



**'STAR WARS:
EPISODE VII—
THE FORCE
AWAKENS'
PREVIEW**

STAR
THE FORCE AWAKENS
WARS

THE FORCE AWAKENS PREVIEW

The title card for Star Wars: The Force Awakens features the words "STAR WARS" in a large, yellow, outlined font, with "THE FORCE AWAKENS" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font in the center. The background is a dark space filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes.

STAR WARS THE FORCE AWAKENS WARS

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RETURN OF THE FRANCHISE

A decade after 'Revenge of Sith' closed the book on the prequel trilogy, a new film thrusts the 'Star Wars' saga decades into the future with new heroes, new villains and some of fans' favorite old friends

BY TIMOTHY R. SCHULTE
CTW FEATURES

We could recap how we got here – six monumental films; countless multimedia spinoffs, including books, video games and television series, just to name a few; clothing, costumes, and a culture unto itself; put simply, the most iconic entertainment franchise of all time – but we'll just get right to it: On Dec. 18, "Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens" hits theaters.

And. People. Are. Hyped.

Tickets for the movie went on sale Oct.

19, nearly two months before its release, following the debut of the film's full-length trailer during "Monday Night Football" on ESPN – The Walt Disney Co. owns both ESPN and the "Star Wars" franchise – and immediately set presale records.

Ticket site Fandango said it sold eight times as many first-day tickets as 2012's "The Hunger Games," the previous record holder, including more than \$6.5 million in IMAX sales, also a record.

"This is an extraordinary time for the industry, which experienced unprecedented ticketing demand last night for 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,'" Fandango

said the following day in a statement. "The enthusiasm for this year's most anticipated movie is out of this world and we expect it to continue all the way to its debut on Dec. 18."

Whether you're a longtime fan of the franchise or a newcomer to the "Star Wars" universe, here's everything you need to know to get ready for the new film.

THE BACKGROUND

The Force awakened in October 2012 when "Star Wars" creator George Lucas sold Lucasfilm Ltd. – including, of course, the entirety of "Star Wars" – to The Walt

Disney Co., and Disney in turn announced three new "Star Wars" films. Referred to as the "sequel trilogy," the new films start with this year's "The Force Awakens," followed by currently untitled Episodes VIII and IX in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

J.J. Abrams, who rebooted the "Star Trek" film franchise to enormous box office success, was tapped to direct and co-write the film. Lawrence Kasdan, who co-wrote "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi," and Michael Arndt, who penned "Toy Story 3" and "Inside Out," also were brought on to co-write the screenplay. John Williams, who scored all six previous

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“It’s true. All of it. The Dark Side. The Jedi. They’re real.”

— Han Solo, in the final trailer for “Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens,” released Oct. 19, 2015

franchise films and won an Oscar for 1977’s “Star Wars,” again will be composing the music.

THE STORY

What do we know about the new film – other than, you know, The Force awakening? Not a whole lot, it turns out. It’s set about 30 years after the events of “Return of the Jedi” and will feature both new and old characters. But the series of three teaser trailers released in the past year have given viewers a bit of insight into the characters, conflicts and story to come.

TEASER TRAILER 1: RELEASED NOV. 28, 2014

The teaser begins with a voice-over. *There’s been an awakening. Have you felt it.*

Then, viewers are introduced to a slew of new characters in quick succession: Finn (John Boyega) appears in a desert, panicked, wearing a Stormtrooper suit. New droid BB-8 beeps and rolls quickly across the screen. Rapid flashes show a platoon of new First Order Stormtroopers. Rey (Daisy Ridley) mounts her speeder and cranks the throttle. Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) leads a fleet of Resistance X-wing fighters.

The Dark Side ...

Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) walks through a forest in the nighttime and draws his tri-blade lightsaber

... and the Light.

Finally, the Millennium Falcon, Han Solo and Chewbacca’s famed ship, flies on screen and blazes past two attacking TIE fighters as the “Star Wars” theme kicks in. Cut to “Star Wars” title screen.

