

Elizabeth Taylor dies aged 79

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Warmer

Who are the greatest female Hollywood actresses of the 20th century? Write their names in the stars below.



2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

scandal
roles

courage
chaotic

screen presence
performance

found
vibrant

set
talent

1. An actor who appears impressive on film has _____. (para 3)
2. A _____ is the act of performing a play, dance or other form of entertainment. (para 3)
3. _____ are the characters played by an actor. (para 4)
4. _____ means *lively and exciting*. (para 5)
5. _____ is a natural ability for being good at something. (para 6)
6. A situation in which important people behave in a way that shocks people is a _____. (para 6)
7. A _____ is a stage or other place where a film is made. (para 6)
8. _____ means *confused and without any order*. (para 7)
9. To _____ a company or organization is to start it. (para 8)
10. The ability to do something that you know is right or good, even though it is dangerous, frightening or very difficult is known as _____. (para 9)

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Dame Elizabeth Rosemond Taylor, maybe the last great female star of the Hollywood studio system, has died at the age of 79.

Xan Brooks

23 March, 2011

- 1 The Oscar-winning star died in the early hours of the morning at Cedars-Sinai medical centre in Los Angeles from heart failure, said her spokeswoman. She said Taylor's children were with her.
- 2 Dame Elizabeth, who had been in ill health for a number of years, was taken to the hospital with heart failure in February. A spokeswoman for the hospital said: "She died at 1.28 am."
- 3 Taylor's luminous screen presence, as well as her colourful private life, made her a part of US popular culture for more than 50 years. She won her first best actress Oscar in the 1960 film *BUTTERFIELD 8*. Her second came from her performance in the 1966 drama *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*.
- 4 Born in Hampstead, north London, Taylor moved to the US in 1939. Her first movie part was as a nine-year-old in the 1942 comedy *There's One Born Every Minute*. She became famous as the child star of *Lassie Come Home* and *National Velvet* before moving into adult roles with the 1950 comedy *Father of the Bride*.
- 5 The following year she gave one of her most vibrant performances in *A Place in the Sun* with Montgomery Clift. According to the film critic Andrew Sarris, the film's young actors were "the most beautiful couple in the history of cinema."
- 6 Other important roles were in *Giant*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Yet Taylor's on-screen talent was often less interesting for many people than her personal life. She was married eight times to seven husbands and caused a scandal when she began an affair with the British actor Richard Burton on the set of the film *Cleopatra*.
- 7 Taylor and Burton got married in 1964 and got divorced ten years later. They remarried in 1975 and then split again the following year. Throughout this time they were, for many people, the symbol of Hollywood glamour. "It was probably the most chaotic time of my life," Taylor said. "It was dark, but there were some good times too."
- 8 Throughout her life, Taylor helped people with problems. She reportedly saved the life of Montgomery Clift following a car crash in 1956. After the death in 1985 of her friend Rock Hudson, she helped found the American Foundation for AIDS Research and went on to raise about \$50 million to fight the disease. More recently, she supported Michael Jackson after the singer was accused of child abuse.
- 9 Away from the cameras, her own life was full of health problems. She survived a brain tumour, suffered from a heart condition and broke her back five times. In later life, she was often in a wheelchair because of osteoporosis. Yet there was something strong about Elizabeth Taylor – a fighting spirit behind her famous good looks. "I've been through it all, baby," she once said. "I'm Mother Courage."

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First published in *The Guardian*, 23/03/11

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3 Comprehension check

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

- Elizabeth Taylor died in March from heart failure.
- She was born in Los Angeles.
- She had a 50-year career in movies but never won an Oscar.
- She first became famous when she was a child.
- Her off-screen life was as interesting for many people as her on-screen life.
- She was married to seven different men.
- She had an affair with Richard Burton but they did not get married.
- She was married to Rock Hudson and Michael Jackson.
- She helped people with AIDS.
- She had many health problems, including a brain tumour and osteoporosis.

4 Adjective-noun collocations

a) Join the adjectives with the nouns to make collocations from the article.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. ill | a. performances |
| 2. best | b. looks |
| 3. vibrant | c. time |
| 4. chaotic | d. actress |
| 5. fighting | e. health |
| 6. good | f. spirit |

b) Now use the collocations to complete these sentences.

- Elizabeth Taylor had been in _____ for many years.
- She won the Oscar for _____ twice.
- Taylor said the years she spent with Richard Burton was a very _____.
- She gave many _____ throughout her career.
- Elizabeth Taylor had amazing _____ and a very strong _____.

5 Discussion

Why do you think the author calls Elizabeth Taylor 'the last great female star of the Hollywood studio system'?

6 Webquest

Type the names of the films in the article into a search engine. Can you watch trailers or parts of the films online?

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KEY

2 Key words

1. screen presence
2. performance
3. roles
4. vibrant
5. talent
6. scandal
7. set
8. chaotic
9. found
10. courage

3 Comprehension check

1. T
2. F. She was born in Hampstead, north London.
3. F. She won two Oscars.
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F. She married Richard Burton twice.
8. F. Rock Hudson and Michael Jackson were her friends.
9. T
10. T

4 Adjective-noun collocations

- a)
1. e
 2. d
 3. a
 4. c
 5. f
 6. b
- b)
1. ill health
 2. best actress
 3. chaotic time
 4. vibrant performances
 5. good looks; fighting spirit