

# STAR WARS



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# Introduction

Star Wars is an American epic space opera multimedia franchise created by George Lucas, which began with the eponymous 1977 film and quickly became a worldwide pop culture phenomenon. The franchise has been expanded into various films and other media, including television series, video games, novels, comic books, theme park attractions, and themed areas, comprising an all-encompassing fictional universe. Star Wars is one of the highest-grossing media franchises of all time.

The original film (Star Wars), retroactively subtitled Episode IV: A New Hope (1977), was followed by the sequels Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back (1980) and Episode VI: Return of the Jedi (1983), forming the original Star Wars trilogy. Lucas later returned to the series to direct a prequel trilogy, consisting of Episode I: The Phantom Menace (1999), Episode II: Attack of the Clones (2002), and Episode III: Revenge of the Sith (2005). In 2012, Lucas sold his production company to Disney, relinquishing his ownership of the franchise. This led to a sequel trilogy, consisting of Episode VII: The Force Awakens (2015), Episode VIII: The Last Jedi (2017), and Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker (2019).

All nine films of the "Skywalker Saga" were nominated for Academy Awards, with wins going to the first two releases. Together with the theatrical live action "anthology" films *Rogue One* (2016) and *Solo* (2018), the combined box office revenue of the films equated to over US\$10 billion, which makes it the second-highest-grossing film franchise of all time. Additional upcoming films are in the works, including an untitled movie from Taika Waititi and *Rogue Squadron* directed by Patty Jenkins, both currently without release dates.

# Premise

The Star Wars franchise depicts the adventures of characters "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away", in which humans and many species of aliens (often humanoid) co-exist with robots (typically referred to in the films as 'droids'), who may assist them in their daily routines; space travel between planets is common due to lightspeed hyperspace technology. The planets range from wealthy, planet-wide cities to deserts scarcely populated by primitive tribes. Virtually any Earth biome, along with many fictional ones, has its counterpart as a Star Wars planet which, in most cases, teem with sentient and non-sentient alien life. The franchise also makes use of other astronomical objects such as asteroid fields and nebulae. Spacecraft range from small starfighters, to huge capital ships such as the Star Destroyers, to space stations such as the moon-sized Death Stars. Telecommunication includes two-way audio and audiovisual screens, holographic projections, and HoloNet (internet counterpart).

The universe of Star Wars is generally similar to ours but its laws of physics are less strict allowing for more imaginative stories. One result of that is a mystical power known as the Force which is described in the original film as "an energy field created by all living things ... [that] binds the galaxy together". The field is depicted as a kind of pantheistic god. Through training and meditation, those whom "the Force is strong with" exhibit various superpowers (such as telekinesis, precognition, telepathy, and manipulation of physical energy). It is believed nothing is impossible for the Force. The mentioned powers are wielded by two major knightly orders at conflict with each other: the Jedi, peacekeepers of the Galactic Republic who act on the light side of the Force through non-attachment and arbitration, and the Sith, who use the dark side by manipulating fear and aggression. While Jedi Knights can be numerous, the Dark Lords of the Sith (or 'Darth's') are intended to be limited to two: a master and their apprentice. Another notable fictional element of Star Wars is hyperspace, an alternate dimension that allows faster-than-light travel.

Force-wielders are very limited in numbers in comparison to the population. The Jedi and Sith prefer the use of a weapon called a lightsaber, a blade of plasma that can cut through virtually any surface and deflect energy bolts. The rest of the population, as well as renegades and soldiers, use plasma-powered blaster firearms. As a result of galaxy-scaled politics (involving republics, empires, kingdoms, alliances, etc.), all this weaponry is made use of in various military conflicts during which most Star Wars material takes place. In the outer reaches of the galaxy, crime syndicates such as the Hutt cartel are dominant. Bounty hunters are often employed by both gangsters and governments. Illicit activities include smuggling and slavery.

The combination of science fiction and fantasy elements makes Star Wars a very universal franchise, capable of telling stories of various genres.



# History

## Original trilogy



In 1971, George Lucas wanted to film an adaptation of the Flash Gordon serial, but could not obtain the rights, so he began developing his own space opera. After directing American Graffiti (1973), he wrote a two-page synopsis, which 20th Century Fox decided to invest in. By 1974, he had expanded the story into the first draft of a screenplay. Fox expected the film would be of limited financial success, and so it was given a relatively low budget, with production being moved to Elstree Studios in England to help save on cost. Many of the scenes were shot in England, and so featured a number of British actors. The Star Wars robots were built by the small English company Peteric Engineering. A 2019 BBC documentary revealed how the parts required to create these machines and other now iconic film props, including the light sabers (originally called 'laser guns'), were ingeniously recycled from items scavenged in junk shops, ever conscious of the need to spend

as little money as possible. The 1977 movie's success led Lucas to make it the basis of an elaborate film serial. With the backstory he created for the sequel, Lucas decided that the series would be a trilogy of trilogies. Most of the main cast would return for the two additional installments of the original trilogy, which were self-financed by Lucasfilm.

Star Wars was released on May 25, 1977, and first subtitled Episode IV: A New Hope in the 1979 book The Art of Star Wars. Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back was released on May 21, 1980, also achieving wide financial and critical success. The final film in the trilogy, Episode VI: Return of the Jedi was released on May 25, 1983. The story of the original trilogy focuses on Luke Skywalker's quest to become a Jedi, his struggle with the evil Imperial agent Darth Vader, and the



struggle of the Rebel Alliance to free the galaxy from the clutches of the Galactic Empire.

## Prequel trilogy

The prequel trilogy's main cast includes (from left to right) Ewan McGregor (Obi-Wan Kenobi), Natalie Portman (Padmé Amidala), Hayden Christensen (Anakin Skywalker), and Ian McDiarmid (Palpatine).



According to producer Gary Kurtz, loose plans for a prequel trilogy were developed during the outlining of the original two films. In 1980, Lucas confirmed that he had the nine-film series plotted, but due to the stress of producing the original trilogy, he had decided to cancel further sequels by 1981. In 1983, Lucas explained that "There was never a script completed that had the entire story as it exists now ... As the stories unfolded, I would take certain ideas and save them ... I kept taking out all the good parts, and I just kept telling myself I would make other movies someday."

Technical advances in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including the ability to create computer-generated imagery (CGI), inspired Lucas to consider that it might be possible to revisit his saga. In 1989, Lucas stated that the prequels would be "unbelievably expensive". In



1992, he acknowledged that he had plans to create the prequel trilogy. A theatrical rerelease of the original trilogy in 1997 "updated" the 20-year-old films with the style of CGI envisioned for the new trilogy.

Episode I: The Phantom Menace was released on May 19, 1999, and Episode II: Attack of the Clones on May 16, 2002. Episode III: Revenge of the Sith, the first PG-13 film in the franchise, was released on May 19, 2005. The first two movies were met with mixed reviews, with the third being received somewhat more positively. The trilogy begins 32 years before Episode IV and follows the Jedi training of Anakin Skywalker, Luke's father, and his eventual fall from grace and transformation into the Sith lord Darth Vader, as well as the corruption of the Galactic Republic and rise of the Empire led by Darth Sidious. Together with the original trilogy, Lucas has collectively referred to the first six episodic films of the franchise as "the tragedy of Darth Vader".





## Sequel trilogy

The sequel trilogy's main cast includes (from left to right) Adam Driver (Kylo Ren), Daisy Ridley (Rey), John Boyega (Finn), and Oscar Isaac (Poe Dameron).

