



Sample Paper 12

Score for Voice _____

Behind the Scenes

Ask ten people, “What’s your favorite movie?” and you are likely to get ten different answers. Some will start reciting lines, describing their favorite scenes, or imitating their favorite actors. But ask those same ten people, “Who is your favorite movie producer?” and you will probably get ten confused faces and a lot of silence. Most people couldn’t even *name* three producers—much less pick out a favorite. A few dedicated fans know names of directors, but it takes a real movie *nut* to follow movie producers. I happen to be one of those nuts.

Here’s the proof. Do you stay in your seat at the movie theater to read the credits? I do. I read all the credits at home, too—including the names of executive, associate, and assistant producers. I always wondered what all these people actually *did*, though, and since I couldn’t find a single person who knew (surprise), I did a little research.

As it turns out, movie producers are responsible for just about everything connected with a film project. First, there’s pressure to find a great script or an idea for a script—usually from a book. Then it has to be adapted (books are too long to film, usually). That means finding a writer who can turn a 400–page book into a 100–page script. Next goal: money. Raising money (financing) is the hardest part, especially for a producer who is not connected to a big movie studio. The producer also has to hire a director, help hire actors and a crew, create a production schedule, find scouts to locate a good site for filming, advertise and distribute the movie—just about everything but make the popcorn. Producers have to have good communication skills, and have to remain

cool in stressful situations. They also need a natural feel for what might make a blockbuster. Art Linson, a successful producer, says, “You have to have an instinct for who can write and for a good idea . . .”

Here’s the tricky part, though. Even with the best script and greatest actors in the world, many things can (and do) go wrong. Actors have tantrums and walk off the set, equipment fails, stunt people get injured, the weather doesn’t cooperate, the project runs out of money—or someone dies before they can finish. Have you ever watched a really bad movie and wondered how they ever got money to make it at all? Here’s what probably happened. They started filming, the money ran out, and they had to squeak by on a really tight budget. Cutting too many corners can result in movies nobody wants to watch—even for free! And good luck getting financing after that!

Despite these problems, I hope to be a producer one day. I can handle stress (you should meet my family), and I always know which books would make good movies. Jerry Bruckheimer, producer of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies once said, “I only make movies I want to go see.” That’s my plan, too! Now, if I can just figure out the financing part . . .

Sources

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