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History of Film

Narrator:

For more than a hundred years, film has entertained people around the world. Movies let us see new things, experience history, and dream about living like the actors on a movie screen.

In the 19th century, inventors learned that they could create moving images by showing a series of pictures very quickly. In 1891, in the United States, Thomas Edison and William Dickson designed and created a machine called a kinetoscope. People could pay a fee to look into the machine and watch simple movies. Before long, a machine called a projector could show movies to large groups of people.

People loved this new technology. Everyday life was much more exciting when it was shown in a movie. The first movies were of simple things like trains, but these were soon followed by movies with longer and more complex stories. By the 1920s, several movie studios had opened in Hollywood, California. Crowds of people went to see their productions, and new “movie palaces” were built to show them in. Actors like Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin became famous around the world.

But outside of Hollywood, film was being used in other ways, allowing us to experience the world in a different way. At the beginning of the 20th century, movie directors began to record real happenings and important events. They filmed presidents, explorers, and any kind of human experience, including the Wright Brothers’ early flights.

In the hands of filmmakers, cameras can also show us the traditions of people living in other parts of the planet, and take us far away from our homes. Since those early days, documentary filmmakers have learned to use film in ways that explain how the world really is.

Technology can help us see things much faster than they really happen. It can also let us see things much more slowly, like the movement of a hawk. In the future, film technology may show us new ways to understand the world.

Over the years, ideas from Hollywood have helped documentary filmmakers develop their art. Actors, lighting, and even computer animation are now used to teach us about the real world. Now we can experience other places and other times in history in ways people before us could only dream of.

In only a hundred years, film making has changed completely. Those early simple pictures have now become our window to the world.