Prior to releasing the original film, and made possible by its success, Lucas planned "three trilogies of nine films". However, he announced to Time in 1978 that he planned "10 sequels". He confirmed that he had outlined the prequels and sequels in 1981. At various stages of development, the sequel trilogy was to focus on the rebuilding of the Republic, the return of Luke in a role similar to that of Obi-Wan Kenobi in the original trilogy, Luke's sister (not yet determined to be Leia), Han, Leia, R2-D2 and C-3PO. However, after beginning work on the prequel trilogy, Lucas insisted that Star Wars was meant to be a six-part series and that there would be no sequel trilogy.



Lucas decided to leave the franchise in the hands of other filmmakers, announcing in January 2012 that he would make no more Star Wars films. That October, the Walt



Disney Company agreed to buy Lucasfilm and announced that Episode VII would be released in 2015. The co-chairman of Lucasfilm, Kathleen Kennedy, became president and served as executive producer of new Star Wars feature films. Lucas provided Kennedy his story treatments for the sequels

during the 2012 sale, but in 2015 it was revealed Lucas's sequel outline had been discarded. The sequel trilogy also meant the end of the existing Star Wars Expanded Universe, which was discarded from canon to give "maximum creative freedom to the filmmakers and also preserve an element of surprise and discovery for the audience."

Episode VII: The Force Awakens was released on December 16, 2015, Episode VIII: The Last Jedi on December 13, 2017, and Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker on December 18, 2019, in many countries. The Force Awakens and The Last Jedi were both critical and box office successes. Episode IX received a mixed reception from critics and audiences. The sequel trilogy starts 30 years after Episode VI and focuses on the journey of the Force-sensitive orphan Rey, guided by Luke Skywalker. Along with ex-stormtrooper Finn and ace X-Wing pilot Poe Dameron, Rey helps the Resistance, led by Leia, fight the First Order, commanded by Han and Leia's son (and Luke's nephew), Kylo Ren.





## **Anthology films**

The anthology films' main casts include (from left to right) Felicity Jones (Jyn Erso) and Diego Luna (Cassian Andor) from *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* and Alden Ehrenreich (Han Solo) and Woody Harrelson (Tobias Beckett) from *Solo: A Star Wars Story*.

Lucasfilm and Kennedy have stated that the standalone films would be referred to as the Star Wars anthology series (though the word anthology has not been used in any of the titles, instead carrying the promotional "A Star Wars Story" subtitle). Focused on how the Rebels obtained the Death Star plans introduced in the 1977 film, the first anthology film, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, was released on December 16, 2016, to favorable reviews and box office success. The second, *Solo: A Star Wars Story*, centered on a young Han Solo with Chewbacca and Lando as supporting characters, was released on May 25, 2018, to generally favorable reviews and underperformance at the box office. The television series *Obi-Wan Kenobi* was originally going to be a film instead but changed to a limited series due to *Solo* underperforming. Despite this, more anthology films are expected to be released, following a hiatus after 2019's *The Rise of Skywalker*.

## Other media

From 1976 to 2014, the term Expanded Universe (EU) was an umbrella term for all officially licensed Star Wars storytelling material set outside the events depicted within the theatrical films, including novels, comics, and video games. Lucasfilm maintained internal continuity between the films and television content and the EU material until April 25, 2014, when the company announced all of the EU works would cease production. Existing works would no longer be considered canon to the franchise and subsequent reprints would be rebranded under the Star Wars Legends label, with downloadable content for the massively multiplayer online game *The Old Republic* the only Legends material to still be produced. The Star Wars canon was subsequently restructured to only include the existing six feature films, the animated film *The Clone Wars* (2008), and its companion animated series. All future projects and creative developments across all types of media would be overseen and coordinated by the story group, announced as a division of Lucasfilm created to maintain continuity and a cohesive vision on the storytelling of the franchise. Multiple comics series from Marvel and novels published by Del Rey were produced after the announcement.

## Print media

Star Wars in print predates the release of the first film, with the November 1976 novelization of *Star Wars*, initially subtitled "From the Adventures of Luke Skywalker". Credited to Lucas, it was ghostwritten by Alan Dean Foster.<sup>[109]</sup> The first "Expanded Universe" story appeared in Marvel Comics' *Star Wars* #7 in January 1978 (the first six issues being an adaptation of the film), followed by Foster's sequel novel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* the following month.

## Novels

Timothy Zahn authored the *Thrawn* trilogy, which was widely credited with revitalizing the dormant Star Wars franchise in the early 1990s.

After penning the novelization of the original film, Foster followed it with the sequel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* (1978). The novelizations of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) by Donald F. Glut and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) by James Kahn followed, as well as *The Han Solo Adventures* trilogy (1979–1980) by Brian Daley, and *The Adventures of Lando Calrissian* trilogy (1983) by L. Neil Smith.

Timothy Zahn's bestselling *Thrawn* trilogy (1991–1993) reignited interest in the franchise and introduced the popular characters Grand Admiral Thrawn, Mara Jade, Talon Karrde, and Gilad Pellaeon. The first novel, *Heir to the Empire*, reached #1 on the New York Times Best Seller list, and the series finds Luke, Leia, and Han facing off against tactical genius Thrawn, who is plotting to retake the galaxy for the Empire. In *The Courtship of Princess Leia* (1994) by Dave Wolverton, set immediately before the *Thrawn* trilogy, Leia considers an advantageous political marriage to Prince Isolder of the planet Hapes, but she and Han ultimately marry. Steve Perry's *Shadows of the Empire* (1996), set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*, was part of a multimedia campaign that included a comic book series and video game. The novel introduced the crime lord Prince Xizor, another popular character who would appear in multiple other works. Other notable series from Bantam include the *Jedi Academy* trilogy (1994) by Kevin J. Anderson, the 14-book *Young Jedi Knights* series (1995–1998) by Anderson and Rebecca Moesta, and the *X-wing* series (1996–2012) by Michael A. Stackpole and Aaron Allston.

Del Rey took over Star Wars book publishing in 1999, releasing what would become a 19-installment novel series called *The New Jedi Order* (1999–2003). Written by multiple authors, the series was set 25 to 30 years after the original films and introduced the Yuuzhan Vong, a powerful alien race attempting to invade and conquer the entire galaxy. The bestselling multi-author series *Legacy of the Force* (2006–2008) chronicles the crossover of Han and Leia's son Jacen Solo to the dark side of the Force; among his evil deeds, he kills Luke's wife Mara Jade as a sacrifice to join the Sith. Although no longer canon, the story is paralleled in *The Force Awakens* with Han and Leia's son Ben Solo, who becomes the evil Kylo Ren.

Three series set in the prequel era were published by Scholastic for younger audiences: the 18-book *Jedi Apprentice* (1999–2002) chronicles the adventures of Obi-Wan Kenobi and his master Qui-Gon Jinn in the years before *The Phantom Menace*; the 11-book *Jedi Quest* (2001–2004) follows Obi-Wan and his own apprentice, Anakin Skywalker in between *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones*; and the 10-book *The Last of the Jedi* (2005–2008), set almost immediately after *Revenge of the Sith*, features Obi-Wan and the last few surviving Jedi. In 2019, a new prequel era novel, starring Qui-Gon and the young Obi-Wan, was published by Del Rey under the title *Star Wars: Master and Apprentice*.

Although Thrawn had been designated a Legends character in 2014, he was reintroduced into the canon in 2016 for the third season of the *Rebels* animated series, with Zahn returning to write more novels based on the character and set in the new canon.

