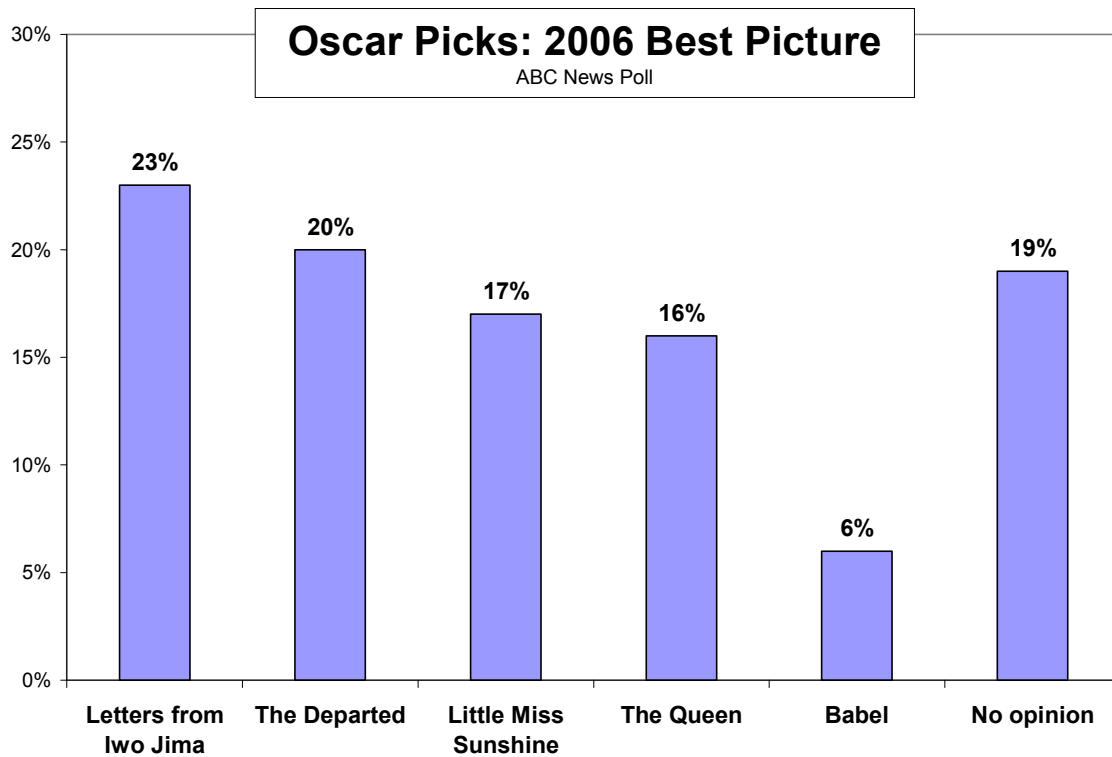


Oscar Picks: It's Gals vs Guys

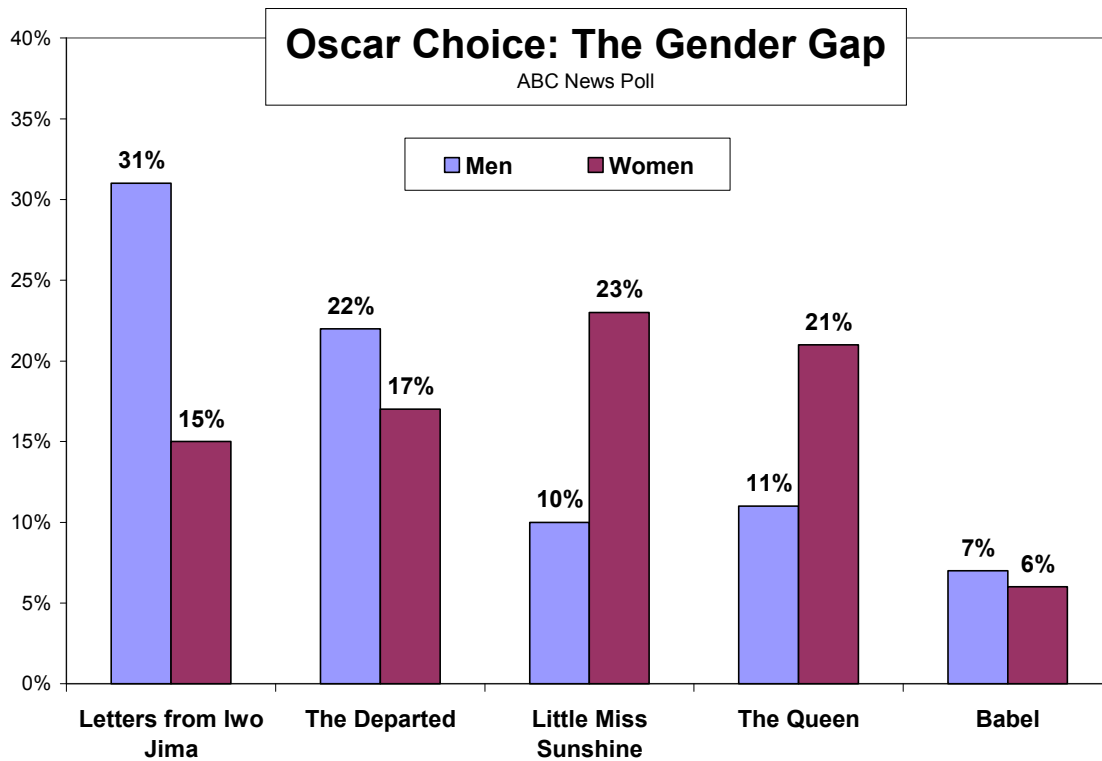
When it comes to the best picture of 2006, the old stereotypes hold true: Guys like shoot-'em-ups, gals like dress-'em-ups.

