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[The World of Animation](#)



The World of Animation

Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (released in 2005)

British films are rarely successful in the United States. However, the animated adventures of a cheese-loving, eccentric inventor and his canine companion are proving to be a surprise hit in America, having taken the number one position in the US box office on the weekend of its release.

In a year which has seen poor ticket sales for big-budget, action movies it seems that the gentle, **quirky humour** of 'Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit' has captured the American public's imagination.

Although Wallace and Gromit have been stars in the UK for a number of years, they are less well-known abroad. For those who don't know, Wallace is a **hare-brained** inventor with a passion for Wensleydale cheese. Gromit is his **wily dog**. Both are **clay models** brought to life through the **painstaking** process of **stop-motion animation**.

Their creator, Nick Park, **dreamed them up** whilst still a student at the National Film and Television School in the 1980s. Their first film 'A Grand Day Out' began as his graduation film and was completed whilst working for his first employers, Aardman Animations.

Since then their rise has been steady but slow. Because the technique of stop-motion animation is so **labour intensive**, typically producing two seconds of film per day's work, Wallace and Gromit films are **few and far between**. They have appeared in only three half-hour films for television and ten one-minute films specially made for the Internet.

Nevertheless, they have received a **great deal of critical acclaim**. Their first film was nominated for an Oscar whilst their second and third outings 'The Wrong Trousers' and 'A Close Shave' both won Oscars.

Hollywood came calling in 2000 when Aardman Animations made a five-movie deal with Steven Spielberg's film studio Dreamworks. 'The Curse of the Were-Rabbit' has taken four years and a reported \$30 million to make, and features the voices of international stars Helena Bonham-Carter and Ralph Fiennes.

Despite **hitting the big time**, one thing hasn't changed since their earliest days. Wallace's voice remains that of veteran, sit-com actor Peter Sallis. Sallis first agreed to take the role after receiving a letter from **then student** Nick Park and an offer of a £50 donation to the charity of his choice.



Glossary

eccentric inventor – a person who creates things and behaves in a strange way	canine companion – a dog that is a friend
quirky humour – the quality of being amusing or comic in an unusual way	hare-brained – rash, wild
clay models – figures made of hard sticky earth	wily – cunning, good at getting what you want
stop-motion animation – the technique of filming successive positions of models to create an illusion of movement	painstaking – taking a lot of effort
labour intensive – that takes a lot of work and effort	dreamed them up – invented them
critical acclaim – positive response from critics	few and far between – not made often
came calling – showed interest	outings – here, released films
then student – who was a student at the time	hitting the big time – becoming very popular

1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

1. Wallace and Gromit are characters invented by American film studio Dreamworks. True / False
2. Nick Park first invented the characters when he was studying at film school. True / False
3. Advanced computer technology is used to animate Wallace and Gromit to give them a 3D look. True / False
4. It takes a whole day's work to complete just two minutes of screen time. True / False
5. Peter Sallis was paid just £50 for his work on the latest Wallace and Gromit film. True / False



2. Vocabulary – film expressions

Look at the words and phrase below. Can you match them to their meanings?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. to cut to the chase | a. the cinema |
| 2. that's a wrap | b. to make a special effort to welcome somebody (as if they were a film star) |
| 3. to roll out the red carpet | c. to get to the most important or interesting part of the story |
| 4. the flicks | d. the job is finished |

Now complete these sentences using the words or phrases from above.

- 'What do you want to do tonight?'
'Why don't we go to the _____ and see a movie?'
- We have a very important client coming to the office this afternoon so we need to _____.
- Well, _____. We can all go home now.
- His explanations are so long and complicated. Why can't he just _____?

3. Jumbled Sentences

Rearrange the words in the sentences below to make correct sentences.

1. characters famous Many lend voices to actors their cartoon

2. to It millions produce can and an animated film cost years take

3. CGI animation or also Computer known CG simply is as

4. films technique Gromit used animation Stop-motion in Wallace is the and

5. character Disney the for the Mickey original Mouse provided Walt voice

4. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with animation in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

s	w	v	r	t	u	g	v	d	a	i	c
c	a	r	t	o	o	n	p	l	a	e	l
q	u	e	x	c	b	n	e	h	w	r	a
d	r	a	n	i	m	a	t	o	r	l	y
i	d	f	h	b	h	y	j	n	e	c	f
r	a	m	o	d	e	l	v	e	t	g	u
e	n	c	b	r	s	x	y	d	t	i	n
c	b	u	e	m	r	t	v	e	r	s	y
t	h	e	b	l	u	n	t	o	m	a	t
o	h	e	g	h	l	j	u	n	i	k	w
r	s	h	e	t	h	l	a	n	r	c	c
s	a	r	t	i	s	t	b	e	r	t	e

cartoon	clay	model	artist	animator
director	cell	voice	CGI	draw

Answers

1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

- Wallace and Gromit are characters invented by American film studio Dreamworks. **False**
- Nick Park first invented the characters when he was studying at film school. **True**
- Advanced computer technology is used to animate Wallace and Gromit to give them a 3D look. **False**
- It takes a whole day's work to complete just two minutes of screen time. **False**
- Peter Sallis was paid just £50 for his work on the latest Wallace and Gromit film. **False**

3. Jumbled Sentences

Rearrange the words in the sentences below to make correct sentences.

- Many famous actors lend their voices to cartoon characters.
- It can take years and cost millions to produce an animated film.
- Computer animation is also known as CGI or simply CG.
- Stop-motion animation is the technique used in Wallace and Gromit films.
- Walt Disney provided the original voice for the character Mickey Mouse.

Vocabulary – film expressions

Look at the words and phrase below. Can you match them to their meanings?

- c
- d
- b
- a

Now complete these sentences using the words or phrases from above.

- 'What do you want to do tonight?'
'Why don't we go to the **flicks** and see a movie?'
- We have a very important client coming to the office this afternoon so we need to **roll out the red carpet**.
- Well, **that's a wrap**. We can all go home now.
- His explanations are so long and complicated. Why can't he just **cut to the chase**?

4. Wordsearch

												c
c	a	r	t	o	o	n						l
												a
d		a	n	i	m	a	t	o	r			y
i												c
r		m	o	d	e	l						g
e		c							d			i
c			e					v	r			
t				l					o			a
o					l					i		w
r												c
	a	r	t	i	s	t						e

