

A History of the Early Cinema

1895-1940s

The first moving picture shows started in theatres in England, France, and the United States at the end of the 19th century.



1895-1910 Silent movies

In 1905, the first cinema, or 'Nickelodeon', opened in Pittsburgh, and by 1907 there were about 4,000 'Nickelodeons' in the US. The films were short (sometimes just one minute long) and silent, but there was usually a pianist to accompany them. Film shows lasted about half an hour.

Later films became longer and were often Bible stories. Until 1910, the actors were not named. With the longer films, their names started to appear on screen. The idea of 'film stars' was born.

1910-1927 'HOLLYWOOD' is born!

In the early years, American films were made in or near New York, but in 1910 many film companies moved to California because of the sunshine and the scenery. Westerns – films about cowboys – became very popular, and California was the perfect place to film.

By 1914 American films were very popular, and Hollywood became a 'movie factory'. In the 1920s studios made about 800 films a year, 82% of the world's films. Hollywood's silent movie stars, such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, became famous throughout the world.

1927-1940s The coming of SOUND!

Hollywood made its first movie with sound in 1927. It was called *The Jazz Singer*. By the end of 1929 nearly all films were 'talkies'. Now began what is often called 'The Golden Age of Hollywood', with its rich, famous, glamorous film stars such as Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Humphrey Bogart, and Judy Garland.

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10 Read the first part of the text '1895-1910'. Complete the questions with *did*, *was*, or *were*. Then complete the answers.

- 1 'When did the first moving picture shows start?'
'At the end of the 19th century.'
- 2 'Where and when _____ the first cinema open?'
'In _____, in _____.'
- 3 'How many 'Nickelodeons' _____ there in the US by 1907?'
'About _____.'
- 4 'How long _____ the film shows last?'
'About _____.'
- 5 'What kind of stories _____ they often tell?'
'_____ stories.'

7.4 Listen and check.

11 Read the rest of the text. Complete the questions and the answers.

- 1 'Where were the first American films made?' 'In New York.'
- 2 '_____ did the film companies move to California?'
'Because of _____.'
- 3 '_____ kind of film became popular?' '_____.'
- 4 '_____ did Hollywood become a 'movie factory' for the world?'
'By _____.'
- 5 '_____ films did the studios make every year?'
'_____.'
- 6 '_____ two movie stars became famous throughout the world?'
'Buster Keaton and _____.'
- 7 '_____ did Hollywood make its first sound movie?'
'In _____.'
- 8 '_____ were some of the film stars of 'The Golden Age of Hollywood'?'
Clark Gable, Greta Garbo, Humphrey Bogart and _____.