

## History at the movies

### AMERICA: Revolution and War

Through the summer, the Arts Cinema presents a season of films based on American history in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.



JULY 5<sup>TH</sup>

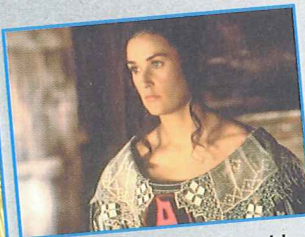
#### Gone with the Wind (1939)

We open our season with this popular classic. ▣ Set in Georgia during the south's war against the northern states, *Gone with the Wind* tells the story of how Scarlett O'Hara sees her traditional way of life destroyed, and how she rebuilds a life for herself and her family.



JULY 27<sup>TH</sup>

#### The Scarlet Letter (1995)

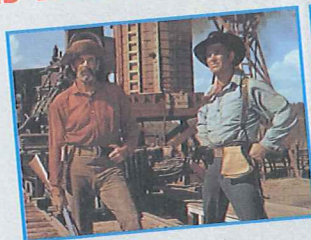


Set in a community of early ▣ settlers in east-coast New England, the film stars Demi Moore as Hester Prynne, whose husband is in England and who has a baby that cannot be his. Hester is punished by the villagers, but her story shows the ▣ hypocrisy of the religious community she lives in.

JULY 12<sup>TH</sup>

#### How the West was Won (1962)

A classic western starring some of American cinema's biggest names, including John Wayne, Henry Fonda and James Stewart. This epic story shows us three generations of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century family as they travel from the east coast to ▣ establish a new community in the west.



AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup>

#### Amistad (1997)

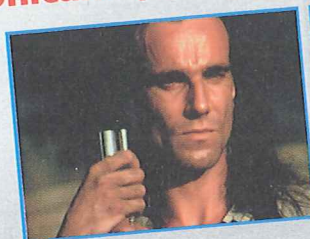


Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* reveals the terrible treatment that slaves received during their transportation by ship to America. It concentrates on the real-life ▣ trial of a group of African slaves who, in 1839, revolted on ship and killed their masters.

JULY 19<sup>TH</sup>

#### The Last of the Mohicans (1992)

Based on Cooper's classic book, Daniel Day Lewis plays Hawkeye, a white man ▣ raised by the native Mohicans, who fights on the side of the British against the French in their colonisation of North America and Canada.



AUGUST 10<sup>TH</sup>

#### The Patriot (2000)



Mel Gibson stars in this story of America's fight for independence from British rule. Gibson plays a plantation owner who is at first ▣ reluctant to fight against the British, but who gradually realises that his country's freedom and future depend on it.

to ban ☐ to make illegal  
 to establish ☐ to build from nothing  
 hypocrisy ☐ telling people what to do, but not doing it yourself  
 to raise (a person) ☐ to help and look after someone as they grow  
 reluctant ☐ not wanting to

to set (a story) ☐ to locate in time or place  
 settlers ☐ the first people to build a community somewhere  
 to surrender ☐ to stop fighting and agree to lose  
 trial ☐ a legal process of judgement

## Landmarks in American history

### A European Settlement and the French Wars

In the 17th century, settlers from England and from Holland started to make their home in America. Many of them were from small religious groups who suffered persecution in Europe. In the 18th century, France fought England for control of Canada and the northern border. Both sides used the help of Native Americans, but England won the war in 1763.

### B The War of Independence

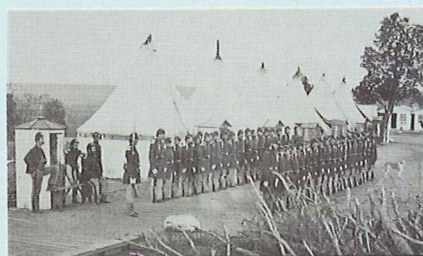
After the French Wars, some US states began to rebel against control and taxation by England and its king, George III. In



1776, thirteen states declared independence from England. A war between the English army and the Americans lasted until 1781, when the United States of America became an independent country.

### C The Civil War

In the 19th century, states were created in the west, where settlers took land from the Native Americans and farmed it. The southern states used many slaves from Africa and the Caribbean on their plantations, but the northern states wanted to ☐ ban slavery. In 1861, eleven southern states left the USA and set up their own Confederacy. A civil war lasted until 1865, when the southern states ☐ surrendered and their slaves were freed.



Left: Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776, by John Trumbull.

Right: Artillery unit on parade at their camp during the American Civil War.

### Before you read

1 Do you know any of the films in the photos on page 42? Do you know who the stars are or what the films are about?

### Reading

2 ☐ ☐ Read the paragraphs about American history and the stories of the films. Which period of history (A, B or C) does each of the films deal with?

3 ☐ ☐ Complete the table with the missing dates and the names of the films.

| Date                | Event                                    | Film  |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|-------|
| 17th century        | English Puritan settlers move to America | ..... |
| 17th - 19th century | The use of slavery in the south          | ..... |
| ..... century       | The French Wars                          | ..... |
| 17 .....            | The Declaration of Independence          | ..... |
| ..... century       | Settlement in the western states         | ..... |
| 18 .....            | The American Civil War                   | ..... |

4 Answer the questions about paragraphs A, B and C. Who:

1. won the French Wars?
2. won the War of Independence?
3. won the American Civil War?
4. was King of England in 1776?
5. helped the Europeans in the French Wars?
6. were forced to work on American plantations?

### Listening

5 ☐ ☐ ☐ Listen to someone giving his opinion about *The Patriot*. Circle his general opinion of the following things.

| The main character                                                | The story                                                         | The dialogue                                                      | The camerawork                                                    | The historical accuracy                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |

6 ☐ ☐ Listen again and note down the reasons for his opinions.

### Speaking

7 If you have seen any of these films, tell the class your opinion of them. Talk about: the characters, the story, the camerawork, the music.