



### Unit 20 At the movies

#### Before you read

The article describes a movie about a boy who follows his dream. Think about these questions. Is there something that you would really like to do, but that other people, like your family, don't want you to do? What is it?

#### Read the article

##### ***Billy Elliot***

*Billy Elliot* is a movie about a boy from a small mining village in the north of England and his love for ballet. Billy's mother is dead. His brother and father are miners. They are involved in the 1984 miner's strike and have not worked for a while. Life is difficult, they don't have much money, and their only relaxation is at the miner's social club, where they enjoy drinking and arguing.

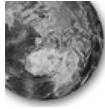
Billy's brother likes listening to rock music, and Billy does too. At school, Billy likes playing soccer, but he doesn't like running or other sports very much. His father wants him to box, so he gives him money for lessons at the social club. After a few lessons, Billy decides that he hates boxing. There's a ballet class at the same time and Billy prefers to watch that. Eventually, the ballet teacher, a tough woman named Mrs. Wilkinson, asks him to join the class. Billy discovers that he really loves dancing, and he's also really good at it. To him, dancing feels "like electricity."

Mrs. Wilkinson realizes that Billy has a lot of talent—talent that she never really had. She thinks he should try to become a professional dancer. She encourages him to train for an audition at the Royal School of Ballet. But Billy's father and brother find out that Billy is taking ballet lessons, and they are furious. They think ballet is just for girls, and they tell him to stop. But Billy continues doing ballet in secret.

Finally Billy's father understands: Billy is really good at dancing, and it can help him have a better life. There's no future for Billy in mining. So Mr. Elliot takes Billy to London and the boy gets a place at the Royal School of Ballet.

This film is based on the true life story of Philip Mosely, a boy from the northeast of England who is now a professional ballet dancer. To play the part of Billy, the filmmakers wanted to find a boy who was from the same part of England and was the same age as Philip when he joined the Royal School of Ballet. They also needed someone who could dance and act. They auditioned over 2,000 boys. Finally, they found Jamie Bell. Jamie and the other actors in *Billy Elliott* did a superb job. If you watch this movie, you will laugh and cry from beginning to end.

Source: Adapted from *Language to Go, Pre-Intermediate* by Gillie Cunningham and Sue Mohamed, Longman



### Check your comprehension

Read the article again. Match the beginnings of the sentences with the endings.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Billy Elliot <u>  e  </u> | a. is the real-life inspiration for the movie. |
| 2. Billy's brother _____     | b. is the actor who played Billy in the movie. |
| 3. Billy's mother _____      | c. is a ballet teacher.                        |
| 4. Mrs. Wilkinson _____      | d. is a miner, just like Billy's father.       |
| 5. Billy's father _____      | e. thinks dancing feels "like electricity."    |
| 6. Philip Mosely _____       | f. is dead.                                    |
| 7. Jamie Bell _____          | g. takes Billy to London for an audition.      |

### Build your reading skills: Identifying the author's viewpoint

Does the author of the article think *Billy Elliot* is a good movie? Find evidence in the article to support your opinion.