TEASER TRAILER 2: RELEASED APRIL 16, 2015

The trailer opens with a speeder – presumably Rey’s – zooming across the landscape of desert planet Jakku as the screen pans to reveal both a crashed Resistance X-wing fighter and a downed Star Destroyer ship halfway buried in the sand. Next, a voice-over from Luke Skywalker:

The Force is strong in my family. My father has it.

Cut to Darth Vader’s melted helmet.

I have it.

Next, what appears to be a cloaked Luke placing his hand on R2-D2.

My sister has it.

Two unknown people – one, presumably, Leia – exchange a lightsaber.

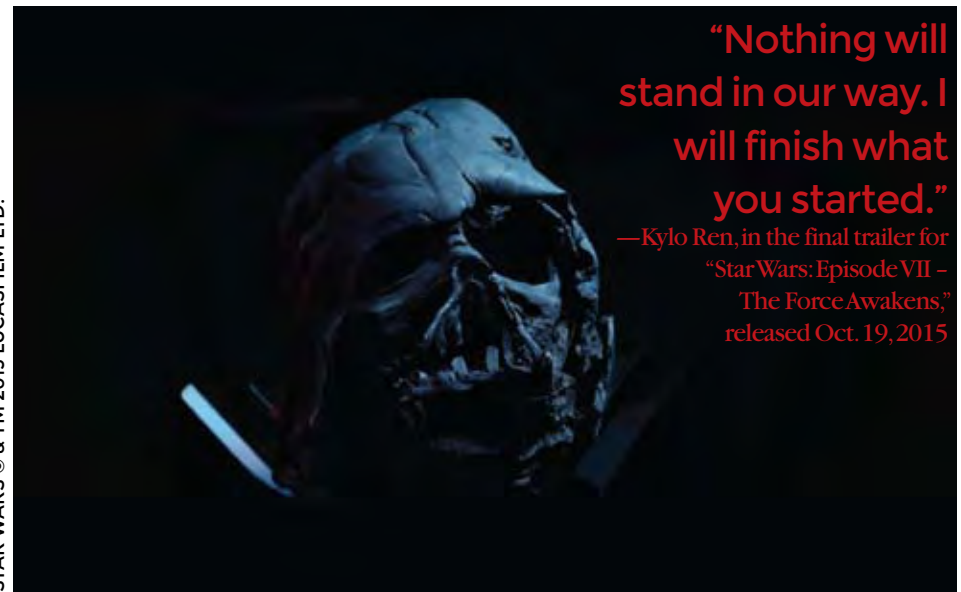
The voice-over is taken word-for-word from a conversation between Luke and

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“Nothing will stand in our way. I will finish what you started.”

—Kylō Ren, in the final trailer for “Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens,” released Oct. 19, 2015

Leia in “Return of the Jedi,” but here one new line is added:

You have that power, too.

From there, viewers get a big action sequence: Poe Dameron leading an X-wing fleet, Kylo Ren swinging his saber, Rey and Finn and BB-8 fleeing an explosion, a Stormtrooper army at a new imperial base, the new Chrometrooper, and, finally, a dogfight between a TIE fighter (with a new chromed-out pilot) and the Millennium Falcon before the big reveal:

Chewie ...

Cut to Harrison Ford’s 70-something Han Solo and Chewbacca, with nary a gray hair.

...we’re home!

And ... scene!

FULL-LENGTH TRAILER: RELEASED OCT. 19, 2015

The final trailer opens with a couple shots of Rey – scavenging a ship, walking the surface of Jakku with BB-8, working on her speeder. Then a voice of pirate Maz Kanata (Lupita Nyong’o) asks: *Who are you?* To which Rey responds: *I’m no one.*

Next, a shot of a Stormtrooper fleet, followed by Finn, in a full Stormtrooper suit, removing his helmet. Then a Finn voice-over begins:

I was raised to do one thing ...

We see a TIE fighter get shot out of the sky, followed by Finn, now in regular clothes, standing on Jakku.

... but I’ve got nothing to fight for.

Next, the camera zooms in on Kylo Ren,

standing on the bridge of a large imperial ship. Now, Ren:

Nothing will stand in our way ...

The melted Vader helmet again appears.

...I will finish what you started.

