

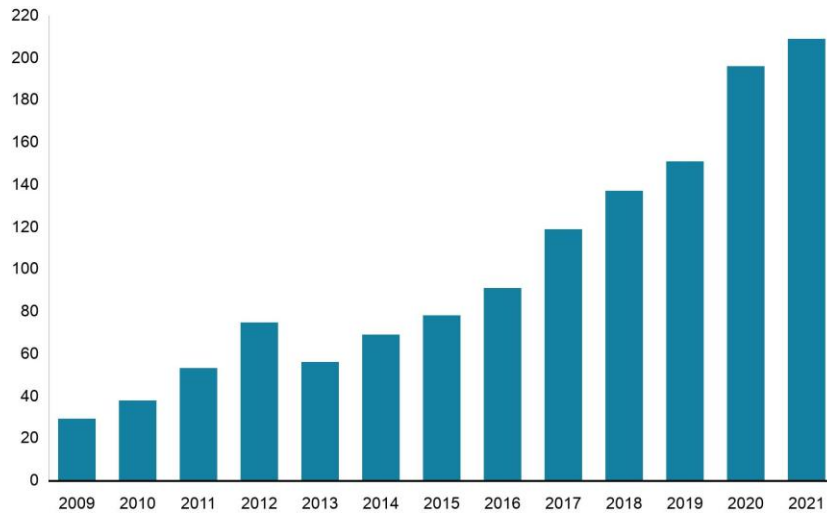
## Christmas movie production snowballs to reach new record

By Ian Youngs Published 8 December 2021

**Settling down in front of feel-good festive movies has become a modern Christmas tradition - and has driven the production of seasonal films to record-breaking levels this year.**

### Season's screenings

New films with "Christmas" in the title



Source: IMDB

BBC

More than 200 new feature films and TV movies with the word Christmas in the title are listed on the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) for release in 2021.

That number has doubled since 2016, and is four times more than in 2011.

Channels and streamers have discovered festive films are big ratings winners.

Christmas movies have been popular for decades, and classics like *Home Alone*, *Love*

20 *Actually* and *It's A Wonderful Life* will be widely watched again in the coming weeks.

But the boom in a new breed of festive films can be traced back to the Hallmark US cable channel's decision to launch a special season of TV movies in 2009.

Its first *Countdown To Christmas* featured four original productions and delivered record audiences.

25 This year, its countdown started even earlier, on 22 October, and includes a record 42 original holiday films.

"They bet really big on Christmas and everyone else seemed to notice the ratings," says Brandon Gray, co-host of the Deck the Hallmark podcast.

Rival channel Lifetime was among those to take notice, and has made 35 of its own Christmas crowd-pleasers this year, also its highest number yet.

30 Streaming platforms are tapping into the seasonal demand too, with Netflix offering a dozen original films starring big names like John Cleese, Kelsey Grammar and Brooke Shields.

The IMDB numbers only include movies with "Christmas" in the title, meaning the true number of festive films is even higher.

35 This season's big cinema releases include *Silent Night*, starring Keira Knightley, and Aml Ameen's *Boxing Day*, which also stars Little Mix's Leigh-Anne Pinnock.

When it comes to made-for-TV movies, many are relatively low-budget and use a feel-good formula to tell stories of romance and family - and are cosy and comforting enough.

"It's this magical season when the storyline that's on the screen doesn't matter as long as there's a bunch of Christmas trees in the background and it's snowing," says Gray.

40 "For viewers, it's just a way to escape and to feel for at least two hours this little bit of peace in the midst of the craziness of the holiday season and the craziness of the world in which we have lived in the last couple years."

Hallmark built its festive empire on films that look and feel the same, Gray says.

45 "They have the same aesthetic because they figured out what works: 'If we keep everything basically uniform - not too funny, not too sad - people will go from one movie to the next.'

"So you have the two people that fall in love and there's some sort of misunderstanding with about 30 minutes to go and then they'll figure it out, and they'll kiss.

"And you do it over and over again, and as long as it looks uniform and feels uniform, people will watch one after the other."

50 This year is the best crop of films so far, Gray says - partly because channels like Hallmark are beginning to experiment with that formula.

"Especially this year, I feel the change, where they're putting more emphasis on different types of stories," he says. "They're working hard with inclusion and making sure that the stories that are being told match what you're seeing on the screen.

55 "So it's no longer them just putting a person of colour on screen in a white world, but they're actually telling stories that feel authentic to who you're watching on screen."

