

Top Ten Best Sequels of All Time

10. Ghostbusters 2

Ivan Reitman's follow up to the comedy classic "Ghostbusters" is a darker, scarier and even more hilarious movie, which resurrects all the favorite characters from the original. A sign of an adequate sequel is when reflecting upon it you're unsure of what elements appeared part 1 or part 2, because the sequel is such an extension of the first film. This is the case in one of the "runner-ups" to this list, "Wayne's World 2." Both Wayne's World movies now feel like one giant movie, no better, no worse, no funnier, no more memorable. In Ghostbusters 2 the formula is almost exactly the same: a giant thing walks through Manhattan, but instead of being a hindrance to the film, it's part of its charm. Vigo the Carpathian adds a creepiness not seen in the first Ghostbusters along with The Scary Brothers! but Ghostbusters 2 is a classic in its own right and lived up to the huge expectations set by the first film.

9. Evil Dead 2

Despite being "disowned" by hardcore "Evil Dead" fans for sort-of rewriting the origin of the series, Evil Dead 2 can be considered the seminal Evil Dead film. The first Evil Dead was a straight horror film, with plenty of camp and gore. The third and final (as of now) installment "Army of Darkness" is an adventure/comedy film set in medieval times. Evil Dead 2 is a cross between its counterparts, a little funny, a little scary, a little adventurous and all glorious. For any lover of silly horror films, Evil Dead 2 is among the finest ever made, giving us quotations like "Let's head down into that cellar and carve ourselves a witch" and of course, "Groovy." We also see Bruce Campbell really emerging as the character of Ash (Ashley J. Williams), connecting a chainsaw to his handless arm, forever imprinting the iconic image onto the minds of horror-buffs everywhere.

8. Aliens

Ridley Scott's 1979 classic "Alien" is a tough act to follow, but James Cameron did it and did it well with his 1986 "Aliens." Some argue that Aliens is more thrilling and more action-packed than the original, but both films are shining examples of their genre. They both show sophistication and an understanding for filmmaking in general, never allowing the action or special effects to overshadow the actors. If you want a well-made, intense and frightening experience, check out "Aliens."

7. Terminator 2: Judgment Day

Another James Cameron film makes the list, but deservedly. Terminator 2 surpasses the original in every way and is arguably the best action film of all time. The story is more complex, the special effects are improved, and the action is extremely well done and plentiful. The introduction of the T-1000 ushered in one of the greatest villains in film history and brought the experience to a new echelon. He's menacing, frightening, unique and above

all else, thrilling. A sign of a truly great sequel is when people think of the series or franchise and the sequel is what pops into mind, becoming the definitive film, and Terminator 2 has that. Not before or since has the Terminator concept been dealt with so carefully, with complexity and quality.

6. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom

Many people's least favorite of the trilogy, including Steven Spielberg, but Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is one of the finest examples of an action film, succeeding on every level. It's dark, brooding, disgusting and magnificent. Technically a prequel, for the film's events transpire before the events found in "Raiders of the Lost Ark," but the second in the series (making you wonder, what happened to Short Round?), Temple of Doom is the most original of the Indy films and also the black sheep from a subject matter standpoint. Both Raiders and Last Crusade deal with biblical items and Nazis, where Temple of Doom deals with a remote and almost secluded storyline: magic stones. It's questionable how people can be so judgmental about a film when the description contains the term "magic stones," but nevertheless they are. Of course Temple of Doom is dark, the word "Doom" is in the title, but it's also fun, enjoyable and classic Indiana Jones, unlike other movies I know... (Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull) understandably

5. For a Few Dollars More

The second installment in Sergio Leone's "Man with No Name" series starring Clint Eastwood is every bit as good as "A Fistful of Dollars" and the championed "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly." Granted, the last one has the best title, but For a Few Dollars more seems to be lost in the shuffle, when it certainly doesn't deserve such treatment, and that's why it made this list. Iconic, beautiful, epic, perfect are words that come to mind when describing For a Few Dollars More and the entire Man with No Name series.

4. The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

Picking up where The Fellowship of the Ring left off, the Two Towers is many fans' favorite of the Lord of the Rings trilogy directed by Peter Jackson. It's engrossing, beautiful and full of adventure. The real battling begins in The Return of the King, but The Two Towers is essential to the story. The film doesn't suffer from that usual lag that so many sequels in trilogies are victim of. It holds its own, functioning as an independent entity, not dependent on the other films, but working together to tell a larger, grander story. The Two Towers also introduces us to some of the most enduring characters from the series, sustaining the momentum created by the first film and leading us into the breathtaking climax.

3. The Dark Knight

One of the best films made within the last 20 years, *The Dark Knight* makes its predecessor look like small change, and that's saying a lot because 2005's "*Batman Begins*" is NOT small change. *The Dark Knight* elevates the subject matter to such a high standard that it's impossible to ignore its significance, perfectly balanced as a drama/crime/thriller and satisfying on an artistic and entertainment level. You'll have a hard time finding a movie so well developed and brilliantly executed, which also happens to center on a man who dresses like a bat and a psychotic clown. As Roger Ebert wrote, "*Batman* is no longer a comic book." No, *Batman* is now of the caliber of John Wayne and comic book films no longer have an excuse to be awful.

2. *The Godfather Part II*

"*The Godfather*" is called the best film ever made. Perhaps it is, perhaps it is perfectly conceived, but what does that mean for *The Godfather Part II*? It means there is enough room at the top for both. *The Godfather Part II* continues the story of Michael Corleone and his rise to power within his crime family, but we also see Robert De Niro as the young Marlon Brando character from the first film. Sure, *Part II* isn't as congealed as the original, but it keeps the bar, which the first film set so high, firmly intact, and if it were not for *The Godfather* being so damned perfect, we'd be saying *Godfather Part II* is the greatest film ever made.

1. *The Empire Strikes Back*

It was simultaneously easy and extremely difficult to decide whether or not *The Godfather Part II* or *The Empire Strikes Back* should take the number one spot, and although when the history of film is looked back upon *The Godfather Part II* will be remembered as a superior film, it doesn't matter because this is a list of the greatest sequels and there is no better example than *The Empire Strikes Back*. It simply has everything and does what a sequel should do, surpass the original, but also compliment it. The *Star Wars* films (the original three) are reminiscent of a great piece of classical music, they build and build and build, eventually breaking out of the normal confines of the imagination and becoming something extraordinary. *Return of the Jedi* is a lesser film, sure, but that's because it follows the world's most perfect sequel, but all the films are in-step with one another, creating a driving force as though they were all one big script and they had to be broken down into pieces to keep the running time manageable. *The Empire Strikes Back* contains the classic elements that made the franchise so strong, and though *A New Hope* deservedly holds a tender spot in most *Star Wars* fan's hearts, deep down everyone knows *The Empire Strikes Back* encompasses the spirit and soulfulness that is today known as *Star Wars*.