It then cuts to what appears to be Ren using the Force to control Poe Dameron, who has a look of pain and agony on his face. Cue the music and the Millennium Falcon evading attacking TIE fighters

Rey: There were stories about what happened ...

Solo: It’s true ...

Finn and Rey and Solo are on a ship – likely the Falcon – having a conversation.

Solo: ...All of it.

The Falcon makes a jump to hyperspeed, and the screen cuts to some First Order baddies, led by Ren, on a dark field in the rain. Then, a sequence of battle shots as Solo continues: *...the Dark Side ...the Jedi ...they’re real.*

Kanata: The Force. It’s calling to you.

More of the action and battle sequence, and then viewers at long last see Leia (Carrie Fisher) embracing Solo.

The final shot is Finn drawing what looks like Luke Skywalker’s blue lightsaber from “Star Wars” as Ren walks toward him, drawing his own saber and preparing to battle.

Kanata: Just let it in.

And with that, “Star Wars” fans have all they’re going to get before “The Force Awakens” arrives Dec. 18.

It can’t get here soon enough.

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THE FORCE AWAKENS PREVIEW

NEW FACES, OLD FRIENDS



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Meet the heroes and villains that battle for Light and Dark in ‘The Force Awakens’



FINN

Portrayed by: John Boyega
A trained warrior desperate to escape his past, Finn is plunged into adventure as his conscience drives him down a heroic, but dangerous, path.



POE DAMERON

Portrayed by: Oscar Isaac
An ace pilot, Poe Dameron is a leader in the Resistance’s fight against the evil First Order. He soars into battle behind the controls of a modern X-wing fighter.



REY

Portrayed by: Daisy Ridley
Rey is a resilient survivor, a scavenger toughened by a lifetime of dealing with the cutthroats of the harsh desert world of Jakku.



BB-8

BB-8 is the spherical, loyal Astromech Droid of the Resistance pilot Poe Dameron.

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HAN SOLO

Portrayed by: Harrison Ford

Smuggler. Scoundrel. Hero. Han Solo, captain of the Millennium Falcon, was one of the great leaders of the Rebel Alliance. He and his co-pilot Chewbacca came to believe in the cause of galactic freedom, joining Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia Organa in the fight against the Empire.

CHEWBACCA

Portrayed by: Peter Mayhew

A legendary Wookiee warrior and Han Solo's co-pilot aboard the Millennium Falcon, Chewbacca was part of a core group of Rebels who restored freedom to the galaxy. Known for his short temper and accuracy with a bowcaster, Chewie also has a big heart - and is unwavering in his loyalty to his friends.



PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA

Portrayed by: Carrie Fisher

Princess Leia Organa was one of the Rebel Alliance's greatest leaders, fearless on the battlefield and dedicated to ending the tyranny of the Empire. Daughter of Padmé Amidala and Anakin Skywalker, sister of Luke Skywalker, and with a soft spot for scoundrels, Leia ranks among the galaxy's great heroes.



KYLO REN

Portrayed by: Adam Driver

A dark warrior strong with the Force, Kylo Ren commands First Order missions with a temper as fiery as his unconventional lightsaber.

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FIRST ORDER STORMTROOPER

Equipped with sleek armor and powerful weapons, the Stormtroopers enforce the will of the First Order.

FIRST ORDER SNOWTROOPER

A trained warrior desperate to escape his past, Finn is plunged into adventure as his conscience drives him down a heroic, but dangerous, path.

FIRST ORDER TIE FIGHTER PILOT

Following the traditions of the Galactic Empire, the First Order has kept the TIE fighter design in service, but has updated the craft to modern combat standards.

CAPTAIN PHASMA

Portrayed by:

Gwendoline Christie

Clad in distinctive metallic armor, Captain Phasma commands the First Order's legions of troopers.

