

Old Hollywood

1930s

1929-1941 The Great Depression was a severe worldwide recession.

1940s

1929: Stock market crash.

1950s

1933: Nearly half the banks in the US had failed, unemployment 33%. No social welfare system.

Many smaller studios went bust, which left the market open for large studios to establish their joint control.

Unaffiliated movie theatres had to bargain with the studios: **block booking, blind bidding.**

Studios gave the audience what they want: **Escapism, Entertainment, Glamour.**



The introduction of **sound**: 'Jazz Singer' (1927). This was expensive to equip theatres; drove many out of business.



The first film in **colour** was Becky Sharp in 1935.

In 1938 an antitrust lawsuit was filed by a number of unaffiliated theatre chains.

In 1948, struggling independent movie producers and exhibitors finally triumphed in their battle against the big studios' monopolistic behaviour.



The studios were ordered to give up their theatres, opening the market to smaller producers.

Paramount studios were the 1st to comply, selling off their theatres, that is why it is called the **Paramount decree.**

This, coupled with the **advent of television** in the 1950s, seriously compromised the studio system's power and profits.

STUDIO SYSTEM:

The studios owned the lots and the theatres.

The Big 5:



Vertical Integration: describes **ownership and control.**

Hollywood controlled the flow of product through the entire market. They controlled production, distribution, and exhibition.

Oligopoly: 'a market or industry is dominated by a small number of sellers'.

'**Assembly line**' films. **Entertainment factory:** each studio had its own 'style' this included stars.

7 Year Contract:

Actors were on the '7 Year Contract'.

They were attached to a studio and not allowed to work outside of that contract (with the exception of "special one off deals").



Norma Jean Baker - Marilyn Monroe

Actors were TOLD their roles, their image was owned by the studio. They had no say at all. The studio controlled their image. They were typecast.

The Little 3:



Not vertically integrated.

Mainly, they produced films, but did not have the ability to distribute them, they had to sell or lease their films to cinemas that were owned by the big 5.

The Motion Picture Production Code / Hays Code:

A set of industry censorship guidelines from 1930 to 1968.

It is also popularly known as the Hays Code, after its creator, Will H. Hays.

It was abandoned in 1968.

1. No picture shall be produced that will **lower the moral standards of those who see it.** Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.
2. **Correct standards of life,** subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall **sympathy be created for its violation.**

STUDIO SYSTEM = OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Q: How is authority, ownership and control represented in the film?

Q: Was your film made in the beginning, middle or end of the 'Golden Age' era?

HAYS CODE

NO: Adultery, ridicule of religion, nudity or 'scenes of passion', 'The methods of crime could not be shown...' murder scenes, drink or drugs, homosexuality.

Q: How did the director work around these **restrictions**? How far did they 'bend the rules'?