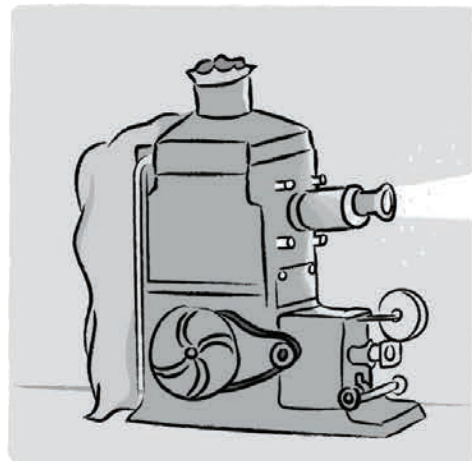


If you love movies with CGI like big explosions, fantastic settings like Hogwarts Castle, or jaw-dropping characters like The Hulk, then you have Georges Méliès to thank. Called the Father of Special Effects, Méliès was the first to experiment with many incredible techniques.

You can say it was fate that brought Méliès to the Lumière brothers' premiere of their cinematograph. Méliès was so enchanted that he asked the Lumière brothers if he could buy their machine. Alas, the brothers said no, so Méliès made his very own camera. He was a trained magician and experimented with filming in brand-new ways. Just a few years later, in 1902, he released his most famous movie, *A Trip to the Moon*.



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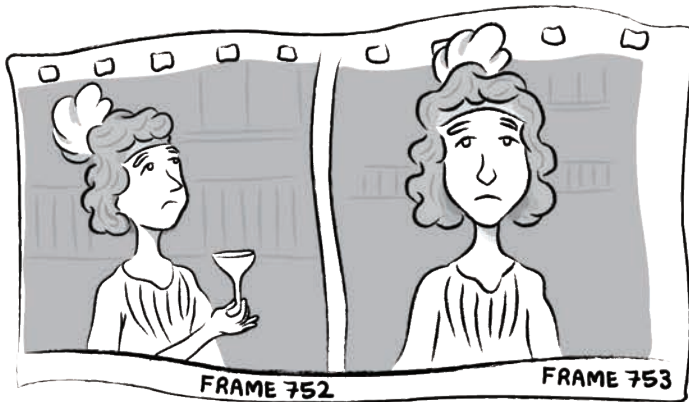
Méliès soon earned the title "the cinemagician" and went on to make a whopping 500 films! Movies and moviegoers will remain forever in his debt for his innovative work.

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**Dissolve:** While we may not think of this as a special effect today, the dissolve was a groundbreaking innovation. The dissolve is simply a transition effect where one scene slowly fades out and another scene fades in to replace it. What's cool is that the two images are briefly one on top of another. This is still a very common technique—you've probably seen it hundreds of times in movies and TV shows!

**Double exposure:** To get spooky-cool effects like Méliès talking with his four bodiless heads, Georges first filmed his actors against a black background, then rewound the film and used it again to shoot so that the images are superimposed on one another.

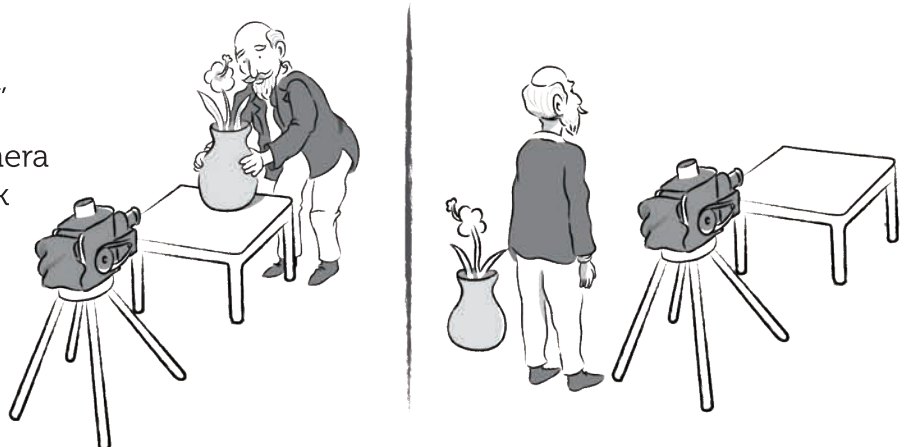


**Jump cut:** Méliès discovered this editing technique by accident! He didn't know that his camera had stopped and then started up again while filming, so things in the film look like they "jumped." Nowadays, filmmakers do this on purpose to show in an obvious way that time has passed.

**Split screen:** With this neat trick Méliès was able to double himself on film with his two selves talking to each other! He did this by first covering up half the lens for one shot, then rewinding the film and using it again to shoot, this time covering up the other half of the lens. He positioned himself to appear in both shots so it looks like there are two of him!



**Stop-trick:** To achieve this special effect during filming, Méliès turned off the camera, moved objects or people around, then turned the camera back on again, making it look like things have magically appeared and disappeared.



**To Review!**

Why was Méliès called a "cinemagician"? What do you think this word means?

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Think about when you've seen one of the special effects above used in a movie. Describe it and how it made the movie better (or didn't!).

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Watch *A Trip to the Moon* (<https://archive.org/details/Levoyagedanslalune>). Describe any special effects Méliès uses.

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**Bonus:** Watch the 2011 movie *Hugo* with a grown-up or a group of your friends. Afterwards, talk about anything you learned about Georges Méliès.

