NEWS LESSON

Why the Big Screen Still Has a Future



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Has cinema become an event rather than a habit?
2. Are people paying for a film at the cinema, or for two hours of focused attention?
3. What would cinemas need to offer that a living room cannot?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**fielded**	☐	A	carried out, used about a survey
2	**sociable**	☐	B	a short trip for pleasure
3	**justifies**	☐	C	the variety of things of one kind
4	**decline**	☐	D	the way you take to get somewhere
5	**abandon**	☐	E	gives a good reason for something
6	**outing**	☐	F	to leave something for good
7	**range**	☐	G	enjoying being with other people
8	**route**	☐	H	a gradual fall in size or quality

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

The sofa has won convenience, but the cinema still owns something harder to reproduce: scale, focus and a room reacting together.

1 The interesting thing about the decline of cinema is how reliably it is announced and how stubbornly it fails to finish. Audiences did not abandon the building; they stopped treating it as the default. A film at home now requires no decision at all, which is precisely the problem for everybody who sells tickets.

2 The numbers describe a shift in habit rather than a verdict. AP-NORC surveyed 1,182 American adults in August 2025 and found three quarters had watched a recently released film at home instead of going out for it at least once in the preceding year. Roughly a third streamed a new release monthly, against 16% who went to a cinema that often. The poll is American and measures frequency, so it cannot be stretched into a global judgement, but the direction is not in doubt.

3 Price explains a good deal of it. A subscription is a fixed household cost that does not grow with the number of people watching, while a cinema charges per seat and per visit. Once the same film is available both ways, the building has to compete on something other than access, and access was the thing it used to own outright.

4 What remains is distinctive rather than convenient. Scale, sound and the absence of a pause button amount to an argument for attention, and audiences appear to understand it as such. The British Film Institute's audience tracker, fielded in March 2025, found that young adults in the UK prized the cinema as a focused and sociable outing, with only 14% wanting venues to be more relaxed about talking or phones. They are not asking for the living room with a larger screen.

5 The trade figures suggest an industry finding a smaller equilibrium rather than falling off a cliff. European attendance dropped about 5.5% in 2025, to somewhere near 796 million admissions, while box office revenue held almost steady. Global takings grew roughly 5% in the same year and still sat about 30% below their pre-pandemic average. Recovery has been uneven, and in several Asian markets it has been driven by national films rather than Hollywood releases.

6 The growth is also not where a Hollywood-shaped account would predict. The Observatory credits Asia's largest markets with most of the 2025 increase, and national films led the box office in several of them. A global figure assembled from very different national recoveries should be handled carefully.

7 A cinema that survives on occasions rather than habits is a different business, and the change carries a risk worth naming. If only spectacle justifies the journey, the quieter films that once filled a Tuesday screening may lose their route to an audience. That would be a loss of range, not merely of revenue.

8 Still, the shift is not simply a defeat. Something is being sold that streaming genuinely cannot supply: two hours in which the film is the only thing happening, in a room of people who all agreed to turn up. Scarcity has a way of making that feel more valuable, not less.

Sources: AP-NORC, Streaming is overtaking theaters for movie watchers. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The writer implies that cinemas can no longer rely on exclusive access to new films. T F NG
2. The BFI found that most young adults wanted cinemas to be more relaxed about phones. T F NG
3. Global takings grew in 2025, yet were still lower than before the pandemic. T F NG
4. Streaming services now release more quiet films than big spectacles. T F NG
5. The writer treats the AP-NORC results as proof that cinema is declining worldwide. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

assembled	dismissed	equilibrium	outright	prized	reinforced	stubbornly	verdict

1. In the old market town, hand-made bread was _____ above anything bought from a supermarket.
2. After years of swings, the housing market has settled into a new _____ at lower prices.
3. The founder did not merely lead the firm; she owned it _____ .
4. The report was _____ from interviews with hundreds of former employees.
5. Despite every setback, the old picture house _____ refused to close.
6. The jury took only an hour to deliver its _____ .

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Trains on this line run _____ on time. (RELY)
2. The pitch was so _____ that the match had to be postponed. (EVEN)
3. Economic _____ in the region have followed very different timetables. (RECOVER)
4. A lapse of _____ cost the manager his job. (JUDGE)
5. The _____ of skilled nurses is putting pressure on the hospital. (SCARCE)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Some of these connectors join two clauses and others need a noun phrase. Watch the punctuation before the gap.

hence	inasmuch	nonetheless	notwithstanding	provided	thereby	whereas

1. _____ the rise of streaming, many people still queue for big releases.
2. Ticket prices have risen; _____ , attendance has held up.
3. A subscription is a fixed household cost, _____ a cinema charges per seat.
4. Demand was higher than expected; _____ the long queues outside.
5. Cinemas can thrive _____ they offer something a living room cannot.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. If cinemas survive mainly through spectacular films, what kinds of stories might disappear from the big screen?
2. Does unlimited choice help us enjoy films, or make us less willing to commit to one?
3. What is the future cinema selling: content, technology, attention or community?

9 Role-play: sofa or cinema?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the cinema fan

A new film is out on Friday. You want to see it on the big screen with your partner. Explain why it's worth the trip and the price. Try to agree a plan.

Student B · the home fan

You'd rather stay in and stream a film. Say why, and ask what makes the cinema worth the money. You can say yes, no, or suggest a different plan.

Useful phrases

I'd really like to see it on the big screen.

Is it worth the price of two tickets?

I'd rather stay in and stream it.

That's true, but we can't pause a film at the cinema.

What if we go this time and stream the next one?

Let's compromise, shall we?

Afterwards, tell the class: did you go out or stay in, and who gave up more?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 A · 2 G · 3 E · 4 H · 5 F · 6 B · 7 C · 8 D

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 prized · 2 equilibrium · 3 outright · 4 assembled · 5 stubbornly · 6 verdict

6 Word forms

1 reliably · 2 uneven · 3 recoveries · 4 judgement · 5 scarcity

7 Language focus

1 Notwithstanding · 2 nonetheless · 3 whereas · 4 hence · 5 provided

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