Overall there's no clear favorite: With the Academy Awards approaching this Sunday night, 23 percent of Americans in this ABC News poll pick "Letters from Iwo Jima" for the best picture statuette, with "The Departed" a close second at 20 percent. "Little Miss Sunshine" and "The Queen" follow, with "Babel" muttering behind.



But behind the scenes there's an impressive gender gap. "Letters," Clint Eastwood's wartime saga, is the far-and-away favorite among men, followed by "The Departed," a Martin Scorsese-directed police-vs.-mafia flick with its own heavy dose of bloodshed. Women, by contrast, divide between "Sunshine" and "The Queen" as their top picks; films, respectively, about a dysfunctional family on the beauty-pageant circuit, and, well, the Queen.

There are other differences among groups. Middle-aged and older adults side heavily with "Letters"; the younger generation, by as wide a margin, favors "The Departed." Breaking it down further, "Letters" scores best with older men, "The Departed" with younger men; "Sunshine" with younger women, "The Queen" with older women. (Her Highness is 80.)



	"Letters"	"The Departed"	"Sunshine"	"The Queen"	"Babel"
All	23%	20	17	16	6
Men	31	22	10	11	7
Women	15	17	23	21	6
Men 18-44	22	31	12	9	6
Men 45+	39	13	10	11	3
Women 18-44	12	22	28	9	9
Women 45+	20	6	17	30	7

Differences between the sexes in flick picks aren't new; last year, for instance, men were twice as likely as women to like the explosive-laden "Munich." (But both sexes favored Crash, which indeed won.) And in 2001, women preferred "Erin Brockovich" while men went for the ultimate winner, "Gladiator," with all its swordplay.

Among other groups, "Letters" also is clear tops outside metro areas, while city dwellers have more trouble reaching consensus. And whites favor "Letters," non-whites, "The Departed."

This year's close contest overall in preferences for best picture is quite common — a sharp contrast to blowout years such as 2004, when, in advance of the Oscars, 42 percent of Americans picked "The Lord of the Rings" for top flick, far above any other. It won.

THE BOX OFFICE — If "Letters" does take home the golden guy, it'd be another big score for a box-office midget. With the latest and smallest release of the nominated films, it ranks 148th in 2006 gross, with a mere \$11.8 million at the ticket window. Compare that to the year's swashbuckling No. 1 grosser, "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," with a 2006 take of more than \$423 million. If not a best-picture Oscar, that'll at least buy a whole lot of eye patches.

Indeed, while total domestic ticket sales gained in 2006 for the first time in three years, the Academy again — as last year — thumbed its nose at the big-money pictures. Only one nominated film, "The Departed," broke into the top 50 in 2006 box office gross: It ranked 15th, compared with "Sunshine" at 52nd, "The Queen" at 62nd, "Babel" at 93rd and "Letters," as noted, at 148th. Those last four combined would only rank 11th on the year's list of top-grossing films — only five spots higher than "The Departed" by itself.

Rank	2006 domestic box-office gross
1. Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	\$423,315,812
2. Cars	\$244,082,982
3. Night at the Museum	\$238,500,531
4. X-Men: The Last Stand	\$234,362,462
5. The DaVinci Code	\$217,536,138
15. The Departed	\$131,498,360
52. Little Miss Sunshine	\$59,758,048
62. The Queen	\$51,350,148
93. Babel	\$33,218,792
148. Letters from Iwo Jima	\$11,811,634

Source: www.boxofficemojo.com

The Oscars air at 8 p.m. Eastern, Sunday night, Feb. 25, on ABC.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 15-19, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,007 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Patrick Moynihan and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1. On another subject, I'm going to name the movies that have been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture this year. Which one do you think should win the Oscar?

	2/19/07
Letters from Iwo Jima	23
The Departed	20
Little Miss Sunshine	17
The Queen	16
Babel	6
No Opinion	19

Compare to:

	2/26/06
Crash*	22
Brokeback Mountain	15
Munich	11
Good Night, and Good Luck	11
Capote	8
No Opinion	34

	2/22/04
Lord of the Rings*	42
Seabiscuit	16
Mystic River	10
Lost in Translation	5
Master and Commander	3
No opinion	24

	3/17/02
Lord of the Rings	30
A Beautiful Mind*	28
Moulin Rouge	12
In the Bedroom	5
Gosford Park	2
No opinion	23

	3/18/01
Erin Brockovich	31
Gladiator*	28
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	7
Traffic	7
Chocolat	6
No opinion	21

	3/19/00
The Green Mile	25
The Sixth Sense	22
American Beauty*	13
The Cider House Rules	5
The Insider	3
No opinion	32

*Best-picture Oscar winner