

Movies & Languages 2016-2017

Bridge of Spies



About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Steven Spielberg
YEAR / COUNTRY	2015 / USA
GENRE	Historical Drama
ACTORS	Tom Hanks, Mark Rylance, Alan Alda

PLOT

This film is based on a true story of the cold war. In 1957 the Lawyer James B. Donovan is recruited from his law firm to defend accused Soviet spy Rudolf Abel. Abel is convicted but Donovan convinces the judge to sentence him to prison rather than execute him, as the USA may at some point in the future swap him for an American spy the Soviets might have in custody. Just such a scenario comes about in 1960 when a U-2 spy pilot Francis Gary Powers is shot down over Soviet territory and taken prisoner. Donovan is recruited to act as the intermediary and negotiate swapping Abel for Powers requiring him to travel to East Berlin crossing the newly built Berlin Wall.

The film was a great success, and received positive reviews for its direction, screenplay, acting, score and production merits. It received six Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture.

LANGUAGE

Standard American English, some German, some Russian.

GRAMMAR

Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are short phrases beginning with words like *who*, *which*, *that* and *whose* that define or describe people and things. There are two types:

1) Defining relative clauses define or differentiate the person or thing they refer to. They have the following forms:

◦ *who*, *whom*, *which*, or *that*

For people both *who* and *that* are used, but *who* is more common. For things or ideas both *which* and *that* are used, but *that* is more common, especially in speech.

*Sam is the person **who** has the most experience.*

*I know some people **that** can help you.*

◦ No pronoun (if the object of the verb is in the clause)

*The students (**whom**) we saw were studying.*

*The salad (**that**) I had for lunch was tasty.*

◦ *whose*

*The United Nations is an organization **whose** policies change quite slowly.*

2) Non-defining relative clauses only give extra information and do not define what they refer to. The relative pronoun must be kept: it cannot be left out.

They have the following forms:

◦ *who, which, whom, whose*

That is never used in a non-defining relative clause.

*The salad, **which** had avocado in it, was superb.*

*The Professor, **whom/who** the students know well, said the computer was working fine.*

◦ We usually use commas to separate a non-defining relative clause from the rest of the sentence.

VOCABULARY

To deploy: to move people or things for tactical or strategic purposes	Tossed it into our lap: gave us the problem or responsibility
Like riding a bike: easy, not difficult	I got stood up: someone did not meet me after an appointment we had made
Say grace: praying before a meal	“Would it help?”: what difference would it make
Flailing: to wave or swing about without control	Drivers: pilots of spy airplanes
Deal me in: I’m playing the game, I’m participating	Jeez: Jesus
“The Article”: high altitude U-2 spy plane	Canvassing: checking, controlling
“Spend the dollar”: commit suicide	“Hot dog!”: great, good idea
If things go south: if things go wrong	“Hang on”: Wait!, Wait a minute!, Wait for me!
In a nutshell: to be more specific	Checkpoint Charlie: a famous crossing point between East and West Berlin where passports and identities were checked
I don’t give a shit: I don’t care	Cold War: name given to the relationship that developed between the USA and the USSR after World War Two
Red letter day: a day of special importance or significance	Pointless: useless, without a reason
To be slighted: to be diminished, ignored, disrespected	Fourth Amendment: an amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures. They may be conducted only on a judicially sanctioned warrant based on probable cause. It is part of the Bill of Rights
To stick out: to be very obvious or apparent	