## Comics

Marvel Comics published a Star Wars comic book series from 1977 to 1986. Original Star Wars comics were serialized in the Marvel magazine *Pizzazz* between 1977 and 1979. The 1977 installments were the first original Star Wars stories not directly adapted from the films to appear in print form, as they preceded those of the Star Wars comic series. From 1985 to 1987, the animated children's series *Ewoks* and *Droids* inspired comic series from Marvel's Star Comics line. According to Marvel comics former Editor-In-Chief Jim Shooter, the strong sales of Star Wars comics saved Marvel financially in 1977 and 1978. Marvel's Star Wars series was one of the industry's top selling titles in 1979 and 1980. The only downside for Marvel was that the 100,000 copy sales quota was surpassed quickly, allowing Lippincott to renegotiate the royalty arrangements from a position of strength.

In the late 1980s, Marvel dropped a new Star Wars comic it had in development, which was picked up by Dark Horse Comics and published as the popular *Dark Empire* series (1991–1995). Dark Horse subsequently launched dozens of series set after the original film trilogy, including *Tales of the Jedi* (1993–1998), *X-wing Rogue Squadron* (1995–1998), *Star Wars: Republic* (1998–2006), *Star Wars Tales* (1999–2005), *Star Wars: Empire* (2002–2006), and *Knights of the Old Republic* (2006–2010).

After Disney's acquisition of Lucasfilm, it was announced in January 2014 that in 2015 the Star Wars comics license would return to Marvel Comics, whose parent company, Marvel Entertainment, Disney had purchased in 2009. Launched in 2015, the first three publications were titled *Star Wars*, *Darth Vader*, and the limited series *Princess Leia*.

First announced as Project Luminous at Star Wars Celebration in April 2019, the *Star Wars: The High Republic* publishing initiative were revealed in a press conference in February 2020. Involving the majority of the then current officially licensed publishers, a new era set 200 years before the Skywalker Saga was explored in various books and

comics. Including ongoing titles by Marvel and IDW Publishing, written by Cavan Scott and Daniel José Older respectively.

## **Audio**

### ***Soundtracks and singles***

John Williams composed the soundtracks for the nine episodic films; he has stated that he will retire from the franchise with *The Rise of Skywalker*. He also composed Han Solo's theme for *Solo: A Star Wars Story*; John Powell adapted and composed the rest of the score. Michael Giacchino composed the score of *Rogue One*. Ludwig Göransson scored and composed the music of *The Mandalorian*. Williams also created the main theme for *Galaxy's Edge*.

### ***Audio novels***

The first Star Wars audio work is *The Story of Star Wars*, an LP using audio samples from the original film and a new narration to retell the story, released in 1977. Most later printed novels were adapted into audio novels, usually released on cassette tape and re-released on CD. As of 2019, audio-only novels have been released not directly based on printed media.

### ***Radio***

Radio adaptations of the films were also produced. Lucas, a fan of the NPR-affiliated campus radio station of his alma mater the University of Southern California, licensed the Star Wars radio rights to KUSC-FM for US\$1. The production used John Williams's original film score, along with Ben Burtt's sound effects.

The first was written by science-fiction author Brian Daley and directed by John Madden. It was broadcast on National Public Radio in 1981, adapting the original 1977 film into 13 episodes. Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels reprised their film roles.

The overwhelming success, led to a 10-episode adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back* debuted in 1983. Billy Dee Williams joined the other two stars, reprising his role as Lando Calrissian.

In 1983, Buena Vista Records released an original, 30-minute Star Wars audio drama titled *Rebel Mission to Ord Mantell*, written by Daley. In the 1990s, Time Warner Audio Publishing adapted several Star Wars series from Dark Horse Comics into audio dramas: the three-part *Dark Empire* saga, *Tales of the Jedi*, *Dark Lords of the Sith*, the *Dark Forces* trilogy, and *Crimson Empire* (1998). *Return of the Jedi* was adapted into 6-episodes in 1996, featuring Daniels.

## **Video games**

The Star Wars franchise has spawned over one hundred computer, video, and board games, dating back to some of the earliest home consoles. Some are based directly on the movie material, while others rely heavily on the non-canonical Expanded Universe (rebranded as *Star Wars Legends* and removed from the canon in 2014). Star Wars games have gone through three significant development eras, marked by a change in leadership among the developers: the early licensed games, those developed after the creation of LucasArts, and those created after the closure of the Lucasfilm division by Disney and the transfer of the license to Electronic Arts.



### ***Early licensed games (1979–1993)***

The first officially licensed electronic Star Wars game was Kenner's 1979 table-top Star Wars Electronic Battle Command. In 1982, Parker Brothers published the first Star Wars video game for the Atari 2600, Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, followed soon the year later by Star Wars: Jedi Arena, the first video game to depict lightsaber combat. They were followed in 1983 by Atari's rail shooter arcade game Star Wars, with vector graphics to replicate the Death Star trench run scene from the 1977 film. The next game, Star Wars: Return of the Jedi (1984), has more traditional raster graphics, while the following Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (1985) has vector graphics.

Platform games were made for the Nintendo Entertainment System, including the Japan-exclusive Star Wars (1987), an international Star Wars (1991), and Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back (1992). Super Star Wars (1992) was released for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, with two sequels over the next two years.

### ***LucasArts and modern self-published games (1993–2014)***

Lucasfilm founded its own video game company in 1982, becoming best known for adventure games and World War II flight combat games, but as George Lucas took more interest in the increasing success of the video game market, he wanted to have more creative control over the games and founded his own development company, LucasArts. Improved graphics allowed games to tell complex narratives, which allowed for the retelling of the films, and eventually original narratives set in the same continuity, with voice-overs and CGI cutscenes. In 1993, LucasArts released Star Wars: X-Wing, the first self-published Star Wars video game and the first space flight simulator based on the franchise. It was one of the bestselling video games of 1993 and established its own series of games. The Rogue Squadron series was released between 1998 and 2003, also focusing on space battles set during the films.

Dark Forces (1995), a hybrid adventure game incorporating puzzles and strategy, was the first Star Wars first-person shooter. It featured gameplay and graphical features not then common in other games, made possible by LucasArts' custom-designed game engine, the Jedi. The game was well received, and it was followed by four sequels. The series introduced Kyle Katarn, who would appear in multiple games, novels, and comics. Katarn is a former stormtrooper who joins the Rebellion and becomes a Jedi, a plot arc similar to that of Finn in the sequel trilogy films. A massively multiplayer online role-playing game, Star Wars Galaxies, was in operation from 2003 until 2011. After Disney bought Lucasfilm, LucasArts ceased its role as a developer in 2013, although it still operates as a licensor.

### ***EA Star Wars (2014–present)***

Following its acquisition of the franchise, Disney reassigned video game rights to Electronic Arts. Games made during this era are considered canonical, and feature more influence from the Star Wars filmmakers. Disney partnered with Lenovo to create the augmented reality video game Jedi Challenges, released in November 2017. In August 2018, it was announced that Zynga would publish free-to-play Star Wars mobile games. The Battlefront games received a canonical reboot with Star Wars: Battlefront in November 2015, which was followed by a sequel, Battlefront II, in November 2017. A single-player action-adventure game, Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order, with an original story and cast of characters, was released in November 2019. A space combat game titled Star Wars: Squadrons, which builds upon the space battles from Battlefront, was released in October 2020.

## Multimedia projects

A multimedia project involves works released across multiple types of media. *Shadows of the Empire* (1996) was a multimedia project set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* that included a novel by Steve Perry, a comic book series, a video game, and action figures. *The Force Unleashed* (2008–2010) was a similar project set between *Revenge of the Sith* and *A New Hope* that included a novel, a 2008 video game and its 2010 sequel, a graphic novel, a role-playing game supplement, and toys.

## Merchandising

George Lucas made much of his fortune by retaining his rights to the franchise's merchandising.