In the UK, some of those TV movies have been playing on the Great! Movies Christmas channel since 23 September, and on Channel 5 in the daytimes since early November.

Some new films of Christmas:

A Boy Called Christmas  
A Castle For Christmas  
Last Train To Christmas  
Next Stop, Christmas  
Silent Night

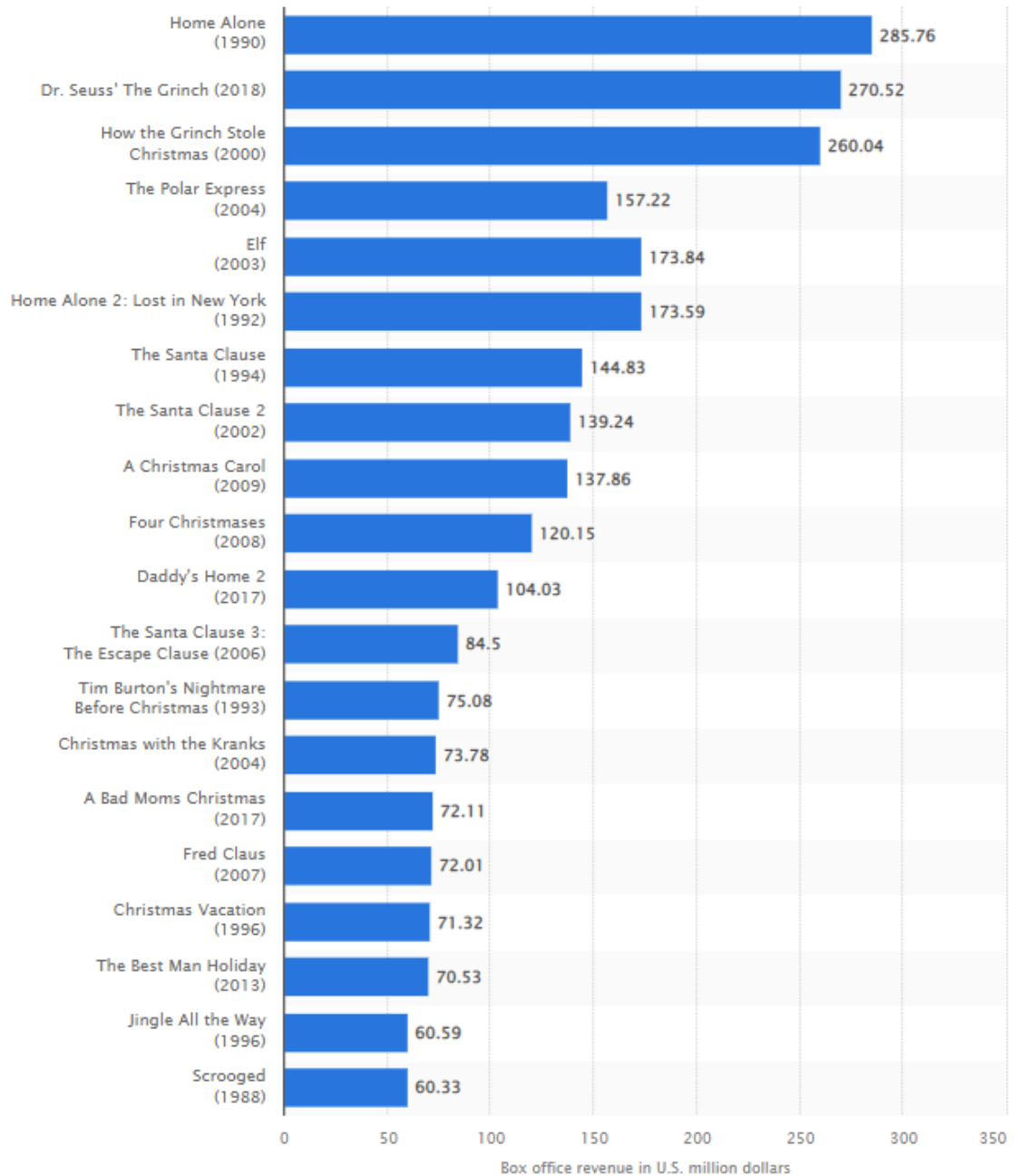
Boyfriends Of Christmas Past  
Father Christmas Is Back  
Home Sweet Home Alone  
'Twas the Fight Before Christmas

