



INACCURACIES IN FILMS

Although many of these films lead every year to the Academy Award nominations, critics are quick to point to the film's inaccuracies. *TIME* takes a look at films that, while they may entertain, also fall short of the truth

THE AVIATOR (2004)

In a scene set in 1928, Howard Hughes (Leonardo DiCaprio) asks for some chocolate chip cookies, a cookie not invented until 1937.



GLADIATOR (2000)

The climax showing Roman Emperor Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) fighting Russell Crowe's Maximus in the Colosseum isn't that far-fetched: Commodus was in fact the only emperor to fight in the arena. He didn't die there, however, and he wasn't killed by a gladiator. In reality he was poisoned, then strangled in his bath by a wrestler called Narcissus.



SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (1998)

Gwyneth Paltrow's character Viola de Lesseps lives in fear of being married off to Colin Firth's Lord Wessex, who intends to take her away with him to his tobacco plantations in the New World. The problem? The film is set in 1593, the year of Christopher Marlowe's death, while tobacco cultivation didn't start in America until the 1610s.



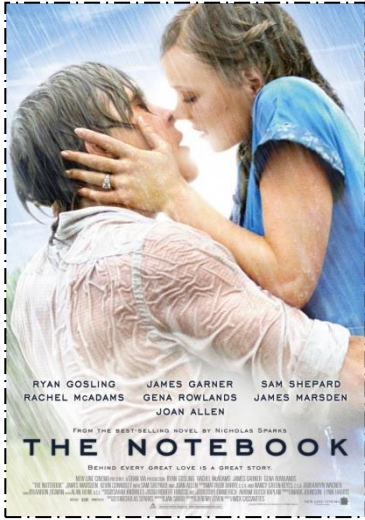
APOCALYPTO (2006)

The Inaccuracies: Although Mayans *did* occasionally engage in ritual human sacrifice, they were a far more civilized and complex culture than shown in the film. In fact, the Mayan sun god Kukulkan, to whom the sacrifice is made in the movie, never asked for and was never given such a sacrifice, so whatever priest was offering Kukulkan a human heart was probably just creeping him out



THE KING'S SPEECH (2010)

Colin Firth makes an excellent King George VI – so excellent, in fact, that he earned himself an Oscar nomination for Best Actor. But that doesn't make *The King's Speech* a historically accurate film. As Christopher Hitchens points out in *Slate*, Winston Churchill was a close friend and supporter of Nazi-sympathizer King Edward VIII (George VI's brother, who abdicated the throne in order to marry a divorced socialite, leaving George to stutter his way through the monarchy). In the movie, though, Churchill is constantly portrayed as being on George's side. The filmmakers also fudged the chronology: *The King's Speech* gives the impression that George VI and his speech therapist worked together for only a few years in the mid-1930s, when in reality the two began their relationship as early as 1926. Of course, none of that seems to matter to the Academy, which nominated *The King's Speech* for a whopping 12 awards.

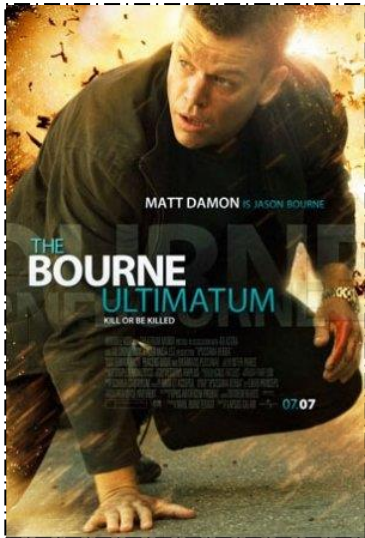


THE NOTEBOOK (2004)

If you enjoy **sickly sweet romantic films** that unashamedly **tug on the heart strings** to make you cry, then this is most definitely the film for you. From the moment the film begins you know where it is taking you. A boy meets a girl. The boy is poor and the girl is rich. The girl's parents don't approve. Fast forward to years later ... Have your box of tissues to hand!

- a nonsense
- b nauseating
- c gripping

THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM (2007)



This is the third in the Bourne series starring the excellent Matt Damon. Filmed on location in Tangier, London, Paris, Madrid, Berlin and New York City, the story is fast-paced but to my mind rather confusing. My concentration was disturbed by the hand-held camera effect which meant that the film was constantly 'shaking'. I appreciate that this was supposed to **heighten the tension** but I found it almost impossible to focus in places.

- a unwatchable
- b unrealistic
- c exciting

Complete the sentences with a verb from the box in the correct form.

create strike adapt suspend reveal set tell see

- 1 The story _____ in Washington, DC, in 2054.
- 2 It _____ from a book by Philip K Dick.
- 3 The film _____ the story of a man accused of a future crime.
- 4 When the truth _____ he goes on the run.
- 5 The soundtrack and special effects help _____ an atmosphere of suspense.
- 6 The plot is sometimes unconvincing. You have to _____ your disbelief.
- 7 What _____ you most is Tom Cruise's impressive performance.
- 8 I highly recommend it. I'd say it's well worth _____.