The success of the *Star Wars* films led the franchise to become one of the most merchandised franchises in the world. While filming the original 1977 film, George Lucas decided to take a \$500,000 pay cut to his salary as director in exchange for full ownership of the franchise's merchandising rights. By 1987, the first three films have made US\$2.6 billion in merchandising revenue. By 2012, the first six films produced approximately US\$20 billion in merchandising revenue.

Kenner made the first *Star Wars* action figures to coincide with the release of the original film, and today the original figures are highly valuable. Since the 1990s, Hasbro holds the rights to create action figures based on the saga. Pez dispensers began to be produced in 1997. *Star Wars* was the first intellectual property to be licensed in Lego history. Lego has produced animated parody short films and mini-series to promote their *Star Wars* sets. The Lego *Star Wars* video games are critically acclaimed bestsellers.

In 1977, the board game *Star Wars: Escape from the Death Star* was released. A *Star Wars* Monopoly and themed versions of *Trivial Pursuit* and *Battleship* were released in 1997, with updated versions released in subsequent years. The board game *Risk* has been adapted in two editions by Hasbro: *The Clone Wars Edition* (2005) and the *Original Trilogy Edition* (2006). Three *Star Wars* tabletop role-playing games have been developed: a version by West End Games in the 1980s and 1990s, one by Wizards of the Coast in the 2000s, and one by Fantasy Flight Games in the 2010s.

*Star Wars* Trading Cards have been published since the first "blue" series, by Topps, in 1977. Dozens of series have been produced, with Topps being the licensed creator in the United States. Each card series are of film stills or original art. Many of the cards have become highly collectible with some very rare "promos", such as the 1993 Galaxy Series II "floating Yoda" P3 card often commanding US\$1,000 or more. While most "base" or "common card" sets are plentiful, many "insert" or "chase cards" are very rare. From 1995 until 2001, Decipher, Inc. had the license for, created, and produced the *Star Wars* Customizable Card Game.

## Themes

*Star Wars* features elements such as knighthood, chivalry, and Jungian archetypes such as "the shadow". There are also many references to Christianity, such as in the appearance of Darth Maul, whose design draws heavily from traditional depictions of the devil. Anakin was conceived of a virgin birth, and is assumed to be the "Chosen One", a messianic individual. However, unlike Jesus, Anakin falls from grace, remaining evil as Darth Vader until *Return of the Jedi*. According to Adam Driver, sequel trilogy villain

Kylo Ren, who idolizes Vader, believes he is "doing what he thinks is right". George Lucas has said that the theme of the saga is redemption.

The saga draws heavily from the hero's journey, an archetypical template developed by comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell. Each character—primarily Anakin, Luke, and Rey—follows the steps of the cycle or undergoes its reversal, becoming the villain. A defining step of the journey is "Atonement with the Father". Obi-Wan's loss of a father figure could have impacted his relationship with Anakin, whom both Obi-Wan and Palpatine are fatherlike mentors to. Luke's discovery that Vader is his father has strong repercussions on the saga and is regarded as one of the most influential plot twists in cinema. Supreme Leader Snoke encourages Kylo Ren to kill his father, Han Solo. Kylo uses the fact that Rey is an orphan to tempt her into joining the dark side. According to Inverse, the final scene in *The Last Jedi*, which depicts servant children playing with a toy of Luke and one boy using the Force, symbolizes that "the Force can be found in people with humble beginnings."

## Historical influences

Political science has been an important element of Star Wars since the franchise launched in 1977, focusing on a struggle between democracy and dictatorship. Battles featuring the Ewoks and Gungans against the Empire and Trade Federation, respectively, represent the clash between a primitive society and a more advanced one, similar to the Vietnam-American War. Darth Vader's design was initially inspired by Samurai armor, and also incorporated a German military helmet. Originally, Lucas conceived of the Sith as a group that served the Emperor in the same way that the Schutzstaffel served Adolf Hitler; this was condensed into one character in the form of Vader. Stormtroopers borrow the name of World War I German "shock" troopers. Imperial officers wear uniforms resembling those of German forces during World War II, and political and security officers resemble the black-clad SS down to the stylized silver death's head on their caps. World War II terms were used for names in the films; e.g. the planets Kessel (a term that refers to a group of encircled forces) and Hoth (after a German general who served on the snow-laden Eastern Front). Shots of the commanders looking through AT-AT walker viewscreens in *The Empire Strikes Back* resemble tank interiors, and space battles in the original film were based on World War I and World War II dogfights.

Palpatine being a chancellor before becoming the Emperor in the prequel trilogy alludes to Hitler's role before appointing himself Führer. Lucas has also drawn parallels to historical dictators such as Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and politicians like Richard Nixon. The Great Jedi Purge mirrors the events of the Night of the Long Knives. The corruption of the Galactic Republic is modeled after the fall of the democratic Roman Republic and the formation of an empire.

On the inspiration for the First Order formed "from the ashes of the Empire", *The Force Awakens* director J. J. Abrams spoke of conversations the writers had about how the Nazis could have escaped to Argentina after WWII and "started working together again."

## Cultural impact

The lightsaber and the blaster are iconic elements of the franchise.

The Star Wars saga has had a significant impact on popular culture, with references to its fictional universe deeply embedded in everyday life. Phrases like "evil empire" and "May the Force be with you" have become part of the popular lexicon. The first Star Wars

film in 1977 was a cultural unifier, enjoyed by a wide spectrum of people. The film can be said to have helped launch the science-fiction boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s, making science-fiction films a mainstream genre. The widespread impact made it a prime target for parody works and homages, with popular examples including *Hardware Wars*, *Spaceballs*, *The Family Guy Trilogy* and *Robot Chicken: Star Wars*.

In 1989, the Library of Congress selected the original *Star Wars* film for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry, as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." *The Empire Strikes Back* was selected in 2010, and *Return of the Jedi* was selected in 2021. 35 mm reels of the 1997 Special Editions were the versions initially presented for preservation because of the difficulty of transferring from the original prints, but it was later revealed that the Library possesses a copyright deposit print of the original theatrical releases.

## Industry

The original *Star Wars* film was a huge success for 20th Century Fox, and was credited for reinvigorating the company. Within three weeks of the film's release, the studio's stock price doubled to a record high. Prior to 1977, 20th Century Fox's greatest annual profits were \$37 million, while in 1977, the company broke that record by posting a profit of \$79 million. The franchise helped Fox to change from an almost bankrupt production company to a thriving media conglomerate.

*Star Wars* fundamentally changed the aesthetics and narratives of Hollywood films, switching the focus of Hollywood-made films from deep, meaningful stories based on dramatic conflict, themes and irony to sprawling special-effects-laden blockbusters, as well as changing the Hollywood film industry in fundamental ways. Before *Star Wars*, special effects in films had not appreciably advanced since the 1950s. The commercial success of *Star Wars* created a boom in state-of-the-art special effects in the late 1970s. Along with *Jaws*, *Star Wars* started the tradition of the summer blockbuster film in the entertainment industry, where films open on many screens at the same time and profitable franchises are important. It created the model for the major film trilogy and showed that merchandising rights on a film could generate more money than the film itself did.

Film critic Roger Ebert wrote in his book *The Great Movies*, "Like *The Birth of a Nation* and *Citizen Kane*, *Star Wars* was a technical watershed that influenced many of the movies that came after." It began a new generation of special effects and high-energy motion pictures. The film was one of the first films to link genres together to invent a new, high-concept genre for filmmakers to build upon. Finally, along with Steven Spielberg's *Jaws*, it shifted the film industry's focus away from personal filmmaking of the 1970s and towards fast-paced, big-budget blockbusters for younger audiences.