**Find out if the statements are true or false:**

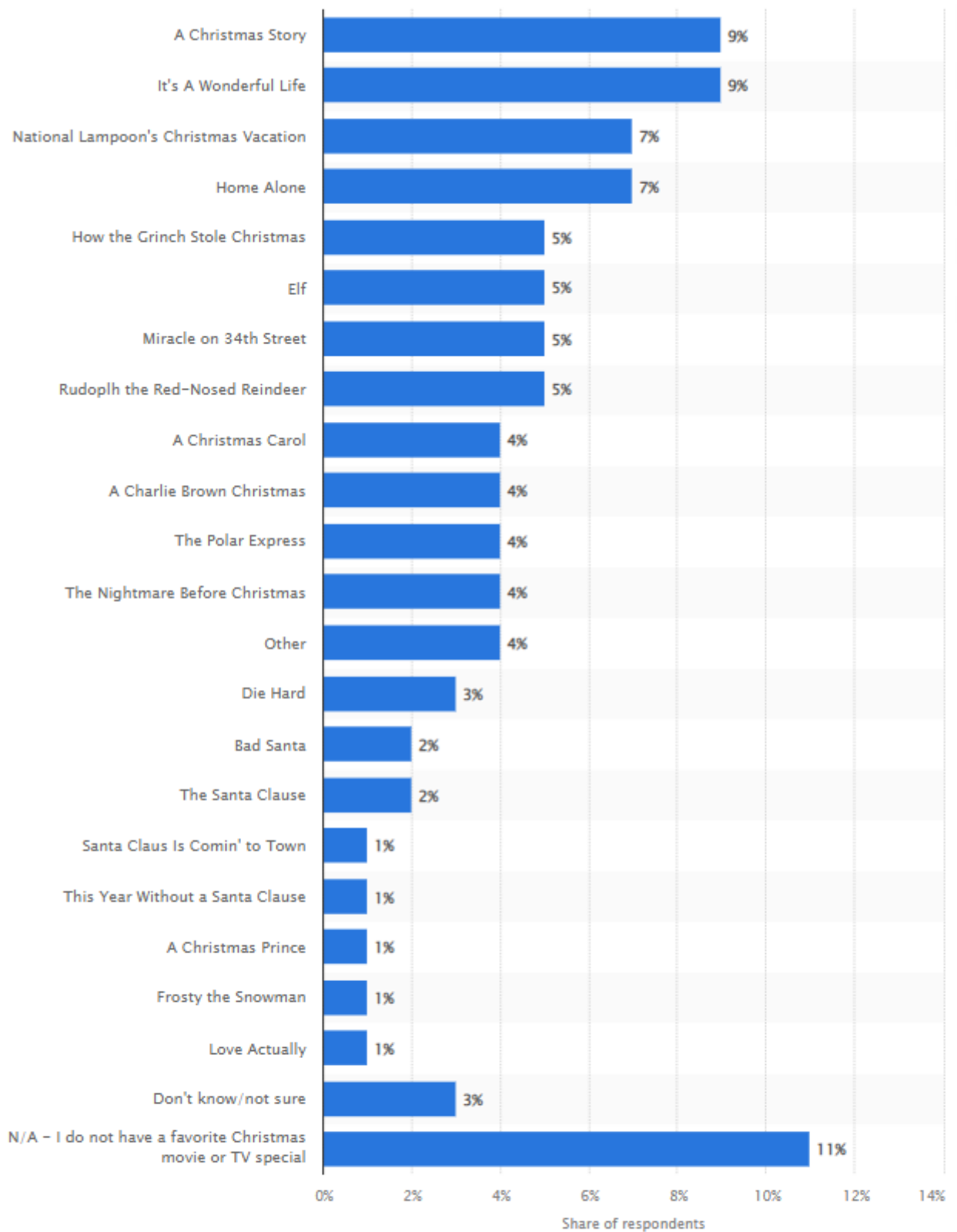
1. Moviemakers produce more films around Christmas to gain more money.
2. Lifetime channel has made films to entertain a small number of intellectuals.
3. Big screen films are made with little money.
4. Viewers want to see movies with twisted plots at Christmas.
5. Christmas movies are full of special effects and stunts.

**Answer the questions:**

1. What is the typical story for a Christmas movie?
2. How has Hallmark increased its movie production?
3. When did the movie season start?



Collapse statistic



Collapse statistic