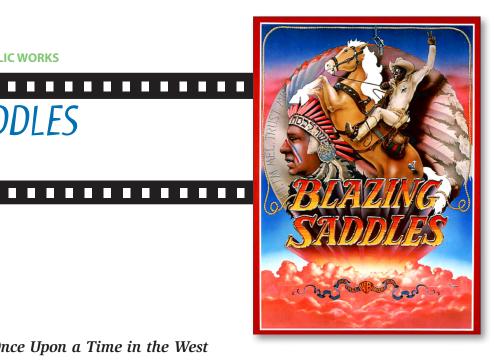
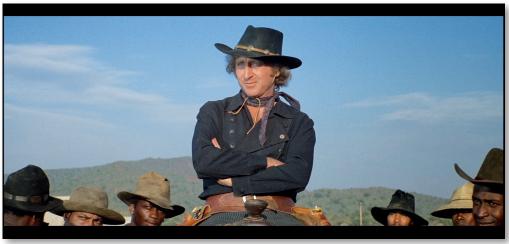
BLAZING SADDLES



Mel Brooks' parody of Once Upon a Time in the West

PRODUCTION	USA 1974
DIRECTOR	Mel Brooks
STARRING	Cleavon Little (Sheriff Bart), Gene Wilder (Jim, the "Waco Kid"), Harvey Korman (Hedley Lamarr), Mel Brooks (Governor William J. Le Petomane), Taggart (Slim Pickens)





A SYNOPSIS

In the American Wild West of 1874, the construction of a new railroad must pass through Rock Ridge, a frontier town inhabited exclusively by white people with the surname Johnson. An unscrupulous politician, State Attorney General Hedley Lamarr, wants to force Rock Ridge's residents to abandon their town, thereby lowering land prices. After he sends a gang of criminals, led by his assistant Taggart to shoot the sheriff and devastate the town, the people demand that Governor William J. Le Petomane appoint a new sheriff to protect them. Lamarr persuades the dumb Governor to nominate Bart, a black railroad worker who is going to be hanged. A black sheriff, Lamarr thinks, will offend the inhabitants of Rock Ridge, create chaos and leave the town at his mercy. The new Sheriff Bart is a sophisticated man who, after some difficulties, gets the loyalty of the townspeople; so in the end he, a reformed alcoholic outlaw (Jim, the *Waco Kid*) and the entire town decide to stand against the politician's forces and win the battle. The film is a parody of many popular Western films, *Once Upon a Time in the West* in particular. It is full of gags and ironic language.

The movie opens with our hero Bart working on a black railroad crew. His white bosses are super racist and put no value on a person's life. The boss Taggart sends Bart and a friend to check out some quicksand up ahead of the tracks they are laying. The two friends barely emerge from the quicksand alive.

ain't: (slang, qui) isn't to appoint: nominare bunch: (qui) branco to afford: permetterci il lusso

to dock: tagliare dumb: stupido, sciocco dummy: imbecille

fagot: (slang spreg.) checca, frocio to get caught up: farsi prendere, trascinare

hanged: impiccato

kicks: (fam.) eccitazione, godimento

to lay (laid- laid): posare

to lollygag: (fam.) fare gli stupidi

mercy: mercè

to nap: schiacciare un pisolino

outlaw: fuorilegge quicksand: sabbie mobili

shoot: sparare a, uccidere (con arma da fuoco)

them: (pop.) those.

4 Now watch the film clip and fill in the script with the following expressions:

come on boys • Get on that handcar • is going here • is the world rising • it was 120 degrees • let me ask you something • the surveyors say • to check out the ground • to jump around • to tell a family secret • When you were slaves • you dummy

Boss: Come on boys. The way you're lollygagging around here with them picks and them shovels,		
you'd think (1)		
and it is taken away by other workers] Dock that Chink ¹ a day's pay for napping on the job.		
Worker: Yes, Sir		
Boss: Now, (2), where's your spirit? I don't hear no singing. (3)		
, you sang like birds. Come on, how about a good old nigger ² song		
Black workers: Nigger work song!?		
Bart: [starts singing] "I get no kicks from champagne"		
Taggart: What in the wide, wide world of sport (4)? I hired you people		
to try to get a little track laid, not (5) like a bunch of Kansas City fagots!		
Boss: Sorry, Mr. Taggart, I guess we kind of got caught up.		
Taggart: Listen dummy, (6) they may have run into some quicksand up		
ahead. Better check it out.		
Boss: Okay, I'll send down a team of horses (7)		
Taggart: Horses! We can't afford to lose no horses, (8)! Send over a		
couple of niggers.		
Boss: Okay, Mr. Taggart. You and you		
Bart: Sir Sir, he has specifically requested two niggers, but (9), my		
grandmother was a Dutch.		
Boss: (10) and take it down to the end of that line!		
Bart: Just trying to help you out		
Boss: Get!		
Charlie: I didn't know your grandmother was Dutch		
[They start singing while they are pushing the handcar] "Oh, the Comptown Ladies sing this		
song doo-da doo-da"		
Charlie: Bart?		
Bart: What?		
Charlie: Am I wrong or (11)?		
Bart: I don't know, but whatever it is, I hate it Hey, Charlie, (12)		
What is it that is not exactly water and it ain't exactly earth		
Bart and Charlie: Quicksaaand!!!		

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

5 Discuss the following topics:

- 1. How white people are characterized.
- 2. How Black Bart is portrayed.
- 3. What term is used to refer to black rail workers.

Watch the film clip with the subtitles to check your answers to the gap-filling exercise.

^{1.} Chink, nigger: very offensive words for a Chinese and a black person respectively.