Some critics have blamed *Star Wars* and *Jaws* for "ruining" Hollywood by shifting its focus from "sophisticated" films such as *The Godfather*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Annie Hall* to films about spectacle and juvenile fantasy, and for the industry shift from stand-alone, one and done films, towards blockbuster franchises with multiple sequels and prequels. One such critic, Peter Biskind, complained, "When all was said and done, Lucas and Spielberg returned the 1970s audience, grown sophisticated on a diet of European and New Hollywood films, to the simplicities of the pre-1960s Golden Age of movies... They marched backward through the looking-glass." In an opposing view, Tom Shone wrote that through *Star Wars* and *Jaws*, Lucas and Spielberg "didn't betray cinema at all: they



plugged it back into the grid, returning the medium to its roots as a carnival sideshow, a magic act, one big special effect", which was "a kind of rebirth".

The original Star Wars trilogy is widely considered one of the best film trilogies in history. Numerous filmmakers have been influenced by Star Wars, including Damon Lindelof, Dean Devlin, Roland Emmerich, John Lasseter, David Fincher, Joss Whedon, John Singleton, Kevin Smith, and later Star Wars directors J. J. Abrams and Gareth Edwards. Lucas's concept of a "used universe" particularly influenced Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Alien* (1979), James Cameron's *Aliens* (1986) as well as *The Terminator* (1984), George Miller's *Mad Max 2* (1981), and Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003). Christopher Nolan cited Star Wars as an influence when making the 2010 blockbuster film *Inception*.

## **Fan works**

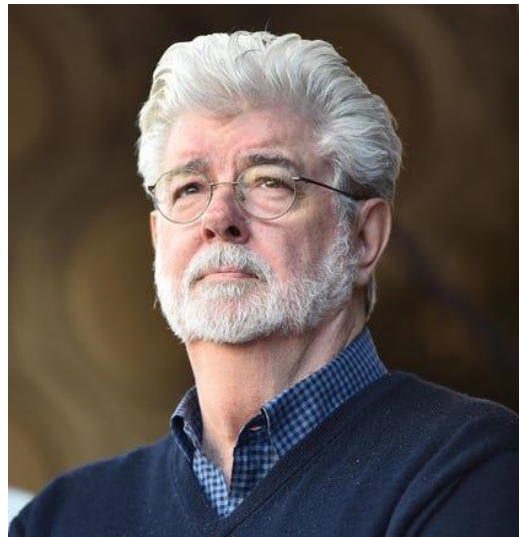
The Star Wars saga has inspired many fans to create their own non-canon material set in the Star Wars galaxy. In recent years, this has ranged from writing fan fiction to creating fan films. In 2002, Lucasfilm sponsored the first annual Official Star Wars Fan Film Awards, officially recognizing filmmakers and the genre. Because of concerns over potential copyright and trademark issues, however, the contest was initially open only to parodies, mockumentaries, and documentaries. Fan fiction films set in the Star Wars universe were originally ineligible, but in 2007, Lucasfilm changed the submission standards to allow in-universe fiction entries. Lucasfilm has allowed but not endorsed the creation of fan fiction, as long as it does not attempt to make a profit.

## **Academia**

As the characters and the storyline of the original trilogy are so well known, educators have used the films in the classroom as a learning resource. For example, a project in Western Australia honed elementary school students storytelling skills by role-playing action scenes from the movies and later creating props and audio/visual scenery to enhance their performance. Others have used the films to encourage second-level students to integrate technology in the science classroom by making prototype lightsabers. Similarly, psychiatrists in New Zealand and the US have advocated their use in the university classroom to explain different types of psychopathology.

## Author Biography

George Walton Lucas Jr. (born May 14, 1944) is an American filmmaker. Lucas is best known for creating the Star Wars and Indiana Jones franchises and founding Lucasfilm, LucasArts, Industrial Light & Magic and THX. He served as chairman of Lucasfilm before selling it to The Walt Disney Company in 2012. Lucas is one of history's most financially successful filmmakers and has been nominated for four Academy Awards. His films are among the 100 highest-grossing movies at the North American box office, adjusted for ticket-price inflation. Lucas is considered to be one of the most significant figures of the 20th-century New Hollywood movement, and a pioneer of the modern blockbuster.



After graduating from the University of Southern California in 1967, Lucas co-founded American Zoetrope with filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola. Lucas wrote and directed THX 1138 (1971), based on his student short Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4EB, which was a critical success but a financial failure. His next work as a writer-director was American Graffiti (1973), inspired by his youth in the early 1960s Modesto, California, and produced through the newly founded Lucasfilm. The film was critically and commercially successful and received five Academy Award nominations, including Best Director and Best Picture.

Lucas's next film, the epic space opera Star Wars (1977), had a troubled production but was a surprise hit, becoming the highest-grossing film at the time, winning six Academy Awards and sparking a cultural phenomenon. Lucas produced and co-wrote the sequels The Empire Strikes Back (1980) and Return of the Jedi (1983). With director Steven Spielberg, he created, produced, and co-wrote the Indiana Jones films Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981), The Temple of Doom (1984), The Last Crusade (1989), and The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008), and only produced The Dial of Destiny (2023). Lucas is also known for his collaboration with composer John Williams, who was recommended to him by Spielberg, and with whom he has worked for all the films in both of these franchises. He also produced and wrote a variety of films and television series through Lucasfilm between the 1970s and the 2010s.

In 1997, Lucas re-released the original Star Wars trilogy as part of a Special Edition featuring several modifications; home media versions with further changes were released in 2004 and 2011. He returned to directing with a Star Wars prequel trilogy comprising Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (1999), Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002), and Episode III – Revenge of the Sith (2005). He last collaborated on the CGI-animated television series Star Wars: The Clone Wars (2008–2014, 2020), the war film Red Tails (2012), and the CGI film Strange Magic (2015).

## Early life

Lucas was born and raised in Modesto, California, the son of Dorothy Ellinore Lucas (née Bomberger) and George Walton Lucas Sr., and is of German, Swiss-German, English, Scottish, and distant Dutch and French descent. His family attended Disneyland during its opening week in July 1955, and Lucas would remain enthusiastic about the park. He was interested in comics and science fiction, including television programs such as the Flash Gordon serials. Long before Lucas began making films, he yearned to be a racecar driver, and he spent most of his high school years racing on the underground circuit at fairgrounds and hanging out at garages. On June 12, 1962, a few days before his high school graduation, Lucas was driving his souped-up Autobianchi Bianchina when another driver broadsided him, flipping his car several times before it crashed into a tree; Lucas's seatbelt had snapped, ejecting him and thereby saving his life. However, his lungs were bruised from severe hemorrhaging and he required emergency medical treatment. This incident caused him to lose interest in racing as a career, but also inspired him to pursue his other interests.

Lucas's father owned a stationery store, and had wanted George to work for him when he turned 18. Lucas had been planning to go to art school, and declared upon leaving home that he would be a millionaire by the age of 30. He attended Modesto Junior College, where he studied anthropology, sociology, and literature, amongst other subjects. He also began shooting with an 8 mm camera, including filming car races. At this time, Lucas and his friend John Plummer became interested in Canyon Cinema: screenings of underground, avant-garde 16 mm filmmakers like Jordan Belson, Stan Brakhage, and Bruce Conner. Lucas and Plummer also saw classic European films of the time, including Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless*, François Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*, and Federico Fellini's *8½*. "That's when George really started exploring," Plummer said. Through his interest in autocross racing, Lucas met renowned cinematographer Haskell Wexler, another race enthusiast. Wexler, later to work with Lucas on several occasions, was impressed by Lucas's talent. "George had a very good eye, and he thought visually," he recalled.

