

## ▣ ABOUT THE MOVIE ▣

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| <b>TITLE</b>            | Wall Street  |
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>         | Oliver Stone   |
| <b>YEAR AND COUNTRY</b> | 1987<br>USA  |
| <b>GENRE</b>            | Drama  |
| <b>ACTORS</b>           | Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen, Daryl Hannah |

### PLOT

Released shortly before the 1987 stock market crash, Wall Street is a morality play about Bud Fox (Ch. Sheen), a young stockbroker trying to become a “player” on Wall Street. With the help of some inside information, Bud manages to become close to Gordon Gekko (M. Douglas), a corporate raider with a lot of style and very few ethics. His new position brings Bud power and money, but also causes a personal dilemma. The only way Bud can resolve the problem is to beat Gekko at his own game.

### LANGUAGE

Wall Street – the industry – is famous for its jargon, and director Oliver Stone uses the lingo to great effect in the film. One category of jargon is connected to Bud’s job as a stockbroker (technical name: account executive). The key to being a stockbroker, particularly, a young stockbroker, is to find clients, and Stone has truly captured the stress of finding (and dealing with) clients over the phone. A second category is the heart of Wall Street, the trading of stocks on the New York Stock Exchange. Again Oliver Stone presents the real language of buying and selling stocks. One note: until 2001, stock prices on the NYSE were quoted in fractions, and the base unit in the 1980s was the 1/8 (eighth). So a share offered at US \$ 46.375 would be quoted as “46 and 3/8” or, simply “6 and 3/8”.

“The deal” represents the third category of Wall Street jargon. Though the film is really about “greed”, the storyline relies on Gordon Gekko’s transactions, transactions that are unethical, but linguistically rich.

### VOCABULARY

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| (stock)broker: someone who acts as an intermediary, buying or selling stocks for a client.                                   | LBO: Leveraged Buy Out, a takeover of a company using a significant amount of borrowed money, often more than 70% of the total purchase price |
| bid: the price an investor is willing to pay to buy a stock  | liquidation: the sale of the components of a company, often carried out to pay for a takeover   |
| cold call: a phone call made to strangers to see if they are interested in becoming clients                                  | mole: a spy inside an organization  |
| floor: the trading area of the New York Stock Exchange   | quota: a number (usually monthly) representing the minimum amount of commissions or sales a stockbroker is expected to produce                |
| Golden Parachute: large benefits given to an executive when he or she loses her job  | Stop-Loss: an order to sell a stock when it reaches a certain price which is below the current market price                                   |
| greenmail: a premium paid to a corporate raider to get him/her to terminate a takeover attempt.                              | to clear: to make a profit  |
| insider trading: illegally buying or selling a company’s stock on the basis of information which is not known to the public. | to dump: sell something, regardless of the price  |