

The Life of  
American Composer

John  
Williams

John Williams is an American composer, conductor and pianist. His music has been heard in more than 100 films including:

**Jaws**

**Star Wars (7 movies)**

**E.T.**

**Harry Potter (the 1<sup>st</sup> three films)**

**Jurassic Park**

**Superman**

**Home Alone**

**Catch Me if You Can**



Click [HERE](#) for a picture of Williams

# The Background of John Williams

He was born on February 8, 1932 in the town of Floral Park, New York.

He came from a musical family. His father was a jazz percussionist and he has 2 brothers, Donald and Jerry, who are also percussionists.

(click [HERE](#) for a picture of young John Williams)

He started taking piano lessons at a very young age.

In 1948, the Williams family moved to Los Angeles, where he attended High School.

After graduating, he attended the University of California where he studied music composition.

(Music composition means learning to write your own original music.)



In 1952, Williams was drafted into the US Air Force, where he conducted and arranged music for the U.S Air Force Band as part of his assignments.

In 1955, following the Air Force, he moved to New York City to attend The Juilliard School, one of the most prestigious music schools in the country. He studied piano performance.

To earn extra money, he worked as a jazz pianist in many of the city's jazz clubs.

Following his time in New York City, he returned to Los Angeles to pursue a career as a movie studio musician. He was heard as a pianist on films such as “To Kill A Mockingbird” (1962).

After a short while, he was composing his own music for T.V. His career took off in the 1970s when he began composing for the film industry.



# John Williams's Movie Career

Williams may be best known for his work with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

Click [HERE](#) for a picture of John Williams and Steven Spielberg at work.

Another recent picture can be seen [HERE](#).

John Williams wrote the musical scores for almost all of Spielberg's movies. The most well known scores are...

Jaws (1975)  
E.T. (1982)  
Hook (1991)  
Jurassic Park (1993)  
Indiana Jones (4 films)  
Schindler's List (1993)  
Saving Private Ryan (1998)  
Catch Me If You Can (2002)  
Munich (2005) and  
Lincoln (2012)

Williams also composed the music for George Lucas's 7 Star Wars movies.

He has also created the music for many other famous movies including:

Superman (1978)

Home Alone (1990)

Harry Potter (first 3 films)

In an ongoing career, he has worked on more than 100 films!

Click [HERE](#) for a short video clip of George Lucas giving a toast to John Williams at an American Film Institute Awards presentation.  
(2:30)

# Non-Movie Related Career Events

He is best known for his film works, but he has written other music, including concert pieces and musical themes for the following Olympic Games:

1984, 1988, and 1996 Summer Olympic Games

2002 Winter Olympic Games

1987 International Summer Games of the Special Olympics

Click [HERE](#) to listen to one of his Olympic themes (3:07)

Do you recognize it?

Williams also works regularly as a conductor.  
In 1980, he became the conductor of the  
Boston Pops Orchestra.

He held that position until he retired in 1993.

Click [HERE](#) for a picture of Williams with the  
Boston Pops.

# AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Mr. Williams has received 5 Academy Awards and 50 Oscar nominations, making him the Academy's most-nominated living person and the second-most nominated person in the history of the Oscars. His most recent nomination was for the film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

He has also received 7 British Academy Awards (BAFTA), 2 Grammys, 4 Golden Globes, 5 Emmys, and numerous gold and platinum records.

He was a recipient of the 2009 National Medal of Arts, the highest award given to artists by the United States Government. In 2003, he received the Olympic Order, the IOC's highest honor, for his contributions to the Olympic movement.

Williams was also awarded many other honors- too many to list!

# How Did He Become Successful?

John Williams has had a successful career as a musician, composer and conductor. Following are his top 10 rules for success.