Source: StarWars.com

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CAPTAIN PHASMA



FIRST ORDER STORMTROOPER



FIRST ORDER SNOWTROOPER



FIRST ORDER TIE FIGHTER PILOT



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THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY AND PREQUELS

A LOOK BACK AT STAR WARS

Before Episode VII arrives,
brush up on Episodes I-VI

STAR WARS: EPISODE IV - A NEW HOPE

Released: 1977

Director: George Lucas

Writer: George Lucas

Nineteen years after the formation of the Empire, Luke Skywalker is thrust into the struggle of the Rebel Alliance when he meets Obi-Wan Kenobi, who has lived for years in seclusion on the desert planet of Tatooine. Obi-Wan begins Luke's Jedi training as Luke joins him on a daring mission to rescue the beautiful Rebel leader, Princess Leia, from the clutches of the evil Empire. Although Obi-Wan sacrifices himself in a lightsaber duel with Darth Vader, his former apprentice, Luke, proves that the Force is with him by destroying the Empire's dreaded Death Star.

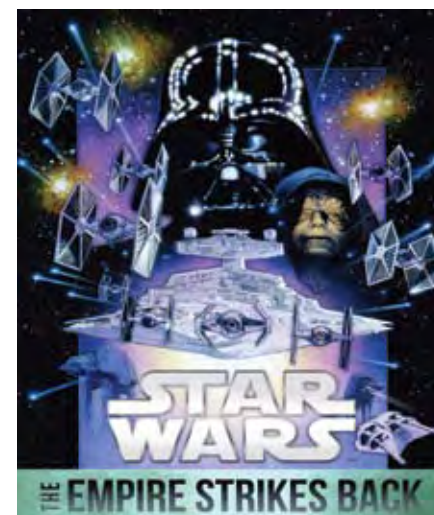
STAR WARS: EPISODE V - THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Released: 1980

Director: Irvin Kershner

Writers: Leigh Brackett and
Lawrence Kasdan

After the destruction of the Death Star, Imperial forces continue to pursue the Rebels. After the Rebellion's defeat on



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the ice planet Hoth, Luke journeys to the planet Dagobah to train with Jedi Master Yoda, who has lived in hiding since the fall of the Republic. In an attempt to convert Luke to the dark side, Darth Vader lures young Skywalker into a trap in the Cloud City of Bespin. In the midst of a fierce lightsaber duel with the Sith Lord, Luke faces the startling revelation that the evil Vader is in fact his father, Anakin Skywalker.

STAR WARS: EPISODE VI – RETURN OF THE JEDI

Released: 1983

Director: Richard Marquand

Writers: George Lucas and Lawrence Kasdan

In the epic conclusion of the saga, the Empire prepares to crush the Rebellion with a more powerful Death Star while the Rebel fleet mounts a massive attack on the space station. Luke Skywalker confronts his father, Darth Vader, in a final climactic duel before the evil Emperor. In the last second, Vader makes a momentous choice: He destroys the Emperor and saves his son. The Empire is finally defeated, the Sith are destroyed and Anakin Skywalker is thus redeemed. At long last, freedom is restored to the galaxy.



STAR WARS: EPISODE I – THE PHANTOM MENACE

Released: 1999

Director: George Lucas

Writer: George Lucas

Stranded on the desert planet Tatooine after rescuing young Queen Amidala from the impending invasion of Naboo, Jedi apprentice Obi-Wan Kenobi and his Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn discover 9-year-old Anakin Skywalker, a young slave unusually strong in the Force. Anakin wins a thrilling Podrace and with it his freedom as he leaves his home to be trained as a Jedi. The heroes return to Naboo where Anakin and the Queen face massive invasion forces while the two Jedi contend with a deadly foe named Darth Maul. Only



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then do they realize the invasion is merely the first step in a sinister scheme by the re-emergent forces of darkness known as the Sith.