At Plummer's recommendation, Lucas then transferred to the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts. USC was one of the earliest universities to have a school devoted to motion picture film. During the years at USC, Lucas shared a dorm room with Randal Kleiser. Along with classmates such as Walter Murch, Hal Barwood, and John Milius, they became a clique of film students known as The Dirty Dozen. He also became good friends with fellow acclaimed student filmmaker and future *Indiana Jones* collaborator, Steven Spielberg. Lucas was deeply influenced by the Filmic Expression course taught at the school by filmmaker Lester Novros which concentrated on the non-narrative elements of Film Form like color, light, movement, space, and time. Another inspiration was the Serbian montagist (and dean of the USC Film Department) Slavko Vorkapić, a film theoretician who made stunning montage sequences for Hollywood studio features at MGM, RKO, and Paramount. Vorkapich taught the autonomous nature of the cinematic art form, emphasizing the kinetic energy inherent in motion pictures.

After graduating with a bachelor of fine arts in film in 1967, he tried joining the United States Air Force as an officer, but he was immediately turned down because of his numerous speeding tickets. He was later drafted by the Army for military service in Vietnam, but he was exempted from service after medical tests showed he had diabetes, the disease that killed his paternal grandfather.

## **Film career**

### ***1965–1969: Early career***

Lucas saw many inspiring films in class, particularly the visual films coming out of the National Film Board of Canada like Arthur Lipsett's 21-87, cameraman Jean-Claude Labrecque's cinéma vérité 60 Cycles, the work of Norman McLaren, and the documentaries of Claude Jutra. Lucas fell madly in love with pure cinema and quickly became prolific at making 16 mm nonstory noncharacter visual tone poems and cinéma vérité with such titles as Look at Life, Herbie, 1:42.08, The Emperor, Anyone Lived in a Pretty (how) Town, Filmmaker, and 6-18-67. He was passionate and interested in camerawork and editing, defining himself as a filmmaker as opposed to being a director, and he loved making abstract visual films that created emotions purely through non narrative structures.

In 1967, Lucas re-enrolled as a USC graduate student in film production. He began working under Verna Fields for the United States Information Agency, where he met his future wife Marcia Griffin. Working as a teaching instructor for a class of U.S. Navy students who were being taught documentary cinematography, Lucas directed the short film Electronic Labyrinth: THX 1138 4EB, which won first prize at the 1967–68 National Student film festival. Lucas was awarded a student scholarship by Warner Bros. to observe and work on the making of a film of his choosing. The film he chose after finding the animation department closed down was Finian's Rainbow (1968) which was being directed by Francis Ford Coppola, who was revered among film school students of the time as a cinema graduate who had "made it" in Hollywood. In 1969, Lucas was one of the camera operators on the classic Rolling Stones concert film Gimme Shelter.

### ***1969–1977: THX 1138, American Graffiti, and Star Wars***

In 1969, Lucas co-founded the studio American Zoetrope with Coppola, hoping to create a liberating environment for filmmakers to direct outside the perceived oppressive control of the Hollywood studio system. Coppola thought Lucas's Electronic Labyrinth could be adapted into his first full-length feature film, which was produced by American Zoetrope as THX 1138, but was not a success. Lucas then created his own company, Lucasfilm, Ltd., and directed the successful American Graffiti (1973).

Lucas then set his sights on adapting Flash Gordon, an adventure serial from his childhood that he fondly remembered. When he was unable to obtain the rights, he set out to write an original space adventure that would eventually become Star Wars. Despite his success with his previous film, all but one studio turned Star Wars down. It was only because Alan Ladd Jr. at 20th Century Fox liked American Graffiti that he forced through



a production and distribution deal for the film, which ended up restoring Fox to financial stability after a number of flops. Star Wars was significantly influenced by samurai films of Akira Kurosawa, Spaghetti Westerns, as well as classic sword and sorcery fantasy stories.

Star Wars quickly became the highest-grossing film of all-time, displaced five years later by Spielberg's E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial. After the success of American Graffiti and prior to the beginning of filming on Star Wars, Lucas was encouraged to renegotiate for a higher fee for writing and directing Star Wars than the US\$150,000 agreed. He declined to do so, instead negotiating for advantage in some of the as-yet-unspecified parts of his contract with Fox, in particular, ownership of licensing and merchandising rights (for novelizations, clothing, toys, etc.) and contractual arrangements for sequels. Lucasfilm has earned hundreds of millions of dollars from licensed games, toys, and collectibles created for the franchise.

The original Star Wars film went through a tumultuous production, and during editing, Lucas suffered chest pains initially feared to be a heart attack, but actually a fit of hypertension and exhaustion. The effort that Lucas exerted during post-production for the film, and its subsequent sequels, caused strains on his relationship with his wife Marcia Lucas, and was a contributing factor to their divorce at the end of the trilogy. The success of the first Star Wars film also resulted in more attention focused on Lucas, both positive and negative, attracting wealth and fame but also many people who wanted Lucas's financial backing or just to threaten him.

### ***1977–1993: Hiatus from directing, Indiana Jones***

Following the release of the first Star Wars film, Lucas worked extensively as a writer and producer, including on the many Star Wars spinoffs made for film, television, and other media. Lucas acted as executive producer for the next two Star Wars films, commissioning Irvin Kershner to direct The Empire Strikes Back, and Richard Marquand to direct Return of the Jedi, while receiving a story credit on the former and sharing a screenwriting credit with Lawrence Kasdan on the latter. Lucas also gave away his writing story credit out of great respect for Leigh Brackett for The Empire Strikes Back after her death from cancer. He also acted as story writer and executive producer on all four of the Indiana Jones films, which his colleague and good friend Steven Spielberg directed.

Craig Barron, who worked at ILM as part of the matte painting department, told Star Wars Insider that Lucas liked to spend time with the department's painters and often spoke of what movies he wanted to make. According to Barron, Lucas had wanted to make a film about Alexander the Great, but this film was ultimately never produced. Projects where Lucas was credited as executive producer and sometimes story writer in this period include Kurosawa's Kagemusha (1980), John Korty's Twice Upon A Time (1983), Ewoks: Caravan of Courage (1984), Ewoks: Battle for Endor (1985), Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters (1985), Jim Henson's Labyrinth (1986), Ron Howard's Willow

(1988), Don Bluth's *The Land Before Time* (1988), and the Indiana Jones television spinoff *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* (1992–93). There were unsuccessful projects, however, including *More American Graffiti* (1979), Willard Huyck's *Howard the Duck* (1986), which was the biggest flop of Lucas's career, Coppola's *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988) and *Radioland Murders* (1994) directed by Mel Smith.

The animation studio Pixar was founded in 1979 as the Graphics Group, one third of the Computer Division of Lucasfilm. Pixar's early computer graphics research resulted in groundbreaking effects in films such as *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Young Sherlock Holmes*, and the group was purchased in 1986 by Steve Jobs shortly after he left Apple Computer. Jobs paid Lucas \$5 million and put \$5 million as capital into the company. The sale reflected Lucas's desire to stop the cash flow losses from his seven-year research projects associated with new entertainment technology tools, as well as his company's new focus on creating entertainment products rather than tools. As of June 1983, Lucas was worth \$60 million, but he met cash-flow difficulties following his divorce that year, concurrent with the sudden dropoff in revenues from *Star Wars* licenses following the theatrical run of *Return of the Jedi*. At this point, Lucas had no desire to return to *Star Wars*, and had unofficially canceled the sequel trilogy.

Also in 1983, Lucas and Tomlinson Holman founded the audio company THX Ltd. The company was formerly owned by Lucasfilm and contains equipment for stereo, digital, and theatrical sound for films, and music. Skywalker Sound and Industrial Light & Magic, are the sound and visual effects subdivisions of Lucasfilm, while Lucasfilm Games, later renamed LucasArts, produces products for the gaming industry.

