WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD 'FILM'?

WHAT'S THE BEST MOVIE YOU'VE EVER SEEN?

Musical   Biography   Fantasy   Detective

Drama   Sport   Western   Mystery

Thriller   Horror   War   Action
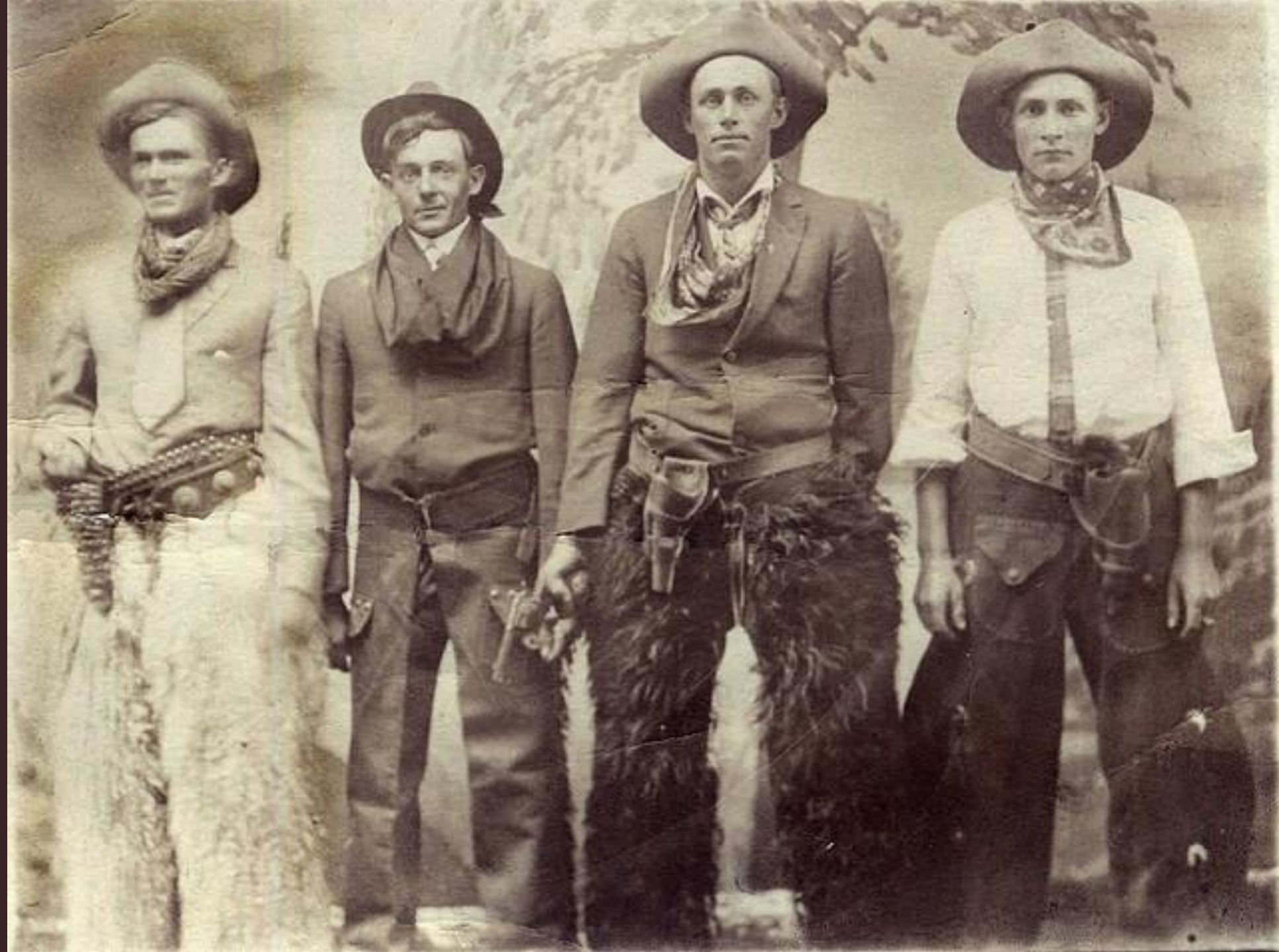
Comedy   Sci-Fi   Romance   History

1 SPEAKING In pairs, choose the words that you think best describe a cowboy.

aggressive cooperative dangerous honest
independent mean short strong tall weak

2 Read the article. Do the words that you chose in exercise 1 match what real cowboys were like?

THE NOT-SO-WILD WEST

🎧 4.22

The tall stranger stands in the sunlight and looks down the road to where his rival stands, nervously touching his gun with his right hand. Meanwhile, groups of frightened townspeople watch from the safety of shop doorways.
5 Suddenly, the rival pulls out his pistol, but before he can pull the trigger, the stranger shoots him. The man falls to the ground and dies: just another victim of a Wild West shoot-out.

A familiar scene, but only to fans of westerns, because if
10 you had lived in the Wild West, you would probably never have seen a gunfight. According to official statistics, there were only three organised gunfights during the whole of the 19th century – less than in some films! And although cowboys did occasionally get involved in gunfights between
15 gangs, shootings were a rare occurrence. In fact, between the years of 1870 and 1885, only 45 people were killed by gunshot in all the major cowboy towns of the West.

But the violent history of cowboys is not the only invention that Hollywood has passed off as true. The
20 whole cowboy image is a fake. The tall, strong, white cowboy who rides off into the sunset to face danger on his own has only ever existed on cinema screens.
25 Forty per cent of cowboys were African Americans, Native Americans or Mexicans, and they were usually short, thin men. Their horses had to support their weight for up to fifteen hours a day,
30 so being tall and very muscular would have made this extremely difficult. And cowboys always worked together in teams, as controlling a large group of cattle was an impossible job for just one man.

Why, then, did Hollywood manipulate the truth and create
35 a character that had little to do with reality? Some people say that the cinema industry wanted to take advantage of Americans' fascination with the West, but that the lives of real cowboys were just not interesting enough and had to be reinvented. Others, however, see a political motivation
40 to create a role model that would serve the social and economic interests of the country.

3 **Read the text again. Answer the questions in your own words.**

1 What does the last sentence of the first paragraph suggest about the Wild West?

2 Why would someone living in the Wild West probably not have seen a gunfight?

3 What does the fact that only 45 people were shot in fifteen years suggest about the Wild West?

4 What does the writer suggest that Hollywood did?

5 Why were cowboys usually physically small?

6 Why do some people believe Hollywood reinvented the lives of cowboys?

4 🎧 4.23 Listen to a podcast about the actor Clint Eastwood's career. What jobs did he do in the film *Unforgiven*?

5 🎧 **4.23** **Listen again. Are the sentences true or false? Write T or F.**

1 Clint Eastwood played a cowboy on TV before he played one in films. ___

2 Sergio Leone's films were very similar to Hollywood westerns. ___

3 Eastwood doesn't think Sergio Leone's films were of a very high quality. ___

4 Eastwood's character was seen as anti-American. ___

5 *Unforgiven* includes few scenes of violence. ___

6 *Unforgiven* shows a more realistic image of the lives of cowboys. ___

6 SPEAKING Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

1 Why do you think the image of the cowboy has been so successful in popular culture?

2 Who or what do you think has replaced the cowboy as an icon in modern popular culture?

ASSIGNMENT: SUMMARY

DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY