

## JAMES BOND IS FOREVER

James Bond films are one of the world's longest running and most successful film series, with 23 movies and more than 6 billion dollars earned at box offices around the world. But James Bond shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, Bond is more popular than ever, after the record-breaking performance of *Skyfall*, which became the biggest ever film at the UK box office in 2012, earning a total of 1.1 billion dollars. For this reason, there was a lot of interest surrounding the announcement of a few more details about the 24<sup>th</sup> Bond film; especially its official title, *Spectre*. The number one question is: can *Spectre* repeat *Skyfall*'s success?

Charles Gant, film editor for *Heat* magazine, says it is heading in the right direction. "*Skyfall* was a brilliant strategic move", he says. "It was simultaneously modern and retro. It appealed to fans of Daniel Craig and it also engaged the older, more nostalgic Bond fans, who may have lost interest over the previous few films. With the new title", he adds, "it is certain to be a success".

It seems that *Eon Productions*, the company originally founded in 1961 that is behind all the official Bonds, is doing all it can to ensure another success. Daniel Craig will play Bond at least until film 25 and the same *Skyfall* writers have produced the script of *Spectre*. But it's getting Sam Mendes as director again that gives Bond fans the most hope. A director mainly known for character studies such as *American Beauty* and *Revolutionary Road*, Mendes has taken the Bond series to new heights. He managed to engage with both the modern and the traditional Bond audience, and he also attracted top actors like Ralph Fiennes. Actors like Fiennes will only agree to be in a film if they like the director.

Though the Bond series was not in trouble before Mendes's arrival, there was a certain amount of boredom towards the end of Pierce Brosnan's time as Bond. The series had survived the running out of original Bond stories to adapt and the movies were no longer anything like the Ian Fleming originals, but they were lacking dynamism. This cycle, however, was nothing new: the history of the Bond series has been one of decline and progress, related most obviously to the lead actor: first, Sean Connery; then, successively, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, Brosnan and, now, Craig. Each new Bond has been a response to the state of the series, and some have been more successful than others. Nevertheless, the Bond brand has remained very powerful over the years.

If the initial enthusiasm for Bond movies lasted through the 60s and 70s, it's fair to say that the series almost disappeared after *Licence to Kill*'s poor figures. *Goldeneye*, the first of Brosnan's efforts, announced a dramatic renewal: not simply because of a new actor but, more significantly, because of who was behind the camera. Moreover, a whole new generation was reached through a *Goldeneye* video-game, erasing perceptions that Bond films were boring and old-fashioned.

A. ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, DECIDE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN.

1. James Bond has never been as popular as he is now.

- a. True                      b. False                      c. Not given

2. According to Charles Gant, the release of *Spectre* is bound to be a success.

- a. True                      b. False                      c. Not given

3. Daniel Craig will not play Bond film number 25.

- a. True                      b. False                      c. Not given

4. Bond fans are especially optimistic because Sam Mendes is going to direct *Spectre*.

- a. True                      b. False                      c. Not given

5. *Licence to Kill* performed far worse than all the other Bond films.

- a. True                      b. False                      c. Not given

B. CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT FITS BEST ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.

6. Why is *Skyfall* described as a 'brilliant strategic move'?

- a. because it was based on previous Bond films  
b. because it was funny and sad at the same time  
c. because it attracted both older and younger viewers  
d. because it focused on Bond's personal life

7. Why was Sam Mendes important for the Bond films?

- a. because he is well-known for his character studies  
b. because the Bond series had problems before he arrived  
c. because viewers didn't like Brosnan as James Bond  
d. because he was able to bring in well-known actors

8. What is most likely to be the key to the success or failure of Bond films?

- a. who the director is  
b. who writes the script  
c. who plays the main role  
d. who produces the film

9. Which actor helped overcome a difficult situation?

- a. Daniel Craig  
b. Pierce Brosnan  
c. Timothy Dalton  
d. Roger Moore

10. What was special about *Goldeneye*?

- a. it was turned into a video-game  
b. it made Brosnan become a celebrity  
c. it was perceived as old-fashioned  
d. it disappointed younger generations

## BMX-TREME: BICYCLE MOTOCROSS IS BACK

**A.** I will never forget the year 1979. I was just ten years old when my father decided to take me to see a show starring the legendary motorcyclist Evel Knievel. After seeing the amazing performance, I started dreaming about riding bikes and performing at shows myself one day. My entire childhood was spent at skate parks; there was a group of us that would go there everyday after school with our brand new BMX bikes. After all, I'd need to get some practice if I was going to be like my hero! Mostly we just copied the skateboarders, but did it on our bikes instead, pretending we were riding motorcycles. Anyone could invent a new trick. (11) We were in control of the sport, so it was a direct reflection of who we were.

**B.** My later teenage years were spent competing in endless BMX freestyling championships; some I won and others I lost (12). I just loved the rush of energy I got from this, and from continuously trying newer, more daring tricks. The atmosphere was magical, with over 1,000 riders at some events. By the late 1980s, sponsorship money for the sport had begun to decrease and we freestyle BMS-ers had to organize our own events. Sometimes I'd leave with a hundred pounds in my pocket; most often I left empty-handed but with a story to tell!

**C.** In 1995, I was chosen to compete in an international action sports competition called the X-Games. (13) I was attempting a back flip with a 360-degree twist, when I landed badly on my hand and pulled several tendons. It took me out of the sport for a while, but my attitude was: 'If others have suffered more and gone on, then why can't I?' I had once read that Evel Knievel suffered a total of 35 broken bones during his career!

**D.** The current popularity of extreme sports has meant that BMX has seen a recent revival. Old tracks are being renovated and new ones are being built. There is also now a growing number of women participating in competitions at a professional level. A few years ago, the International Olympic Committee made BMX an Olympic sport. I couldn't have been more delighted! (14) Its entry into the Olympics is going to encourage more people to take it up seriously.

**E.** I've heard some people say that BMX is too dangerous for kids. (15) With riders pushing the limits far beyond each time, BMX seems set to remain one of the most risky and exciting sports in history.

**C. COMPLETE THE TEXT BY PUTTING THE SENTENCES (A-E) IN THE CORRECT PLACE (11-15).**

- a. For once in my life I was nervous
- b. In my opinion, the sport finally got the recognition it deserved
- c. There were no real rules, but that's what was so great about it
- d. Well, I agree with them
- e. But it wasn't the trophies that were important

**D. FOR QUESTIONS 76-80 CHOOSE THE PARAGRAPH FROM THE TEXT (A-E). CHOOSE EACH PARAGRAPH ONLY ONCE.**

*Which paragraph mentions ...*

- 16. a time when the writer had to stop doing BMX?
- 17. signs that BMX is coming back?
- 18. what the writer really liked about competitions?
- 19. what other people think about BMX?
- 20. when he started looking up to Evel Knievel?

**E. CHOOSE THE MOST APPROPRIATE TITLE FOR EACH PARAGRAPH.**

- 21. Not all about the money
- 22. Get up and go on
- 23. Handle with care
- 24. Emulating my hero
- 25. Gold, silver, bronze