

Timeline: The History of Photography

Directions: Learn the history of photography in a hands-on way! Read the history of photography below. Then cut out the events on the next page and paste them into the timeline to create a chronological history of photography.



Hint: Match the squares to the spaces on the timeline to put the events in order.

More than 1,000 years ago, people tried to capture images using the pinhole camera and the camera obscura. These inventions helped people understand how light behaved in different situations, but they could not permanently put a picture onto a physical object. In 1694, a philosopher named Wilhelm Homberg discovered that light darkened certain chemicals. This discovery helped others begin creating photographs.






In 1826, the first photograph was taken by French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. He used a polished metal plate and an oil called bitumen, which reacts to light. Photographic technology then advanced quickly, and ways of taking and developing pictures became cheaper and easier. Photography studios began to pop up in urban areas, and “photographer” became a real profession.

In 1900, George Eastman invented the Brownie camera, a small, portable camera that was easy to use. Before its invention, photography was done by professionals. Now, anyone could capture a moment with a photograph.

Though color photography was invented in the late 1800s, color film didn't take off until the 1950s. The digital camera was invented in 1975, and digital cameras became available on the market in 1990. Today, more digital cameras are sold than traditional film cameras. Technology surrounding photography continues to develop, even allowing people to use their phones to take pictures.

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1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 



People begin opening photography studios.

The first photograph is taken by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce.

George Eastman produces the Brownie.

People experiment with using light to make images but don't have a way of preserving it.

Digital cameras and alternative forms of photography are most popular.