



# Star Wars: The Force Awakens

12A

Director: J.J. Abrams

Ratings info: moderate violence and threat

## Synopsis

The film is a sci-fi action adventure in which a young woman becomes embroiled in a galactic conflict.

## About the film

The film is the seventh installment in the *Star Wars: Skywalker Saga* franchise. It is directed by J.J. Abrams, a producer and director known for his work on successful sci-fi and fantasy films (including the *Star Trek* reboot in 2009) and television series (eg. *Lost*). The film is set three decades after the Empire's defeat, and introduces audiences to two new heroes - Rey and Finn - as they find themselves caught up in the Resistance's search for the missing Luke Skywalker.

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## BBFC age rating and about the film

The film is rated **12A for moderate violence and threat**.

A lot of the violence in the film is likely to be very familiar to audiences, including younger children. The film features lots of exciting aerial dogfights, laser blast fights and lightsaber duels, none of which is visually detailed or results in any blood or injury detail.

However, a couple of stronger moments stood out to our compliance team, including sequences in which characters are killed with lightsabers, with sight of a laser beam protruding through a character's body, and a moment in which a lightsaber burns against a character's skin, causing lasting injury. Although these more detailed examples of violence are infrequent, the focus on characters' pain and suffering in these moments place the issue of violence at 12A.

The film also contains scenes of occasional moderate threat, including during prolonged scenes of intense action violence; scenes in which characters are held at lightsaber point and interrogated using the Force also provide another example in which the film emphasises victims being in pain and anguish. As a result, we considered the threat to be category defining at 12A.

The film also contains very mild bad language ('damn', 'hell')

## Discussion Points

- Why do you think Disney requested a 12A classification? What impact do you think the rating has on the distributor's ability to market the film to different audiences?
- Daisy Ridley and John Boyega play the film's leading roles. At the time the film was released, neither actor was particularly familiar to mainstream audiences. How important are film stars in the marketing of blockbuster films?
- *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was released 38 years after the first film - *Star Wars: A New Hope* - in the franchise. How important do you think it is for the film to appeal to new audiences and in what ways do you think the film tries to do this?
- The ratings info for the film is 'moderate violence, threat'. Do you think this is likely to confound audience expectations?
- The film's antagonist Kylo Ren is torn between using the Force for good or evil. Is he a villain? How does his character inform the film's theme of 'good vs. evil'?

## Further Viewing

*Super 8* (JJ Abrams, 2011) 

*Serenity* (Joss Whedon, 2005) 

*Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Gareth Edwards, 2016) 