

# DISCOVERING CAREERS

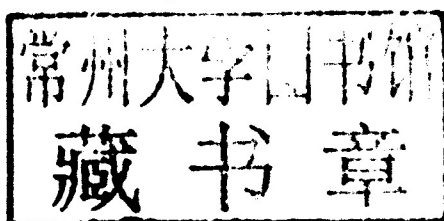
## Movies





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## Movies



Ferguson's  
*An Infobase Learning Company*

## **Movies**

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# DISCOVERING CAREERS

## Movies

**Titles in the  
Discovering Careers  
series**

**Adventure  
Animals  
Art  
Computers  
Construction  
Environment  
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Movies  
Nature  
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Science  
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Transportation  
Writing**

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# Introduction



You may not have decided yet what you want to be in the future. And you don't have to decide right away. You do know that right now you are interested in movies. Do any of the statements below describe you? If so, you may want to begin thinking about what a career in movies might mean for you.

- ☐ I enjoy performing in front of an audience.
- ☐ I like to make movies with my video camera.
- ☐ I enjoy putting on plays with my friends.
- ☐ I like to make or build things.
- ☐ I like to write songs, plays, or stories.
- ☐ I like to listen to or record sounds and music.
- ☐ I watch as many movies as I can.
- ☐ I play in the school band.
- ☐ I enjoy photography.
- ☐ I make my own clothes and jewelry.
- ☐ I spend a lot of time using art, illustration, or movie-editing programs on my computer.
- ☐ I enjoy drawing.
- ☐ I am fascinated by cartoons and the methods used to create them.
- ☐ I like to dance.
- ☐ I like to discover new music, movies, or books and tell my friends about them.
- ☐ I like to perform stunts with my bike.

*Discovering Careers: Movies* is a book about careers in movie-making, from actors to film directors to screenwriters. Careers in this field can be found on film sets, in recording studios,



in business offices, in production houses, and in art studios. While the film industry is centered in Los Angeles and New York, workers are employed in most major cities in the United States and throughout the world.

This book describes many possibilities for future careers in moviemaking. Read through it and see how the different careers are connected. For example, if you are interested in working as a performer, you should read the Actors chapter, but also read about Dancers and Choreographers and Stunt Performers. If you are interested in working behind the scenes in a creative position, you will want to read about Cinematographers, Costume Designers, Film Directors, Production Designers and Art Directors, Screenwriters, and other careers. If your interests are more technical in nature, you will want to read about Lighting Technicians, and Special and Visual Effects Technicians, and other careers. Perhaps you want to write about the movies. If so, a career as a Movie Writer and Critic might be in your future. Go ahead and explore!

## **What Do Movie-Industry Workers Do?**

The first section of each chapter begins with a heading such as “What Film Editors Do” or “What Talent Agents and Scouts Do.” It tells what it’s like to work at this job. It describes typical responsibilities and assignments. You will find out about working conditions. Which movie workers are employed on film sets? Which ones work at computers in offices? This section answers these and other questions.

## **How Do I Become a Movie-Industry Worker?**

The section called “Education and Training” tells you what schooling you need for employment in each job—a high school diploma, training at a junior college, a college degree, or more. It also talks about on-the-job training that you can expect to re-



ceive after you're hired, and whether or not you must complete an apprenticeship program.

## **How Much Do Movie-Industry Workers Earn?**

The "Earnings" section gives salary figures for the job described in the chapter. These figures give you a general idea of how much money people with this job can make. Keep in mind that many people really earn more or less than the amounts given here because actual salaries depend on many different things, such as the size of the company, the location of the company, and the amount of education, training, and experience you have. Generally, but not always, bigger companies located in major cities pay more than smaller ones in smaller cities and towns, and people with more education, training, and experience earn more. Also remember that these figures are current salaries. They will probably be different by the time you are ready to enter the workforce.

## **What Will the Future Be Like for Movie-Industry Workers?**

The "Outlook" section discusses the employment outlook for the career: whether the total number of people employed in this career will increase or decrease in the coming years and whether jobs in this field will be easy or hard to find. These predictions are based on economic conditions, the size and makeup of the population, foreign competition, and new technology. They come from the U.S. Department of Labor, professional associations, and other sources.

Keep in mind that these predictions are general statements. No one knows for sure what the future will be like. Also remember that the employment outlook is a general statement about an industry and does not necessarily apply to everyone. A determined and talented person may be able to find a job in an

industry or career with the worst outlook. And a person without ambition and the proper training will find it difficult to find a job in even a booming industry or career field.

