***Inception*** is a 2010 [science fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction_film) [action film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_film) written and directed by [Christopher Nolan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Nolan), who also produced it with [Emma Thomas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Thomas), his wife. The film stars [Leonardo DiCaprio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_DiCaprio) as a professional thief who steals information by infiltrating the [subconscious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subconscious) of his targets. He is offered a chance to have his criminal history erased as payment for the implantation of another person's idea into a target's subconscious. The [ensemble cast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ensemble_cast) includes [Ken Watanabe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Watanabe), [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Gordon-Levitt), [Marion Cotillard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Cotillard), [Elliot Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elliot_Page),[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inception#cite_note-Elliot-1) [Tom Hardy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Hardy), [Cillian Murphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cillian_Murphy), [Tom Berenger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Berenger), [Dileep Rao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dileep_Rao), and [Michael Caine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Caine).

After the 2002 completion of [*Insomnia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insomnia_(2002_film)), Nolan presented to [Warner Bros.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.) a written 80-page [treatment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_treatment) for a [horror film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror_film) envisioning "dream stealers," based on [lucid dreaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucid_dreaming).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inception#cite_note-Hiscock-9) Deciding he needed more experience before tackling a production of this magnitude and complexity, Nolan shelved the project and instead worked on 2005's [*Batman Begins*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batman_Begins), 2006's [*The Prestige*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prestige_(film)), and 2008's [*The Dark Knight*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Knight).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inception#cite_note-Itzkoff-10) The treatment was revised over six months and was purchased by Warner in February 2009. *Inception* was filmed in six countries, beginning in Tokyo on June 19 and ending in Canada on November 22. Its official budget was $160 million, split between [Warner Bros.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.) and [Legendary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legendary_Pictures). Nolan's reputation and success with *The Dark Knight* helped secure the film's US$100 million in advertising expenditure.

*Inception*'s premiere was held in [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) on July 8, 2010; it was released in both conventional and [IMAX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IMAX) theaters beginning on July 16, 2010. *Inception* grossed over $837 million worldwide, becoming the [fourth-highest-grossing film of 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_in_film#Highest-grossing_films). Considered one of the best films of the 2010s, *Inception* won four [Oscars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Awards) ([Best Cinematography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Cinematography), [Best Sound Editing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Sound_Editing), [Best Sound Mixing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Sound), [Best Visual Effects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Visual_Effects)) and was nominated for four more ([Best Picture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Picture), [Best Original Screenplay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Original_Screenplay), [Best Art Direction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Production_Design), [Best Original Score](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Original_Score)) at the [83rd Academy Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/83rd_Academy_Awards).

**Plot**

Dom Cobb and Arthur are "extractors" who perform [corporate espionage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_espionage) using experimental dream-sharing technology to infiltrate their targets' [subconscious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconscious_mind) and extract information. Their latest target, Saito, is impressed with Cobb's ability to [layer multiple dreams within each other](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_awakening). He offers to hire Cobb for the ostensibly impossible job of implanting an idea into a person's subconscious; performing "inception" on Robert Fischer, the son of Saito's competitor Maurice Fischer, with the idea to dissolve his father's company. In return, Saito promises to clear Cobb's criminal status, allowing him to return home to his children.

Cobb accepts the offer and assembles his team: a forger named Eames, a chemist named Yusuf, and a college student named Ariadne. Ariadne is tasked with designing the dream's architecture, something Cobb himself cannot do for fear of being sabotaged by his mind's projection of his late wife, Mal. Maurice Fischer dies, and the team sedates Robert Fischer into a three-layer shared dream on an airplane to America bought by Saito. Time on each layer runs slower than the layer above, with one member staying behind on each to perform a music-synchronized "[kick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypnic_jerk)" (using the French song "[Non, je ne regrette rien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non,_je_ne_regrette_rien#In_popular_culture)") to awaken dreamers on all three levels simultaneously.

The team abducts Robert in a city on the first level, but his trained subconscious projections attack them. After Saito is wounded, Cobb reveals that while dying in the dream would usually awaken dreamers, Yusuf's sedatives will instead send them into "[Limbo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limbo#Cultural_references)": a world of infinite subconscious. Eames impersonates Robert's godfather, Peter Browning, to introduce the idea of an alternate will to dissolve the company.