### ***1993–2012: Return to directing, Star Wars and Indiana Jones***

Having lost much of his fortune in a divorce settlement in 1987, Lucas was reluctant to return to *Star Wars*. However, the prequels, which were still only a series of basic ideas partially pulled from his original drafts of "The Star Wars", continued to tantalize him with technical possibilities that would make it worthwhile to revisit his older material. When *Star Wars* became popular once again, in the wake of Dark Horse's comic book line and Timothy Zahn's trilogy of spin-off novels, Lucas realized that there was still a large audience. His children were older, and with the explosion of CGI technology he began to consider directing once again.

By 1993, it was announced, in *Variety* among other sources, that Lucas would be making the prequels. He began penning more to the story, indicating that the series would be a tragic one, examining Anakin Skywalker's fall to the dark side. Lucas also began to change the status of the prequels relative to the originals; at first, they were supposed to be a "filling-in" of history tangential to the originals, but now he saw that they could form the beginning of one long story that started with Anakin's childhood and ended with his death. This was the final step towards turning the film series into a "Saga". In 1994, Lucas began work on the screenplay of the first prequel, tentatively titled *Episode I: The Beginning*.

In 1997, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Star Wars, Lucas restored the original trilogy, also making numerous modifications using newly available digital technology to bring them closer to his original vision. The films were re-released in theaters as the "Special Edition". The trilogy received further modifications and restorations for DVD releases in 2004, Blu-ray releases in 2011, and 4K releases released in 2019. Additionally, Lucas released a director's cut of THX 1138 in 2004, with the film re-cut and containing a number of CGI additions.

The first Star Wars prequel was finished and released in 1999 as Episode I – The Phantom Menace, which would be the first film Lucas had directed in over two decades. Following the release of the first prequel, Lucas announced that he would also be directing the next two, and began working on Episode II. The first draft of Episode II was completed just weeks before principal photography, and Lucas hired Jonathan Hales, a writer from The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles, to polish it. It was completed and released in 2002 as Attack of the Clones. The final prequel, Episode III – Revenge of the Sith, began production in 2002 and was released in 2005. Numerous older fans and critics considered the prequels inferior to the original trilogy, though they were box office successes and popular with younger fans. In 2004, Lucas reflected that his transition from independent to corporate filmmaker mirrored the story of Star Wars character Darth Vader in some ways, but concluded he was glad to be able to make his films the way he wants them.

### ***Lucas in 2007***

Lucas collaborated with Jeff Nathanson as a writer of the 2008 film Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, directed by Steven Spielberg. Like the Star Wars prequels, the reception was mixed with fans and critics alike. From 2008 to 2014, Lucas also served as the creator and executive producer for a second Star Wars animated series on Cartoon Network, Star Wars: The Clone Wars which premiered with a feature film of the same name before airing its first episode. The supervising director for this animated series was Dave Filoni, who was chosen by Lucas and closely collaborated with him on its development. This series bridged the events between Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith, and featured the last Star Wars stories in which Lucas was involved in a major way.

In 2012, Lucas served as executive producer for Red Tails, a war film based on the exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II. He also took over direction of reshoots while director Anthony Hemingway worked on other projects.

### ***2012–present: Semi-retirement***

I'm moving away from the business ... From the company, from all this kind of stuff.

—George Lucas on his future career plans

In January 2012, Lucas announced his retirement from producing large blockbuster films and instead re-focusing his career on smaller, independently budgeted features.

In June 2012, it was announced that producer Kathleen Kennedy, a long-term collaborator with Steven Spielberg and a producer of the Indiana Jones films, had been appointed as co-chair of Lucasfilm Ltd. It was reported that Kennedy would work alongside Lucas, who would remain chief executive and serve as co-chairman for at least one year, after which she would succeed him as the company's sole leader. With the sale of Lucasfilm to Disney, Lucas is currently Disney's second-largest single shareholder, after the estate of Steve Jobs.

Lucas worked as a creative consultant on the Star Wars sequel trilogy's first film, *The Force Awakens*. Lucas's involvement included attending early story meetings; according to Lucas, "I mostly say, 'You can't do this. You can do that.' You know, 'The cars don't have wheels. They fly with antigravity.' There's a million little pieces ... I know all that stuff." Lucas's son Jett told *The Guardian* that his father was "very torn" about having sold the rights to the franchise, despite having hand-picked Abrams to direct, and that his father was "there to guide" but that "he wants to let it go and become its new generation." Among the materials turned over to the production team were rough story treatments Lucas developed when he considered creating episodes VII–IX himself years earlier; in January 2015, Lucas stated that Disney had discarded his story ideas.

*The Force Awakens*, directed by J. J. Abrams, was released on December 18, 2015. Kathleen Kennedy executive produced the film and its sequels. The new sequel trilogy was jointly produced by Lucasfilm and The Walt Disney Company, which had acquired Lucasfilm in 2012. During an interview with talk show host and journalist Charlie Rose that aired on December 24, 2015, Lucas likened his decision to sell Lucasfilm to Disney to a divorce and outlined the creative differences between him and the producers of *The Force Awakens*. Lucas went on to say that he needed to support the company and its employees who were going to suffer financially. Lucas described the previous six Star Wars films as his "children" and defended his vision for them, while criticizing *The Force Awakens* for having a "retro feel", saying, "I worked very hard to make them completely different, with different planets, with different spaceships – you know, to make it new." Lucas also drew some criticism and subsequently apologized for his remark likening Disney to "white slavers".

In 2015, Lucas wrote the CGI film *Strange Magic*, his first musical. The film was produced at Skywalker Ranch. Gary Rydstrom directed the movie. At the same time the sequel trilogy was announced, a fifth installment of the Indiana Jones series also entered pre-development phase with Harrison Ford and Steven Spielberg set to return. Lucas originally did not specify whether the selling of Lucasfilm would affect his involvement with the film. In October 2016, Lucas announced his decision to not be involved in the story of the film but would remain an executive producer. In 2016, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, the first film of a Star Wars anthology series was released. It told the story of the rebels who stole the plans for the Death Star featured in the original Star Wars

film, and it was reported that Lucas liked it more than *The Force Awakens*. *The Last Jedi*, the second film in the sequel trilogy, was released in 2017; Lucas described the film as "beautifully made".

Lucas has had cursory involvement with *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (2018), the Star Wars streaming series *The Mandalorian*, and the premiere of the eighth season of *Game of Thrones*. Lucas met with J. J. Abrams before the latter began writing the script to the sequel trilogy's final film, *The Rise of Skywalker*, which was released in 2019.

## **Collaboration**

### ***John Williams***

Lucas was also heavily involved and invested in the scoring process for the original Star Wars soundtrack, which was composed by John Williams, on the recommendation of his friend and colleague Steven Spielberg. Whilst initially wanting to use tracks and film music in a similar manner to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which served as the inspiration for the film, Williams advised against this and instead proposed a system of recurring themes (or leitmotifs) to enhance the story in the style of classical composers Gustav Holst, William Walton, and Igor Stravinsky; works that Lucas had used as "temp tracks" for Williams to gain inspiration from. The film, and subsequent sequels and prequels, make use of the Main Title Theme, the Force Theme (less commonly referred to as Obi Wan Kenobi's Theme), the Rebel Alliance Theme, and Princess Leia's Theme (all introduced in this film) repeatedly. Subsequent films also added to the catalogue of themes for different characters, factions, and locations.

