**Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back**

Released May 1980 it was budgeted at $18 million and grossed over $290 million at the US box office, it received mixed reviews at the time of release, but since has been considered one of the best films of all time, and the best of the Star Wars franchise. It was the no. 1 highest grossing film in 1980, beating The Blues Brothers and Flying High. Ivan Kershner directed the film after George Lucas decided to bankroll it personally.

**Other notable films that year:** The Blues Brothers, The Shining, Friday the 13th, Fame, Caddyshack,

**Awards for the film:** It won the Academy Award for Best Sound, and nominated for Best Art Direction and Best Score. Won the People’s Choice Award for Best Film.

**Awards for that year:** Ordinary People won best film at the Academy Awards and golden Globes (drama). Coal Miner’s Daughter won the Golden Globes (comedy/musical). All that Jazz won the Palme D’or.

**Events**

**1980**

* January 1 – The comic strip [*The Far Side*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Far_Side) debuts in newspapers.
* January 27 – [Canadian caper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_caper): Six United States diplomats, posing as [Canadians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada), manage to escape from [Tehran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tehran), [Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) as they board a flight to [Zürich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z%C3%BCrich), [Switzerland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland). (what Argo is based upon)
* February 2–3 – The [New Mexico State Penitentiary Riot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Mexico_State_Penitentiary_Riot) takes place; 33 inmates are killed and more than 100 inmates injured.
* March 21
  + [Mafioso](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicilian_Mafia) [Angelo Bruno](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Bruno) is assassinated in [Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia).
  + U.S. President [Jimmy Carter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) announces that the United States will boycott the [1980 Summer Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Summer_Olympics) in [Moscow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow).
* April 15 – A mass exodus of [Cubans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba) to the United States known as the [Mariel boatlift](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariel_boatlift) begins. It ends on October 31 by agreement between the two countries.
* April 24 – [Pennsylvania Lottery Scandal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Pennsylvania_Lottery_scandal): the [Pennsylvania Lottery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Lottery) is rigged by six men including the host of the live TV drawing, [Nick Perry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Pennsylvania_Lottery_scandal).
* May 22 – [*Pac-Man*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pac-Man), the best-selling [arcade game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arcade_game) of all time, is released.
* November 21
  + Millions of viewers tune into the U.S. [soap opera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soap_opera) [*Dallas*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dallas_(1978_TV_series)) to learn who shot lead character [J. R. Ewing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._Ewing). The "[Who shot J. R.?](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Who_shot_J._R.%3F)" event is a national obsession.
  + [MGM Grand fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MGM_Grand_fire): A fire at the [MGM Grand Hotel and Casino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MGM_Grand_Hotel_and_Casino) on the [Las Vegas Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Vegas_Strip) kills 85 people.

**IMDb**

The shots where Luke uses his Jedi powers to retrieve his lightsaber from a distance were achieved by having [Mark Hamill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000434) throw the lightsaber away and then running the film in reverse.

[Mark Hamill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000434) had to bang his head 16 times on the ceiling of Yoda's hut before [Irvin Kershner](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0449984) was satisfied.

With the exception of being sucked out of a Cloud City window, [Mark Hamill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000434) did all of his own stunts.

[Carrie Fisher](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000402) stood on a box for many of her scenes with [Harrison Ford](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000148) in order to make up for the height difference and have her appear in the frame with him. [Carrie Fisher](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000402)(5'1) is a foot shorter than [Harrison Ford](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000148) (6'1).

When shooting on location in Finse, Norway, a fierce snow storm hit the hotel where the cast and crew were staying. This would have normally halted filming, but director [Irvin Kershner](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0449984) thought these weather conditions were an excellent opportunity to film the scene where Luke wanders through the snow after escaping the Wampa cave. He did this by sending [Mark Hamill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000434) outside into the cold, while he and the cameraman stayed and filmed inside the hotel's front hall.

When [Mark Hamill](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000434) was having trouble with the Dagobah scenes with Yoda, [Frank Oz](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000568)brought in Miss Piggy to make him laugh.

Yoda's iconic manner of speech has the parts of speech in Object Subject Verb order. Very few languages on Earth use this and most are based in the Amazon river basin.

Originally in the asteroid scene, one of the asteroids was actually a shoe. The rumor is that [George Lucas](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000184) asked the SFX people to redo the scene so many times that they got annoyed and one of them threw in his or her shoe. Later remastered versions have corrected this.

In an early outtake, when Vader entered the Hoth base, he tripped over a cable and fell down face-first.

[George Lucas](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000184) initially called this the worst Star Wars film, and apologized for its existence. He changed his mind after he found out some people believed it was the best Star Wars film.

Of the original 6, this is the Star Wars film that [George Lucas](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000184) had the least involvement with. It is considered to be the best film in the saga.

The reason why Han and Leia act so happy when arriving on Bespin is because Carrie Fisher (Leia) and Harrison Ford (Han Solo) went out partying the night before, and they were still drunk while shooting.

Lighting for the special effects scenes in space was so strong that several models melted.

The only way to get to the set in the midst of a blizzard during filming in Norway was on a snowplow train, which had a giant auger on the front, pushing through the snow to deliver the actors to the set. The weather conditions were so severe that the crew put the camera in the back door of the hotel the cast and crew were staying and shot from out the door, 12 feet from the hotel out in the blizzard.

Contrary to popular opinion, Han's line "I know" was not improvised on the spot. [Harrison Ford](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000148) and [Irvin Kershner](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0449984) had met before filming the scene and decided on the new dialogue. [Carrie Fisher](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000402) was upset that she had not been part of the process, and [Lawrence Kasdan](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001410) was disappointed that his dialogue had been changed, feeling it had been some of his best writing.