



## Top Grossing Movies

Hollywood has been producing movies since the 1920s, so working out which movie made the most money isn't always easy to do. The "gross" for a film is how much money it makes based on ticket sales. So, the top "grossing" film is the film that earned the most money.

To help compare films from a different era, it's easiest to look at how many tickets a film sold at the time and use that to work out how much money they would have made today. So, the film that has earned the most money ever is Avatar, from 2009. However, when you look at many tickets it sold and use current ticket prices, it drops down to 15th in the list. Using that method, let's look at the top five Hollywood movies of all time as of 2021.

### *Gone With The Wind (1939)*

Filmed just before the Second World War and released in the UK after it had started, it's even more surprising how well the film did. In a time when some theatres had to close due to the war, it sold over 202 million tickets! If it had done that today, it would have earned over \$1.8 billion!

### *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope (1977)*

The first in the Star Wars series, A New Hope was an instant success. During its initial release at the cinema (it has regularly been rescreened around the world at special events), it sold over 178 million tickets. Adjusted for modern ticket prices, that would have made nearly \$1.7 billion.

### *The Sound of Music (1965)*

This popular musical has been made famous for its collection of catchy tunes. It helped to launch the career of Julie Andrews, who had portrayed Mary Poppins the year before (Mary Poppins is currently the 27th highest-grossing film of all time). The Sound of Music sold over 142 million tickets worldwide.



## *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)*

Who can forget the lovable alien that befriended young Elliot and took us all on such an emotional journey? Apparently, nearly 142 million people queued up to buy tickets to see it, and who can blame them. When you adjust that for modern ticket prices, it adds up to a whopping \$1.3 billion!

## *Titanic (1997)*

Unlike the titular boat, this classic Leonardo DiCaprio film did anything but sink! Even though it was released with bladder-straining 3 hours and 15 minutes run time, nearly 136 million people swarmed cinemas worldwide to catch a glimpse of Rose and Jack battling to save themselves from the doomed vessel. Putting that into modern ticket sales and it comes in at roughly \$1.27 billion! Interestingly, Titanic is the only one of these five films that are also in the top 5 grossing films of all time based on how much money they made at the time. It sits in the third spot behind Avengers: Endgame and Avatar.

### VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. What does the word “titular” mean in the Titanic section?
2. What is an “era”?
3. Find and copy a phrase that tells the reader that A New Hope was popular from the beginning.
4. Find and copy a word that means “the first time something happened”.
5. Which word in the text has a meaning closest to “pretended to be somebody”?

### VIPERS QUESTIONS

**R**

Which film has earned the most money ever?

**S**

Which film on the list was released first?

**R**

Whose career was helped by The Sound of Music?

**R**

What were the names of the two main characters in Titanic?

**S**

How is Titanic different to the other films on the list?

## Bollywood!

Hollywood isn't the only movie powerhouse in the world. The Hindi language movie industry in India, nicknamed Bollywood, is one of the most popular and successful in the world.

There is a misconception that Bollywood refers to all Indian cinema, but this is wrong. The term originally came from the place names Bombay and Hollywood and so only referred to films that were recorded in the Hindi language. Modern Bollywood films might use different soundtracks or subtitles so that they can be watched in different languages.

One of the most recognisable traits of many Bollywood movies is their colour, energy, music and vibrant dancing. The stories are usually filled with arguments, revenge and drama. For this reason, they are often called Masala movies - Masala means "spice" in Hindi, and these films are definitely full of that!

Many Bollywood actors go on to appear in lots of films. The current record holder is Shakti Kapoor. Since he began acting in 1977, he has appeared in over 700 films, often as the villain or funnyman. Throughout his career, he has made millions of dollars and is a celebrity around the world.

When you look at the numbers, it is perhaps Bollywood that should be considered the home of movies, not Hollywood. Bollywood began producing movies in 1899, 11 years before Hollywood. Despite this, Bollywood didn't release the first film with sound until Alam Ara in the early 1930s, five years after Hollywood.