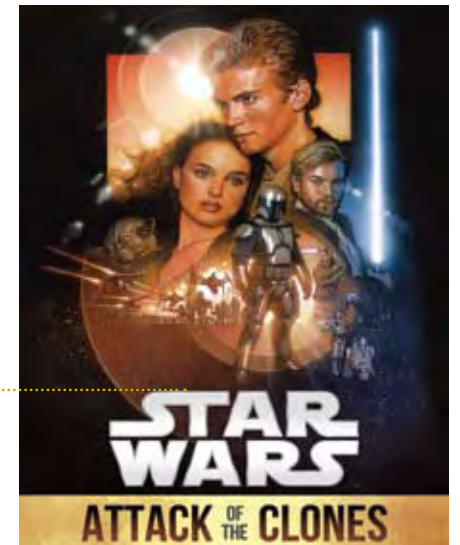
STAR WARS: EPISODE II – ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Released: 2002

Director: George Lucas

Writers: George Lucas and Jonathan Hales

Ten years after the invasion of Naboo, the galaxy is on the brink of civil war. Under the leadership of a renegade Jedi named Count Dooku, thousands of solar systems threaten to break away from the Galactic Republic. When an assassination attempt is made on Senator Padmé Amidala, the former Queen of Naboo, 20-year-old Jedi apprentice Anakin Skywalker is assigned to protect her. In the course of his mission, Anakin discovers his love for Padmé as well as his own darker side. Soon, Anakin, Padmé and Obi-Wan Kenobi are drawn into the heart of the Separatist movement and the beginning of the Clone Wars.



STAR WARS: EPISODE III – REVENGE OF THE SITH

Released: 2005

Director: George Lucas

Writer: George Lucas

Years after the onset of the Clone Wars, the noble Jedi Knights lead a massive clone army into a galaxy-wide battle against the Separatists. When the sinister Sith unveil a thousand-year-old plot to rule the galaxy, the Republic crumbles and from its ashes rises the evil Galactic Empire. Jedi hero Anakin Skywalker is seduced by the dark side of the Force to become the Emperor's new apprentice – Darth Vader. The Jedi are decimated, as Obi-Wan Kenobi and Jedi Master Yoda are forced into hiding. The only hope for the galaxy are Anakin's own offspring – the twin children born in secrecy who will grow up to become heroes.

Source: StarWars.com, IMDB.com



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BY THE NUMBERS

STAR WARS AT THE BOX OFFICE

“Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens” is anticipated to break box office records and gross more than \$1 billion in domestic box office sales, which would put it nearly a *quarter-billion* dollars ahead of current record holder “Avatar” (\$760M). That fervor could not be any more different from the release of “Star Wars” nearly 40 years ago, which premiered on just a few dozen screens. In fact, 20th Century Fox was so concerned about how it would perform versus other summer films that it moved up its premiere to the Wednesday before Memorial Day to give a few days at theaters without big head-to-head competition. Needless to say, they had nothing to worry about. Here’s a look back at how each film in the “Star Wars” franchise performed at the domestic box office:

STAR WARS

Release: May 25, 1977

Opening Weekend Box Office:
\$1,554,475 in 43 theaters

Box Office Total: \$307,263,857 in
1,750 theaters

1977 Average Ticket Cost: \$2.23

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Release: May 21, 1977

Opening Weekend Box Office:
\$4,910,483 in 126 theaters

Box Office Total: \$209,398,025 in
1,278 theaters

1980 Average Ticket Cost: \$2.69

RETURN OF THE JEDI

Release: May 25, 1983

Opening Weekend Box Office:
\$23,019,618 in 1,002 theaters

Box Office Total: \$252,583,617 in
1,764 theaters

1983 Average Ticket Cost: \$3.15

STAR WARS: EPISODE I – THE PHANTOM MENACE

Release: May 19, 1999

Opening Weekend Box Office:

\$64,820,970 in 2,970 theaters
Box Office Total: \$431,088,295 in
3,126 theaters

1999 Average Ticket Cost: \$5.06

STAR WARS: EPISODE II – ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Release: May 16, 2002

Opening Weekend Box Office:
\$80,027,814 in 3,161 theaters

Box Office Total: \$302,191,252 in 3,161
theaters

2002 Average Ticket Cost: \$5.80

STAR WARS: EPISODE III – REVENGE OF THE SITH

Release: May 19, 2005

Opening Weekend Box Office:
\$108,435,841 in 3,661 theaters

Box Office Total: \$380,270,577 in
3,663 theaters

2005 Average Ticket Cost: \$6.41

Sources: BoxOfficeMojo.com,
National Association of Theater
Owners

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