Cobb tells Ariadne that he and Mal entered Limbo while experimenting with dream-sharing, experiencing fifty years in one night due to the time dilation with reality. After waking up, Mal still believed she was dreaming. Attempting to "wake up," she committed suicide and framed Cobb for her murder to force him to do the same. Cobb fled the U.S., leaving his children behind.

Yusuf drives the team around the first level as they are sedated into the second level, a hotel dreamed by Arthur. Cobb persuades Robert that Browning has kidnapped him to stop the dissolution and that Cobb is a defensive projection, leading Robert to another third level deeper as part of a ruse to enter Robert's subconscious.

In the third level, the team infiltrates an alpine fortress with a projection of Maurice inside, where the inception itself can be performed. However, Yusuf performs his kick too soon by driving off a bridge, forcing Arthur and Eames to improvise a new set of kicks synchronized with them hitting the water by rigging an elevator and the fortress, respectively, with explosives. Mal then appears and kills Robert before he can be subjected to the inception, and he and Saito are lost in Limbo, forcing Cobb and Ariadne to rescue them in time for Robert's inception and Eames's kick. Cobb reveals that during their time in Limbo, Mal refused to return to reality; Cobb had to convince her it was only a dream, accidentally incepting in her the belief that the real world was still a dream. Cobb makes peace with his part in Mal's death. Ariadne kills Mal's projection and wakes Robert up with a kick.

Revived into the third level, he discovers the planted idea: his dying father telling him to create something for himself. While Cobb searches for Saito in Limbo, the others ride the synced kicks back to reality. Cobb finds an aged Saito and reminds him of their agreement. The dreamers all awaken on the plane, and Saito makes a phone call. Arriving in [Los Angeles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles_International_Airport), Cobb passes the immigration checkpoint, and his father-in-law accompanies him to his home. Cobb uses Mal's "totem" – a [top](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinning_top) that spins indefinitely in a dream – to test if he is indeed in the real world, but he chooses not to observe the result and instead joins his children.

Cast:

* [Leonardo DiCaprio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_DiCaprio) as Dom Cobb, a professional thief who specializes in [conning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Con_artist) secrets from his victims by infiltrating their dreams.
* [Ken Watanabe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Watanabe) as Saito, a Japanese businessman who employs Cobb for the team's mission
* [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Gordon-Levitt) as Arthur, Cobb's partner who manages and researches the missions.
* [Marion Cotillard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Cotillard) as Mal, Cobb's deceased wife. She is a manifestation of Cobb's guilt about the real cause of Mal's suicide. He is unable to control these projections of her, challenging his abilities as an extractor.
* [Elliot Page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elliot_Page) as Ariadne, a [graduate student](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graduate_student) of architecture who is recruited to construct the various dreamscapes, which are described as mazes
* [Tom Hardy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Hardy) as Eames, a sharp-tongued associate of Cobb. He is referred to as a [fence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fence_(criminal)) but his specialty is forgery, more accurately identity theft. Eames uses his ability to [impersonate others](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impersonator) inside the dream world in order to manipulate Fischer.
* [Cillian Murphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cillian_Murphy) as Robert Fischer, the heir to a business empire and the team's target.
* [Tom Berenger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Berenger) as Peter Browning, Robert Fischer's [godfather](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godparent) and fellow executive at the Fischers' company.
* [Michael Caine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Caine) as Stephen Miles, Cobb's mentor and father-in-law, and Ariadne's college professor who recommends her to the team.
* [Dileep Rao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dileep_Rao) as Yusuf. Rao describes Yusuf as "an avant-garde pharmacologist, who is a resource for people, like Cobb, who want to do this work unsupervised, unregistered and unapproved of by anyone".
* [Lukas Haas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lukas_Haas) as Nash, an architect in Cobb's employment who betrays the team and is later replaced by Ariadne.
* [Talulah Riley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talulah_Riley) as a woman, credited as "Blonde", whom Eames disguises himself as in a dream. Riley liked the role, despite it being minimal: "I get to wear a nice dress, pick up men in bars, and shove them in elevators. It was good to do something adultish. Usually I play 15-year-old English schoolgirls."
* [Pete Postlethwaite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pete_Postlethwaite) as Maurice Fischer, Robert Fischer's father and the dying founder of a business empire.