

## Movies & Languages 2015-2016

### *The Theory of Everything*



#### About the movie

DIRECTOR	J. Marsh
YEAR / COUNTRY	2014 / United Kingdom
GENRE	Biographical, Drama, Romantic
ACTORS	E. Redmayne, F. Jones, C. Cox, T. Prior

#### PLOT

Stephen Hawking is a brilliant, witty doctoral candidate at Cambridge University when he is diagnosed with motor neuron disease, ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), with 2 years to live. For Jane Wilde, Stephen's fellow student and future wife, the prognosis represents not a certainty, but a challenge to accept with determination and perseverance. More than a portrait of Hawking the scientist, the film is a love story, a moving account of their complicated marriage spanning roughly 25 years, placing great strains on Jane as Stephen's illness progressively deteriorated (though never stopping him from continuing his scientific research), caring for both him and their 3 children, often without outside help, and also coming to terms with the kinds of interpersonal challenges neither of them expected when they married.

The film received 4 Academy Award nominations. Eddie Redmayne was awarded the \*Academy Award (US) for Best Actor, followed by the \*Golden Globe (US). The British \*BAFTA awards were given to the Best British Film, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Original Music. Professor Hawking, now 72, gave his blessing to the film.

The film is based on Jane Wilde Hawking's 2004 memoir, "*Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*".

#### LANGUAGE

British English except for the American accent of Prof. Hawking's electronic voice.

#### GRAMMAR

The difference between the **PRESENT PERFECT** and the **SIMPLE PAST**.

To review the difference between the two tenses, look at the following conversation:

Jessica: Have you ever seen a whale?

John: No, I haven't seen a whale but I've seen dolphins.

Jessica: When did you see them?

John: I saw them last year in California.

Jessica: What did you think of them?

John: I thought they were wonderful!

The first 2 sentences are in the Present Perfect: "I've never seen a whale" may change, because John might see a whale sometime. But in the last 4 sentences, the time is very specific; they are talking of an event that occurred in the past and cannot be changed. Therefore, they use the Simple Past.

Here is another conversation:

Fred: Have you ever been to New York?

Jane: Oh, I've been there several times.

Fred: When did you go last?

Jane: I went six months ago.  
 Fred: What did you do there?  
 Jane: I attended a medical conference.

The 2 tenses are used here in exactly the same way. The first two lines use the Present Perfect (since Jane may go to the States more times in her life), and the last 4 lines use the Simple Past (since they are about facts that will not change).

## VOCABULARY

<b>to boot (someone) out:</b> expel, kick (you) out	<b>to do it my way:</b> to do it by myself
<b>final papers were a shambles:</b> a mess, confused	<b>to pass away:</b> to die
<b>a “viva”:</b> an oral examination, typically for an academic qualification derived from the Latin “viva voce”	<b>to cope:</b> get by, carry on, manage
<b>hang on:</b> wait	<b>commitment:</b> dedication involvement
<b>to embark on something:</b> to initiate, begin	<b>it's bracing:</b> invigorating, energizing
<b>to go tits up (slang):</b> to fail, failure... "The economy went tits up so I lost my job"	<b>live-in nurse:</b> lives & works in a home
<b>sod off:</b> scam, get lost, a vulgar way to tell someone to go away	<b>sleeping bag:</b> deep bag with a warm lining usually used when camping
<b>a cad:</b> a lout, an impolite & aggressive man	<b>spelling board:</b> the correct order of letters to make words
<b>baffling:</b> puzzling	<b>blink:</b> shut your eyes and quickly open then
<b>a leap forward:</b> a quantum leap, breakthrough, important development	<b>look after me:</b> take care of me
<b>cracking roast:</b> delicious roast	<b>get a move on:</b> hurry up
<b>a pun:</b> uses words having more than one meaning or having the same sound but different meanings >> fowl play – foul play / plucky – lucky. “My dog's a champion boxer”	<b>put the kettle on:</b> boil some water for tea
<b>wind back the clock:</b> turn back the clock	<b>endeavour:</b> undertaking, effort
<b>muscles wasting away:</b> muscle loss	Now at 72, with no plan to retire, Prof. Hawking is still a living symbol of how much the brain can achieve when the body gives up. “There should be no boundary to human endeavour...However bad life may seem, there is always something you can do, and succeed at. <b>While there is life, there is hope</b> ”
<b>to reckon:</b> think, suppose	<b>take a seat:</b> sit down <b>cut me off:</b> leave me, abandon me
<b>stammering, stuttering:</b> difficulty speaking	<b>it's full of holes:</b> the argument is weak