## **Where Can I Find More Information?**

Each chapter includes a sidebar called “For More Info.” It lists resources that you can contact to find out more about the field and careers in the field. You will find names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web sites of movie-oriented associations and organizations.

## **Extras**

Every chapter has a few extras. There are photos that show movie workers in action. There are sidebars and notes on ways to explore the field, fun facts, profiles of people in the field, and lists of Web sites and books that might be helpful. At the end of the book you will find three additional sections: “Glossary,” “Browse and Learn More,” and “Index.” The Glossary gives brief definitions of words that relate to education, career training, or employment that you may be unfamiliar with. The Browse and Learn More section lists movie-related books, periodicals, and Web sites to explore. The Index includes all the job titles mentioned in the book.

It’s not too soon to think about your future. We hope you discover several possible career choices in the movie industry. Happy hunting!

# Actors



## What Actors Do

*Actors* perform in movies, stage plays, and television, video, and radio productions. They use voice and gestures (movement of the limbs or body) to play, or portray, different characters. Actors spend a lot of time looking for available parts. They read and study the parts and then audition (try out) for the film's casting director, director, and producers. In film and television, actors must also do screen tests, which are scenes recorded on film. Casting directors, producers, and directors study these screen tests to decide if the actor is the right person for the role. Once selected for a role, actors memorize their lines and rehearse with other cast members. If the production includes singing and dancing, it requires more rehearsal time.

*Film actors* may spend weeks, months, and even up to a year on one production, which often takes place on location—that is, in different parts of the world. For example, a film may be shot in a desert, in a forest, in a big city, or on a film soundstage (a special building where movies are filmed). Film and television actors usually perform scenes out of sequence during filming—they may perform the last scene first, for example. They also may have to repeat the same scene many times.

Acting is often seen as a glamorous profession, yet many actors work long and irregular hours for both rehearsals and performances, often at low wages. Actors must frequently travel to work on location. This means that they are away from their family and friends for long periods of time.





## EXPLORING

- Read books about working as an actor. See the Browse and Learn More section for suggestions.
- Visit the following Web site to learn more about a career as an actor: Acting Workshop On-Line: So You Want to be an Actor (<http://www.redbirdstudio.com/AWOL/acting2.html>).
- Participate in school or community theater productions. You can audition for acting roles, but also work on costumes, props, or lighting to get theater experience.
- Watch as many plays, television shows, and movies as you can.
- Read biographies of famous actors and other books about acting, auditioning, theater, and the film and television industries. You can also find biographies of actors on
- Arts & Entertainment Network's Web site at <http://www.biography.com>.
- Talk to an actor about his or her career.

Besides natural acting talent, actors need a good memory, a fine speaking voice, and, if possible, the ability to sing and dance. Actors who appear in musicals usually have studied singing and dancing for years in addition to their training in drama. Since it takes many years to break into the movie industry, they also must be determined and keep trying until they land their first acting job. They should also have a backup career in mind in case they never make it in Hollywood.

## Education and Training

In high school, take as many drama classes as possible and participate in theater productions. High school and community



*An actress (left) discusses a scene with a director. (Jim Lavrakas, AP Photo/The Anchorage Daily News)*

theaters offer acting opportunities. Large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have public high schools for the performing arts. Special dramatic arts schools, located mainly in New York and Los Angeles, also offer training.

Although it is not required, a college education is helpful. Many aspiring actors complete at least a bachelor's degree in film, theater, or the dramatic arts. Some earn a master of fine arts degree. More than 150 programs in theater arts are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre.



## Fame & Fortune: Daniel Radcliffe

Daniel Radcliffe is many things—actor, poet, activist. However, he will forever be known to the world as his most famous character, the bespectacled wizard, Harry Potter.

Radcliffe got his start in the acting industry at a very young age when he convinced his mother, a casting agent, to send his picture to a British television network that was looking to cast an upcoming adaptation of *David Copperfield*. Radcliffe won the role, launching the start of his acting career.

Other roles followed, until he won the lead role in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* at age 11. This movie was based on the wildly popular book written by J. K. Rowling. Radcliffe played Harry

Potter in all seven movies that followed, telling the story of Harry Potter and his Hogwarts School friends as they undertook many adventures.

