

# The DC Extended Universe movies ranked

BY MAKENZIE WHITTLE

The Bulletin

I've been a bad nerd.

I've neglected a very prominent section of movie/comic book/pop culture for years by avoiding most films in the DC Extended Universe.

With a few exceptions, the films never looked particularly intriguing beyond the chiseled jawline of a certain hero and the empowering look of "Wonder Woman," so I avoided these "dark and gritty" takes on the comics.

That all changed this past weekend when I set out to watch them all culminating with the "Snyder Cut."

The biggest and most obvious problem I have with the series of movies is most of them have interesting concepts and plots but are generally overly long and poorly written.

Like every good nerd, I will now rank the DCEU, all of which can be streamed on HBO Max.

Note: "Joker," starring Joaquin Phoenix, is not a part of the DCEU and is a side universe that exists on its own and, as such, will not be listed.

**10) "Suicide Squad" (2016)** — It's really not a great leap to wonder why Warner Bros. is doing a semi-do-over with writer-di-



Clay Enos/Warner Bros./DC Entertainment

**Gal Gadot in a scene from "Wonder Woman 1984" (2017).**

rector James Gunn in this summer's release of "The Suicide Squad," because the first one was rough. David Ayer's film tries and fails to really capture the audience's attention this band of too many villains brought together.

Instead, with a clunky pace, excruciatingly bad exposition and flat performances from pretty much everyone except Margot Robbie's Harley Quinn, it's the worst of the bunch.

**9) "Justice League" (2017) Theatrical Cut**

— Closely following the villain team-up movie is what should have been the antithesis: the big hero team-up movie. Most of the problems come from the uneven tone and the rushed pace that leaves gaping holes in the plot. Yes, most of this stems from the departure of director Zack Snyder and the studio's hiring of Joss Whedon to finish the film in his place. Well, Whedon marked his territory, doing reshoots and adding enough dialogue to give him a co-writing credit. The additions are just bad and the script suffers from the tired Whedon-ese tacked on.

**8) "Wonder Woman 1984" (2020)** — I still don't know how they messed up so badly with this one. While the first installment is pretty incredible, the follow-up misses the mark on so many levels. First, the story is all over the place. Second, it highlights how poor of an actor Gal Gadot is. Third, it has a crummy script. Fourth and fifth, they criminally underuse Chris Pine and Pedro Pascal while completely miscasting Kristen Wiig. It's just a mess.

**7) "Man of Steel" (2013)** — When I sat down to watch this last week, I soon realized that I had in fact seen it before, but completely forgot about it. So, this rewatch gave me a better insight into the world Snyder

**Continued on next page**

**Continued from previous page**

back and forth, and the cut achieving almost mythic status, it was released in all its glory (there is even a "grey" version) on HBO Max.

The general plot remains the same: Bruce Wayne/Batman (Ben Affleck) begins assembling a team of heroes after the death of Clark Kent/Superman (Henry Cavill) to be ready to fight against any meta-humans or aliens who decide to make Earth their next battleground.

Well, the fight comes sooner than he thought when the alien being Steppenwolf begins a quest to find the Mother Boxes, devices that, when unified, will create a portal for his leader Darkseid to arrive and lay waste to the planet.

When Steppenwolf finds one box hidden in Themyscira, home of the Amazons, Diana Prince/Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot) joins with Bruce to find others to join them, including Arthur Curry/Aquaman, Barry Allen/The Flash and Victor Stone/Cyborg (Jason Momoa, Ezra Miller and Ray Fisher).

Because of its length, the film is broken into six parts and follows more of an episodic pace. It makes the film as a whole much easier to follow and allows viewers natural breaks to go to the bathroom, grab

a snack or even watch it like a TV series if that's more your speed.

The film is packed with information at every turn. Special effects are more cohesive and impressive. The epic battle sequences have been revved up and tone adjusted from an awful burnt orange to the more Snyder-esque steel grays and blues.

But the best addition to the film is the expansion on Victor Stone/Cyborg's character arc, in that he actually has one and it has depth.

It does, however, suffer from the things that have plagued the DCEU since the beginning, namely bad writing and length.

Instead of allowing actors to, you know, act and emote like what they're supposed to do, the script, penned by Chris Terrio, basically just tells the audience what is going on at every turn, leaving little room for nuance.

And even with it separated into different parts, there is still way more packed into one movie than really needs to be in there.

While this new version certainly improves by leaps and bounds the problems of the original theatrical cut, it never manages to be anything more than is expected in this universe of comic book movies, and places it just above average.

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HBO Max

**From left, Jason Momoa, Gal Gadot and Ray Fisher in "Zack Snyder's Justice League" (2021).**