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Special Effects

A Think about a film you really liked. What impressed you most about it? Was it the story or the actors? Perhaps it was the amazing spaceships, the talking animals or the exploding buildings. Of course, all these exciting things are not real. They are called "special effects" and they are part of the magic of the cinema.

B The first special effect was created by accident. At the end of the 19th century, a French filmmaker was filming a man walking in the street. Suddenly, the camera got stuck and stopped filming for a few seconds. When the camera started working again, a woman was walking past. When the filmmaker watched the film later, it looked as if the man had become a woman!

C Nowadays special effects are used in almost every film. They are quite complex and they are created using advanced technology. For example, the

huge dinosaurs that appeared in *Jurassic Park* were actually no bigger than a dog and moved electronically. Electronic models were also used in *ET, The Extra-Terrestrial*.

D Computers are used to create special effects. In *Forrest Gump*, for example, Forrest meets President Kennedy, who has been dead since 1963. Tom Hanks, who played the role of Forrest, first acted out the scene in front of a blue screen, and then the computer linked that scene with a scene from an old film with the President.

E What will special effects be like in the 21st century? They'll certainly be more impressive than they were in the past. Computer and cinema experts say that even the main characters will be created by computers, so actors will no longer be needed. But can you imagine a world without film stars?

