

Great movie posters

Layout of movie posters

A movie poster is responsible for capturing the tone, the story, and the visual style of a film, and, in doing so, it can become just as iconic and influential as the movie it is advertising.

A few simple design elements contribute to its success:

- attracting the attention of **passers-by** and encouraging them to look, using either the characters from the movie or an important plot point;
- the iconic use of the themes of the film in combination with an attractive design;
- creating desire and interest;
- the element of recognition in case it is a sequel.

Famous movie posters

- **Blade Runner** (1982): the poster was hand-painted by John Alvin; it **merges** the movie's film noir feeling with impressive **sci-fi** imagery. Looking down on the futuristic city, the spectator is drawn into this new world in a thrilling way, like in free falling. The use of light contributes to this effect.



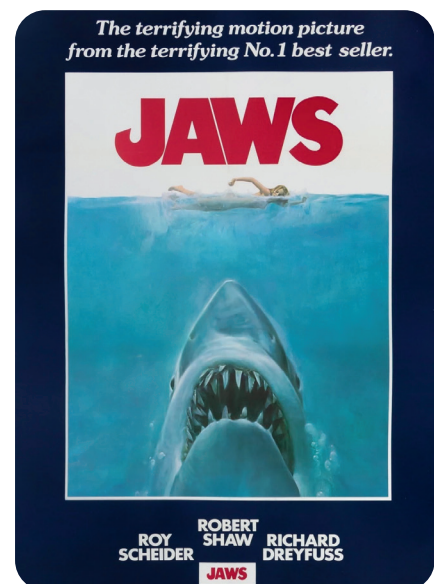
- The red and yellow emblem of **Jurassic Park** (1993) is one of the most iconic logos in the history of cinema. Created by Chip Kidd, it was inspired by an illustration of a **skeleton** of a Tyrannosaurus Rex in the gift shop of the American Museum of Natural History. It was decided that it would be **highlighted** as the only image, with a small image of the jungle to show the big size of the T. Rex. The only element that was added was the motto: "An adventure 65 million years in the making".

- The most iconic and terrifying poster of all time: **Jaws** (1975), with the image of the great white shark about to **devour** its unsuspecting victim, has put fear into the hearts of swimmers everywhere.

The oversized beast, with its rows of **jagged**, enormous teeth, is a visceral terrifying image that has fulfilled the aim of the movie: telling a frightening story.

to depict: *ritrarre*
 to devour: *divorare*
 dawn: *alba*
 dusk: *crepuscolo*
 to float: *galleggiare*
 highlighted: *evidenziato*
 jagged: *frastagliato*

to merge: *unire*
 passer-by: *passante*
 raunchy: *osé, sconcio*
 sci-fi: *fantascienza*
 skeleton: *scheletro*
 tiny: *minuscolo*



1 Read the text and fill in the table with the required information.

Movie Posters Clichés

Movie posters have been used since 1920, and some parallels have been noticed between them. In 1990, it became more obvious that movie posters were copying each other; also, by 1990, movie posters started to imitate other types of art. *Pulp Fiction* copied a magazine while *Jurassic Park* copied its book cover, for example. One of the most overdone movie poster clichés, specifically with romantic comedies, is having two main characters back to back. It shows the inevitable complicated love story of friendship between the two main characters. Think of *Pretty Woman*, *Bride Wars*, or *How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days*.

The classic big, giant, floating faces over a tinier scene of the film, instead, screams drama, and a lot of them are situated on a beach or over a body of water. Think of *Forever Young*, *Corelli's Mandolin*, or *Turning Green*. Psychological films like to use the metaphor of a "fragmented" hero, constructing his face from tiny images, like in *The Extractor*, *Lord of War*, *The Next Three Days*.

Movie posters have also used articles of clothing to define the characters: a woman wearing a red or pink dress draws your focus and depicts them as

the romantic scene of attention as in *The Woman in Red*, or *High School*. If you want to show suspense, then you will see some vigilantes from the back, or a loner viewed from behind. Think of *Shoot-Em Up*, *The Hitcher* or *Resident Evil*.

A close-up on eyeballs is for a horror or a psychological thriller, like *Requiem For A Dream*, or *The Eye*.

For raunchy films we'll see the cast through someone's legs, though some other films have borrowed this device as well as *Transporter*, and *Stinger*.

The colour palette also plays a huge part in movie poster designs since it tells the audience what the movie is going to be like without us even realising it. For example, predominantly orange and blue are the heart and soul of action movies. They are opposite on the colour wheel and represent opposite concepts all around us: fire versus water, explosion versus technology, and dusk versus dawn. Contrast equals drama and these two colours well represent action movies.

Adapted from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ThnxSaExzU>

Movie poster clichés	Genre of movie	Examples



2 Read the analysis of the movie poster on the left and then write a short description of the one on the right.

This is the poster of the movie *The Way We Weren't*. The two main characters are back to back; this cliché helps to identify the movie as a complicated love affair between the two main characters. It is easy to understand it is a romantic comedy. The apparent contrast between the characters is in the two contrasting colours of their clothes, red and black. The title is a strong recall of Sidney Pollack's film *The Way We Were* (1973).

