## What is ISO

The light sensitivity of a camera is a measured as ISO. The higher the ISO, the more sensitive the camera is to light. The upside to a high ISO is that you can get images in lower light situations or you can use the higher ISO settings to force a higher shutter speed to help freeze action. The down side to using a high ISO is that it will produce a grainer image than a lower ISO will.

Film was originally rated by ASA which stands for American Standards Association. ASA was put in place in order to standardize the way film was exposed. The ratings started at 25 ASA and went up for there. The scale went 25, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, each successive number indicating a doubling of the sensitivity of the film. In Europe, there was a similar rating system. Somewhere in the mid 70's, the American Standards Association changed their name to the International Standards Association to incorporate world wide standardization and the ISO rating was born. As far as the rating system for film sensitivity went, nothing else changed, only the name. From that point on, film, yes film, was rated by the ISO system (not too hard to do, just change the writing on the box from ASA to ISO). When digital cameras were being developed, the same ISO measurement of light sensitivity was adopted.

Early digital cameras were not very light sensitive and a light sensitivity of 200 ISO was considered high. Now with new processors and sensors, sensitivities of 1600 are common and even 3200 ISO is not that uncommon.
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