

Arrival activity

- Individually, quickly write down a definition of what you think a British film is.
- Compare your definition with the person next to you. Are there similarities/differences?

Task 1

In the context of increasingly global film production, it doesn't always make sense to talk in terms of, for example, a British, French or Mexican film.

- Are Bond films British even though they are financed by US studios?
- Is *Pan's Labyrinth* Spanish or Mexican – it was set in Spain and financed in Spain but had a Mexican director?
- Look to see how these are quoted on IMDb. What conclusions do you draw?

For audiences, this may not matter. They tend to think of a film in cultural terms: *Harry Potter* films and, say, *The Full Monty* are thought of as culturally British even though they are financed by US studios. *12 Years a Slave* is thought of as American even though the director is British. For producers, however, whether a film qualifies as, say, British or American affects film financing.

The British Film Institute administers a cultural test which allocates points based on a number of factors including:

- whether a film is culturally British (set in Britain with lead characters British)
- whether key aspects of its production were completed by British companies
- whether key personnel were British (director, scriptwriter, producer etc).

If a film qualifies as British, it attracts tax concessions and thus makes a film cheaper to produce. In order for a film to qualify as British, it must reach at least 18 points out of 35 on the cultural test.

Look carefully at the BFI criteria and try to establish whether you think *Gravity* qualifies as a British film. You will need to research the production and cultural context in order to give the film the relevant scores.

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/british-certification-tax-relief/cultural-test-video-games/summary-points-cultural-test-film>

If you think the film scores 18 points on the cultural test, then it qualifies as British.

Task 2 (Digital resource 7a)

Gravity qualified as a British film. It is credited as a UK/USA coproduction production (USA before UK). Set out why you think audiences might think of this more as an American rather than a British film?

Task 3 (Digital resource 6b)

Do you think it matters to audiences of this film whether it is thought of by producers as a British film? The first two articles may help with this debate.

1. Read the following article:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-26048992>

Make notes on the main points it makes about what defines a British film.

2. What is the main function of the following piece on *Gravity*? Does it convince you more about whether the film could be thought of as British or not?

<http://news.sky.com/story/1219643/oscars-gravity-showcases-british-film-talent>

Heyday Films and Framestore

One of the key UK partners in the production of *Gravity* was Heyday Films. Try to find five key facts about this UK production company.

Similarly, find out what you can about Framestore, a UK visual effects company established in 1986 who worked on the VFX for *Gravity*.