Each year, Bollywood releases around 1,000 movies, compared to Hollywood's 500. Hollywood films are watched by around 2.6 billion viewers worldwide, which is a lot of people. However, Bollywood films are watched by over 3 billion!

On the other hand, Hollywood makes a lot more money than Bollywood. In 2018,



Hollywood made \$50.9 billion in revenue. Bollywood wasn't even second in the list - it came in third with \$2.83 billion. Cinema of China was the second most profitable with \$12.8 billion.

The highest-grossing (gross is the term for how much money a film makes) Bollywood film of all time was a 2016 film called Dangal. It was a sports biography and made over \$311 million worldwide. Conversely, the highest-grossing Hollywood film was Avatar, released in 2009. That made over \$2.8 billion worldwide.

So, if you are a film company looking to make money, then perhaps Hollywood is the place to go. However, if you are a fan of colourful, dramatic and entertaining films by the handful, then you should definitely check out a Bollywood production.

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Which produces the most films each year: Hollywood or Bollywood?
2. When was the first film shot in Bollywood?
3. Which film industry made the second most money in 2018?
4. What is the name of the most successful Bollywood film?
5. Who has starred in the most Bollywood films?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**S**

Why are Bollywood films sometimes called Masala films?

**V**

What is a "trait"?

**V**

Complete the sentence using a word from the text: When a character wants to get their own back on somebody, it is called \_\_\_\_\_.

**V**

Write a definition for "conversely".

**S**

Summarise how Bollywood and Hollywood compare with each other.





## Hollywood!

Glamour, money, power and magic. They are perhaps the four words that you picture when you hear the word Hollywood. And yet America's "Tinseltown" hasn't always been the dream factory that it is known as today.

Nowadays, some of the most powerful actors and film studios call Hollywood home or at least work, but in the beginning, it was a struggle to get anybody to go there at all.

The story of Hollywood begins in 1883. All that stood where vast shooting lots and glittering boardwalks now stand was a small hut and little else. Into the frame strode an unlikely hero, a man named Harvey Wilcox. He was a politician and, more importantly, a property developer. Together with his wife Daeida, he bought a large area of land just outside where Hollywood now stands. His idea was to try his hand at farming herds of animals.

Harvey was originally from Kansas, so he may have had some experience working with livestock. However, his idea flopped. He decided to cut his losses and asked the Los Angeles government for permission to divide the land up and build houses on it. Permission was granted, and he began work on a road called Prospect Avenue.

By 1902, the area was a functional town. It had a post office, hotels, markets and plenty of houses. To make the most of the land, another property developer stepped in - H.J. Whitely. He paid for electricity to be connected to the town and built another hotel and a bank.

The first film company came to Hollywood in 1908. The Count of Monte Cristo was filmed mainly in Chicago, but the final bits were shot in Hollywood. By 1910, companies were shooting entire films there. The first was In Old California.

It wasn't until 1911 that the first movie studio actually moved its offices to Hollywood,



but by 1915 there were many more. The reason for them all moving out to Hollywood had a lot to do with a scientist back in the East.

Thomas Edison is famous for his many inventions, many of which were essential to the movie industry. Unfortunately, he was also an extremely greedy man and wanted to charge a fortune for anybody to use his technology. The laws that stopped people emulating his designs didn't apply in Hollywood, and so film companies could do as they pleased without Edison being able to sue. The fact that Hollywood had predictably sunny weather was also a bonus - filmmakers would have to stop filming if it grew too cloudy or the light changed too much between scenes.

One of the most instantly recognisable things about Hollywood is the large,

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. What is Hollywood's nickname?
2. What was the name of Harvey Wilcox's wife?
3. What was the name of the first film to be shot entirely in Hollywood?
4. When was the first film finished in Hollywood?
5. Who paid for a bank in Hollywood?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**S**

What did Wilcox do after he realised his farm wasn't working out?

**S**

Why did so many studios move to Hollywood?

**V**

Find and copy a word that means something was "working as it should do".

**V**

Find and copy a word from the text that is a synonym for "copying".

**I**

Why do you think the Hollywood sign might have been restored in 1970?