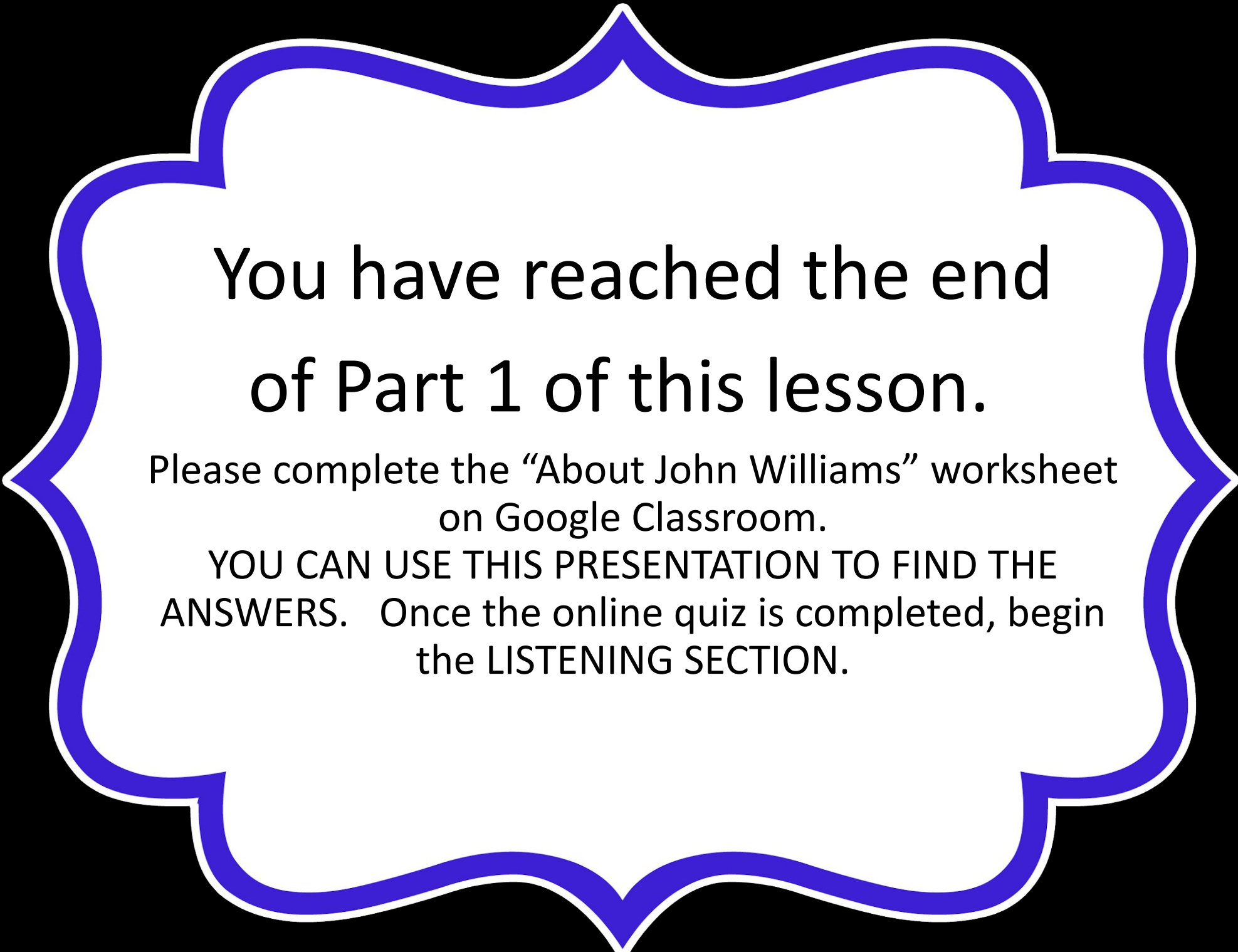
Which of his 10 rules for success can you begin to implement now?



# John Williams's 10 Rules for Success

1. Start small
2. Work hard
3. Challenge yourself
4. Always strive for better
5. Find the joy in life
6. Enjoy every task you do
7. Inspire others
8. Practice every day
9. Nurture great friendships
10. Create greatness

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1QciU4Z-k>



You have reached the end  
of Part 1 of this lesson.

Please complete the “About John Williams” worksheet  
on Google Classroom.

**YOU CAN USE THIS PRESENTATION TO FIND THE  
ANSWERS.** Once the online quiz is completed, begin  
the LISTENING SECTION.