

## Movie Ratings

In the United States, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), through the Classification and Rating Administration (CARA) issues ratings for movies. The system was instituted in November 1968 and is voluntary; however, most movie theater chains will not show unrated domestic films and most major studios have agreed to submit all titles for rating prior to theatrical release. Most films will have the MPAA insignia at the end of the closing credits.

The ratings as they exist in 2009 are:

### Unrestricted

- **G** - General Audiences - All ages admitted. There is no content that would be objectionable to most parents. This is one of only two ratings dating back to 1968 that still exists today (e.g. most of Pixar Studios' movies, including the *Toy Story* trilogy and *WALL-E*). Very mild language may exist including the words such as *heck, moron, dumb, rats, darn, fart, burp, idiot, crud, jerk, or stupid*.
- **PG** - Parental Guidance Suggested - Some material may not be suitable for children under 10. These films may contain some mild language, crude/suggestive humor, scary moments and/or violence. No drug content is present. There are a few exceptions to this rule. A few racial insults may also be heard. Before the creation of PG-13, many "PG" films (e.g. *Airplane!*, *Terms of Endearment* and *Nine to Five*) included elements such as swearing and drug use. Content such as this helped lead to the creation of the PG-13 rating. The F word is generally not found in PG-13 movies.
- **PG-13** - Parents Strongly Cautioned - Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. Films given this rating may contain sexual content, brief or partial nudity, some strong language and innuendo, humor, mature themes, political themes, terror and/or intense action violence. However, bloodshed is rarely present. This is the minimum rating at which drug content is present; with the exception of *Austin Powers* and *Click*, marijuana smoking is the only illegal drug use that can be depicted in a PG-13 movie. While PG-13 films usually have more profanity than PG films, this is not necessarily the case. A film that is given a PG-13 rating due to profane language and/or racial insults is given this rating because it contains more of these elements than a PG rating would permit, or the film contains uses of stronger profanities than a PG would permit. A film rated PG-13 for "intense violence" is given this rating if blood is present in a violent way. In recent years, this rating has been used for the majority of American films released.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Restricted

- **R** - Restricted - Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian 21 or older. The parent/guardian is required to stay with the child under 17 through the entire movie, even if the parent gives the child/teenager permission to see the film alone. These films may contain strong profanity, graphic sexuality, nudity, strong violence, horror, gore, and strong drug use. A movie rated R for profanity often has more severe or frequent language than the PG-13 rating would permit. An R-rated movie may have more blood, gore, drug use, nudity, or graphic sexuality than a PG-13 movie would admit. Some R-

rated films have an "unrated" DVD release with scenes of violence, sexual material, or profanity that have been edited from the original cut. At its inception, the R certificate permitted patrons aged 16 and older to attend unaccompanied, but this was raised to 17 in the 1970s. Local authorities have the power to set a higher age (usually 18, but rare cases as high as 21). On the other hand, in some places, the age requirement is not universally enforced, or not enforced at all. This is the other rating that dates back to 1968 and still exists. Movies that carry this rating include *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, *Watchmen*, and *Bruno*.

## Rating process

### Language

- If a film uses "one of the harsher sexually derived words" (such as *the f word*) one to four times, it is routine today for the film to receive a PG-13 rating, provided that the word is used as an expletive and not with a sexual meaning. It is a common misconception that if a movie uses *the f word* in a nonsexual context more than once, it will automatically receive an R rating.

### Drugs

- A reference to drugs, such as marijuana, usually gets a movie a PG-13 rating at a minimum.
- In May 2007, the MPAA announced that depictions of cigarette smoking would be considered in a film's rating.

### Sexual content

Shirtless men are allowed in G-rated films, while topless women usually earn at least an R. However, topless women have been featured in PG-rated films that depict it in a cultural or scientific context, such as a documentary film. Sometimes a film featuring topless women can get a PG-13 rating depending on how long it lasts on screen, even if depicting it sexually.