## Innovations

The first motion picture shot with a single camera was called Roundhay Garden Scene. The 2-second clip shows a group of four people walking around in a garden and was considered almost magic when it was shot in 1888. If you want to see it, you can find it easily enough on the Internet. Since then, the advances in technology have meant that films are not only a great way to pass the time, they can be truly immersive experiences.

### *The Golden Age*

The first steps towards greatness began in what is known as Hollywood's Golden Age. This was an age of invention and innovation. It all began with the invention of silent movies. Unlike Roundhay Garden Scene, these were much longer - long enough to warrant building cinemas for people to view them in. Some of the most luxurious cinemas were built during this period and were often based on classical stage theatres.

This was the period when stars such as Charlie Chaplin made their name. Not only were these films popular in the United States, but they also became popular all over the world. Those first film stars were perhaps the very first international celebrities.

In 1926, new technology was unleashed on the world that changed cinema forever. Warner Brothers developed a system called Vitaphone, which meant sound could be played alongside a film for the first time ever. Before that, a live band had to sit in the theatre and perform in time, if the cinema wanted sound at all. Some films were screened in total silence. Now, it could be recorded on a set and played back wherever the film was screened.

The first film to contain sound was called Don Juan; however, it only contained recorded music. The first film to contain recorded speech - the first "talkie", as they became known - was called The Jazz Singer. It was released in 1927. Even then, only about a quarter of the speech was recorded. The rest was still displayed on the screen. In 1928, a film called Lights of New York was released as the first ever with completely recorded dialogue.

### 3D

3D movies have been sought after for a long time. Even though it may seem like new technology, the 3D films you may see today at the cinema are actually just a new way of doing it. The idea has been around for a lot longer.

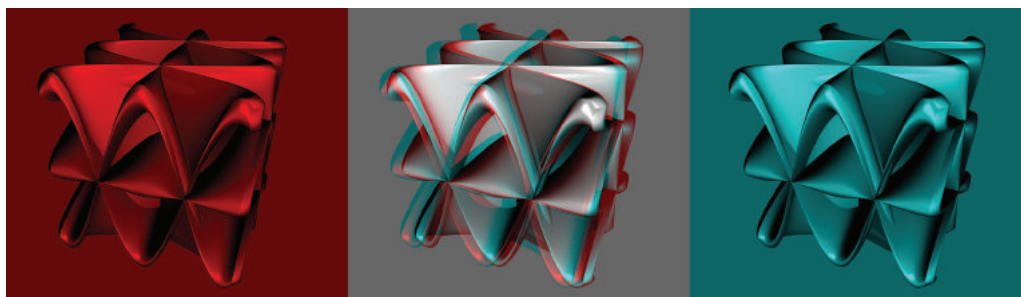


The way a 3D film works depends on tricking your brain. Each of your eyes sees a slightly different angle of the world in front of you. You can test this by placing a finger in front of your nose and closing one eye at a time. You should notice that you can see a different side of the finger with each one. When you look through both eyes together, your brain combines the images, and it gives you a three-dimensional view of the world. This is what allows us to have something called depth-perception. Without this, it is a lot harder to control your hands to pick things up, for instance. Try grabbing something with one eye closed, and you're likely to miss or knock it over.

It may surprise you to hear that the first 3D film was actually released in 1922. That means we've had 3D films for longer than we've had sound at the cinema! Modern 3D technology relies on something called polarisation. When light travels, the waves move at a specific angle. Modern 3D screens emit light in two different angles, and the glasses you wear only allow one type through each light. This way, your eyes see slightly different things, and your brain is tricked.

Before this technology became available, filmmakers had to use different colours to trick the brain. This meant that early 3D films had to be in black and white.

Look at the image below and think back to your finger in front of your nose. The red image is what you might see through your left eye, and the blue is through your right eye. They are slightly different. 3D films are shot using two cameras that are positioned as far apart as human eyes. When the two images are combined, you get the image you see in the middle.



If you then wear a pair of glasses like the ones below, you can trick your brain. Your left eye only sees the red part of the image, and your right eye the blue. How clever!