Today, Radcliffe is busy pursuing roles on the stage and screen, many of which showcase his maturing acting skills. He is also active in many humanitarian causes. He works to raise money for sick children, victims of natural disasters, and others causes.

Radcliffe's portrait was recently displayed in Britain's National Portrait Gallery, earning him the distinction of being the youngest nonroyal to be included.

Sources: Answers.com,  
Danradcliffe.com

## Earnings

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the mean yearly salary for movie actors was \$89,772 in 2010. Some actors just starting out make no or little annual salary until they land acting roles. Many have to work at other jobs (such as waiter or office clerk) in order to earn enough money to pay their bills.

In all areas of acting, well-known performers have salary rates above the minimums, and the salaries of the few top stars are many times higher. In film, top stars may earn as much as \$20 million per film, and, after receiving a percentage of the



gross (the total earnings) earned by the film, these stars can earn far, far more.

Movie actors may also receive additional payments known as residuals as part of their guaranteed salary. A residual is a payment that is given to the actor whenever films in which they appear are rerun, licensed for TV exhibition, or released on DVD or online. Residuals often exceed the actors' original salary and account for about one-third of all actors' income.

## Outlook

There will be strong competition for acting jobs during the next decade. Many people want to become actors—especially in the film industry. In addition to the film industry, there are also opportunities in television and theater. In the last two decades, the field has grown considerably outside New York because many major cities have started their own professional theater companies. The number of dinner theaters and summer stock

### Study with the Masters

- For more than 60 years, The Actors Studio has taught the "method" style of acting to some of the greatest actors. Method acting was developed from the work of Konstantin Stanislavsky of Russia, and was taught by Lee Strasberg. It was made famous by the actors Marlon Brando, Dustin Hoffman, Robert DeNiro, and many others.
- The Actors Studio now has a master of fine arts degree program at the New School for Drama in New York. The three-year program was created by studio members James Lipton, Paul Newman, Ellen Burstyn, Arthur Penn, Norman Mailer, Carlin Glynn, Lee Grant, and Peter Masterson.
- Visit <http://www.theactorsstudio.org> for more information about The Actors Studio.

## FOR MORE INFO



The following is a professional union for actors in theater and "live" industrial productions:

### **Actors' Equity Association**

165 West 46th Street  
New York, NY 10036-2500  
212-869-8530  
<http://www.actorsequity.org>

This union represents television and radio performers, including actors, announcers, dancers, disc jockeys, newsmen, singers, specialty acts, sportscasters, and stuntpersons.

### **American Federation of Television and Radio Artists**

260 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016-2401  
212-532-0800  
<http://www.aftra.com>

For answers to a number of frequently asked questions concerning drama education, visit the NAST Web site.

### **National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST)**

11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21  
Reston, VA 20190-5248  
703-437-0700  
[info@arts-accredit.org](mailto:info@arts-accredit.org)  
<http://nast.arts-accredit.org>

This union represents film and television performers. It has general information on actors, directors, and producers.

### **Screen Actors Guild**

5757 Wilshire Boulevard, 7th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90036-3600  
323-954-1600  
<http://www.sag.com>

companies has also increased. Cable television programming continues to add new acting opportunities, but there always will be many more actors than there are roles to play. Many actors also work as secretaries, waiters, taxi drivers, or in other jobs to earn extra income.

# Animators



## What Animators Do

Animators design the cartoons you see at the movies, on television, and on the Internet. They also create the digital effects for many films and commercials. Making a big animated film, such as *Up*, *Finding Nemo*, or *WALL-E* requires a team of many creative people. Each animator on the team works on one small part of the film. On a small production, animators may be involved in many different parts of the project's development.

An animated film begins with a script. *Screenwriters* plan the story line, or plot, and write it with dialogue and narration. *Designers* read the script and decide how the film should look—should it be set in the future, the past, or in today's times. Should it be funny or serious or a combination of both? They then draw some of the characters and backgrounds. These designs are then passed on to a *storyboard artist* who illustrates the whole film in a series of frames, similar to a very long comic strip. Based on this storyboard, an artist can then create a detailed layout.

In the past, cell animation was the most common form of animation. It is still used today by some animators. *Cell animators* examine the script, the storyboard, and the layout, and begin to prepare the finished artwork frame by frame, or cell by cell, on a combination of paper and transparent plastic sheets. Some animators create the “key” drawings. These are the drawings that capture the characters' main expressions (smiling,