
5. owner
6. analyst