The golden era of these early “anaglyph” films (as the technology is known) was the 1950s. Since the 1980s, studios have been trying to reinvent the technology, but the success of these films has been hit and miss.





## SUMMARY FOCUS

1. What was special about Roundhay Garden Scene?
2. Why was the Golden Age of Hollywood called that?
3. Which important film was released before The Jazz Singer? Why was it important?
4. Explain how 3D films trick your brain.

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**V**

Find and copy a word that means you might feel like you are inside a film.

**R**

True or false: early 3D films were often in full colour.

**R**

When were 3D films most popular?

**V**

Find and copy a phrase that means modern 3D films haven't all been successful.

**I**

Why might somebody who is blind in one eye struggle with picking up an object?

## Attack!

Sandy sat down and sighed; it didn't matter where she sat, she always seemed to get the stickiest seat. Her questing fingers released a piece of old popcorn from the recesses of the faded red cushion and she flicked it into the heaving crowd with a sneer. Even though she hated other people's filthy habits, going to the cinema was her absolute favourite thing to do. If at all possible, she preferred to go on her own.

Her best friend, Sol, had joined her for the premiere screening of Alien Overlords 6 and he'd talked all the way through. Sandy was so annoyed that she told him she was never going to speak to him again - she changed her mind when he bought her an ice-cream to say sorry. Even then, she wasn't sure he understood. Films were her life. Her dream was to direct a blockbuster one day, so she saw every screening as an education. Sol just liked to see things blow up.

This was going to be something even more amazing than normal, she could tell. She hadn't even heard of the film, so it was probably something really artistic and probably subtitled. Looking at her ticket after the bored sales clerk had scanned the code on her phone was the first time she'd seen the title of the film: Parasite. It sounded terrifying and right up her street.

A familiar hush fell over the rest of the audience, the curtains parted and Sandy settled back into the chair. There was always half an hour or commercials and trailers before the film actually started, so she was taken aback when the speakers boomed and the screen lit up with the opening scene. In it, a vast silver orb floated effortlessly in the depths of space. Behind it, far in the distance, Sandy could just make out the familiar markings of Earth.

"Cut to the bridge," Sandy said, under her breath. She knew how these opening scenes worked; she'd studied them all. Sure enough, the screen cut to a vaguely humanoid creature with pallid grey skin and a flattened nose. It was sat in a high-backed chair and was staring straight out of the screen.



“Thank you for joining us,” the creature said. It’s voice was silken and thick like treacle. “This won’t hurt. We promise.”

Sandy bit her lip, her eyebrows creased. It didn’t make any sense. She knew better than to give up yet, some of the best films started with a mystery. On the screen, the creature suddenly split in half, causing Sandy to shriek. From somewhere within its body, a strange, plant-like creature emerged. And then, it didn’t stop emerging until arms like vines were actually reaching out of the cinema screen.

The audience screamed, but those at the front fell silent as the vines snaked around their bodies and slid into their open mouths. Sandy tried to run, but the only exits were at the front of the theatre, past the snaking tendrils. Taking her chances, she leaped down the steps, two at a time.

Just as the fire exit seemed to be within reach, she stumbled. Something had a tight grip on her ankle. She spun around, just as the tip of a branch slid past her lips and into her throat. A sense of peace washed over her; she knew then that everything would be alright as long as she did whatever her new master wanted. All she had to do was to help it conquer Earth.

## INFERENCE FOCUS

1. Find evidence that Sandy goes to the cinema a lot.
2. How do you know that Sandy like ice cream?
3. A “parasite” is something that takes over the body of another creature. Why do you think the film was called this?
4. What type of film do you think Sandy likes? Why?
5. Why was Sandy surprised when the film started?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**R**

What did Sandy have to show to get her ticket?

**R**

What could she see behind the spaceship?

**V**

Which word gives you the impression that the alien’s skin was pale and weak?

**V**

What impression do you get of the alien’s voice from the word “silken”?

**S**

What happened immediately after Sandy was taken over by the parasite?