The score was released to critical acclaim and won Williams his third Academy Award for Best Original Score. The score was listed by the American Film Institute in 2005 as the greatest film score of all time. The professional relationship formed by Lucas and Williams extended through to Williams working on all of Lucas's blockbuster franchise movies: the remaining two films of the Star Wars original trilogy; all three films of prequel trilogy developed over fifteen years later; and the five films of the Indiana Jones franchise, in which Williams reunited with his long-time collaborator Spielberg. In his collaborations with Lucas, Williams received six of his fifty-two Academy Award nominations (*Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*). After Lucas sold Lucasfilm to Disney, Williams stayed on board with the franchise, and continued to score the remaining three films of the "Skywalker saga" (*The Force Awakens*, *The Last Jedi*, and *The Rise of Skywalker*, for which he received a further three Oscar nominations), after which he announced his "retirement" from the series.

Lucas was in attendance for a ceremony honouring Williams as the 44th recipient of the AFI Life Achievement Award, the first composer to receive the honour, and gave a speech in praise of their relationship and his work. In interviews, and most famously at the 40th Anniversary Star Wars Celebration convention, Lucas has repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of Williams to the Star Wars saga, affectionately referring to him as the "secret sauce" of his movies.



## **Philanthropy**

Lucas is the wealthiest film celebrity in the world. His personal net worth is estimated to be between \$7.5–9.4 billion. Lucas has pledged to give half of his fortune to charity as part of an effort called The Giving Pledge led by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett to persuade America's richest individuals to donate their financial wealth to charities.

### ***George Lucas Educational Foundation***

In 1991, The George Lucas Educational Foundation was founded as a nonprofit operating foundation to celebrate and encourage innovation in schools. The foundation's content is available under the brand Edutopia, in an award-winning web site, social media and via documentary films. Lucas, through his foundation, was one of the leading proponents of the E-rate program in the universal service fund, which was enacted as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. On June 24, 2008, Lucas testified before the United States House of Representatives subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet as the head of his Foundation to advocate for a free wireless broadband educational network.

### ***Proceeds from the sale of Lucasfilm to Disney***

In 2012, Lucas sold Lucasfilm to The Walt Disney Company for a reported sum of \$4.05 billion. It was widely reported at the time that Lucas intended to give the majority of the proceeds from the sale to charity. A spokesperson for Lucasfilm said, "George Lucas has expressed his intention, in the event the deal closes, to donate the majority of the proceeds to his philanthropic endeavors." Lucas also spoke on the matter: "For 41 years, the majority of my time and money has been put into the company. As I start a new chapter in my life, it is gratifying that I have the opportunity to devote more time and resources to philanthropy."

### ***Lucas Museum of Narrative Art***

By June 2013, Lucas was considering establishing a museum, the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum, to be built on Crissy Field near the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, which would display his collection of illustrations and pop art, with an estimated value of more than \$1 billion. Lucas offered to pay the estimated \$300 million cost of constructing the museum, and would endow it with \$400 million when it opened, eventually adding an additional \$400 million to its endowment. After being unable to reach an agreement with The Presidio Trust, Lucas turned to Chicago. A potential lakefront site on Museum Campus in Chicago was proposed in May 2014. By June 2014, Chicago had been selected, pending approval of the Chicago Plan Commission, which was granted. The museum project was renamed the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. On June 24, 2016, Lucas announced that he was abandoning his plans to locate the museum in Chicago, due to a lawsuit by a local preservation group, Friends of the Parks, and would instead build the museum in California. On January 17, 2017, Lucas announced that an 11-acre campus with green space and the museum's five-story 300,000 square foot building will be

constructed over what was a parking lot in Exposition Park, Los Angeles, California. It is due to be completed in 2025.

### ***Other initiatives***

In 2005, Lucas gave \$1 million to help build the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to commemorate American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

On September 19, 2006, the University of Southern California announced that Lucas had donated \$175–180 million to his alma mater to expand the film school. It is the largest single donation to USC and the largest gift to a film school anywhere. Previous donations led to the already-existing George Lucas Instructional Building and Marcia Lucas Post-Production building.

In 2013, Lucas and his wife Mellody Hobson donated \$25 million to the Chicago-based not-for-profit After School Matters, of which Hobson is the chair.

On April 15, 2016, it was reported that Lucas had donated between \$501,000 and \$1 million through the Lucas Family Foundation to the Obama Foundation, which is charged with overseeing the construction of the Barack Obama Presidential Center on Chicago's South Side.

## **Personal life**

In 1969, Lucas married film editor Marcia Lou Griffin, who went on to win an Academy Award for her editing work on the original Star Wars film. They adopted a daughter, Amanda Lucas, in 1981, and divorced in 1983. Lucas subsequently adopted two more children as a single parent: daughter Katie Lucas, born in 1988, and son Jett Lucas, born in 1993. His three eldest children all appeared in the three Star Wars prequels, as did Lucas himself. Following his divorce, Lucas was in a relationship with singer Linda Ronstadt in the 1980s.

Lucas began dating Mellody Hobson, president of Ariel Investments and chair of DreamWorks Animation, in 2006. Lucas and Hobson announced their engagement in January 2013, and married on June 22, 2013, at Lucas's Skywalker Ranch in Marin County, California. They have one daughter together, born via surrogate in August 2013.

Lucas was born and raised in a Methodist family. The religious and mythical themes in Star Wars were inspired by Lucas's interest in the writings of mythologist Joseph Campbell, and he would eventually come to identify strongly with the Eastern religious philosophies he studied and incorporated into his films, which were a major inspiration

for "the Force". Lucas has come to state that his religion is "Buddhist Methodist". He resides in Marin County.

Lucas is a major collector of the American illustrator and painter Norman Rockwell. A collection of 57 Rockwell paintings and drawings owned by Lucas and fellow Rockwell collector and film director Steven Spielberg were displayed at the Smithsonian American Art Museum from July 2, 2010, to January 2, 2011, in an exhibition titled Telling Stories.

Lucas has said that he is a fan of Seth MacFarlane's hit TV show Family Guy. MacFarlane has said that Lucasfilm was extremely helpful when the Family Guy crew wanted to parody their works.

Lucas supported Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the run-up for the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

## **Awards and honors**

In 1977, Lucas was awarded the Inkpot Award.

The American Film Institute awarded Lucas its Life Achievement Award on June 9, 2005. This was shortly after the release of Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith, about which he joked stating that, since he views the entire Star Wars series as one film, he could actually receive the award now that he had finally "gone back and finished the movie."

Lucas was nominated for four Academy Awards: Best Directing and Writing for American Graffiti and Star Wars. He received the academy's Irving G. Thalberg Award in 1991. He appeared at the 79th Academy Awards ceremony in 2007 with Steven Spielberg and Francis Ford Coppola to present the Best Director award to their friend Martin Scorsese. During the speech, Spielberg and Coppola talked about the joy of winning an Oscar, making fun of Lucas, who has not won a competitive Oscar.

The Science Fiction Hall of Fame inducted Lucas in 2006, its second "Film, Television, and Media" contributor, after Spielberg. The Discovery Channel named him one of the 100 "Greatest Americans" in September 2008. Lucas served as Grand Marshal for the Tournament of Roses Parade and made the ceremonial coin toss at the Rose Bowl, New Year's Day 2007. In 2009, he was one of 13 California Hall of Fame inductees in The California Museum's yearlong exhibit.

In July 2013, Lucas was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama for his contributions to American cinema. In October 2014, Lucas received Honorary Membership of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

In August 2015, Lucas was inducted as a Disney Legend, and on December 6, 2015, he was an honoree at the Kennedy Center Honors. In 2021, coinciding with Lucasfilm's 50th anniversary, an action figure of Lucas in stormtrooper disguise was released as part of Hasbro's Star Wars: The Black Series.