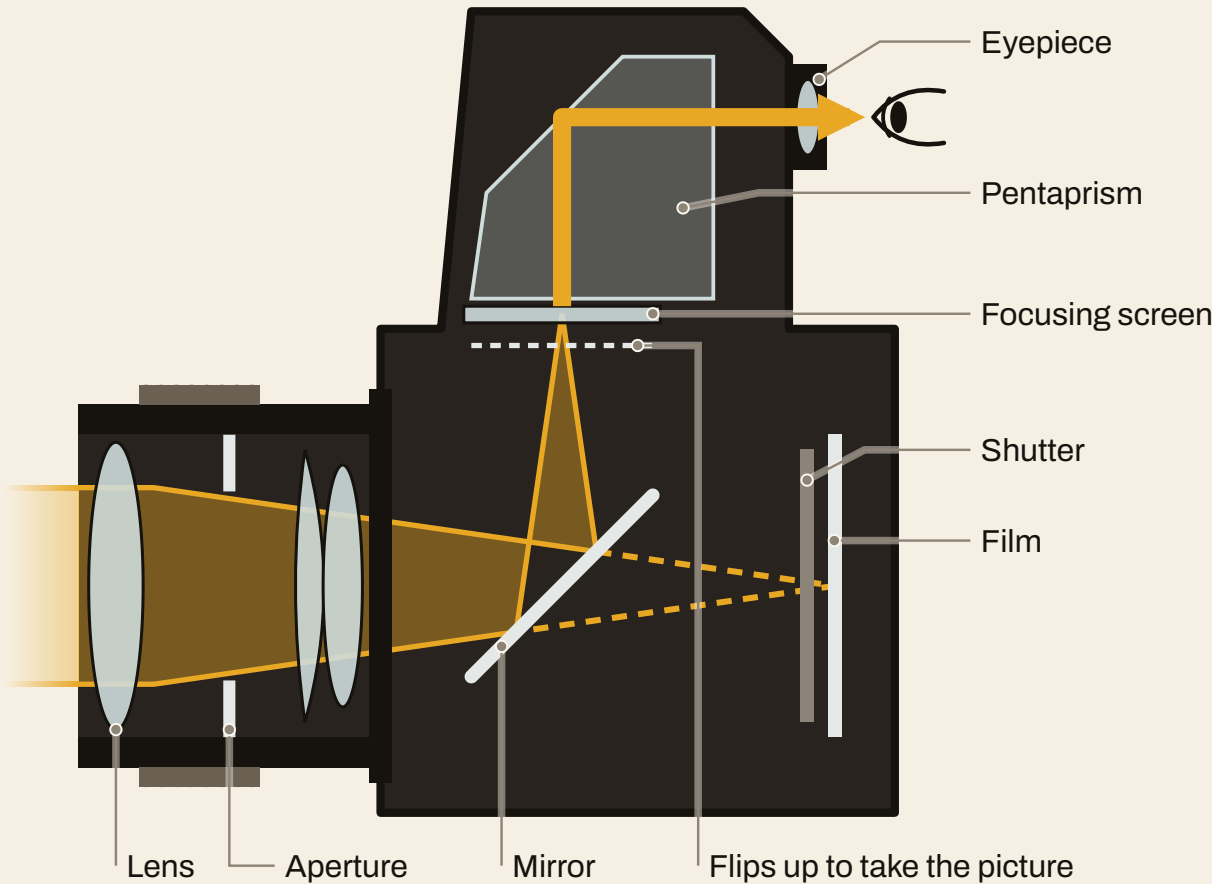


Inside a camera

Every camera is a dark box. A lens bends light to a point, and film or a sensor records it. The light then travels to your eye.

Light from the scene (darker inside the camera) Light to your eye Light when the shutter fires

Single-lens reflex (SLR)



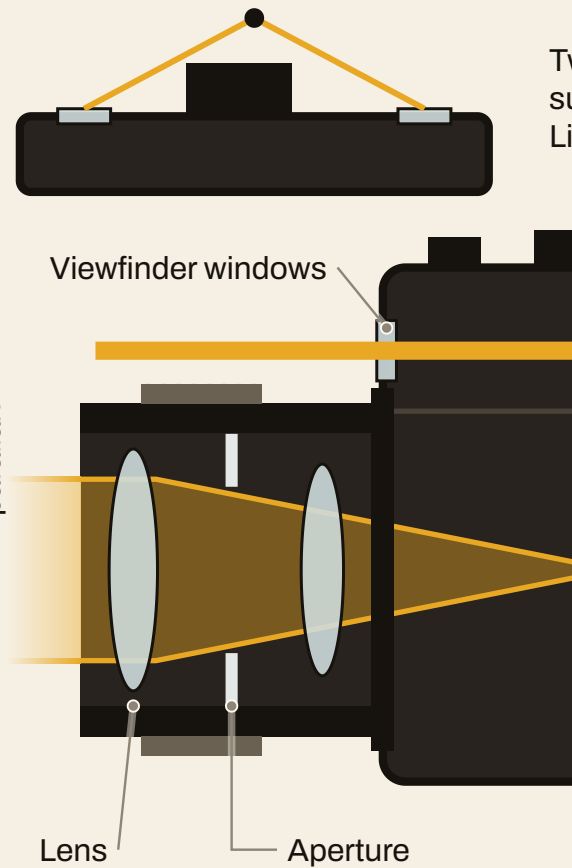
You look through: the lens itself, via a mirror and a prism.

The picture lands on: film.

Good to know: the mirror flips up as you shoot, so the view blinks dark.

Rangefinder

SEEN FROM ABOVE

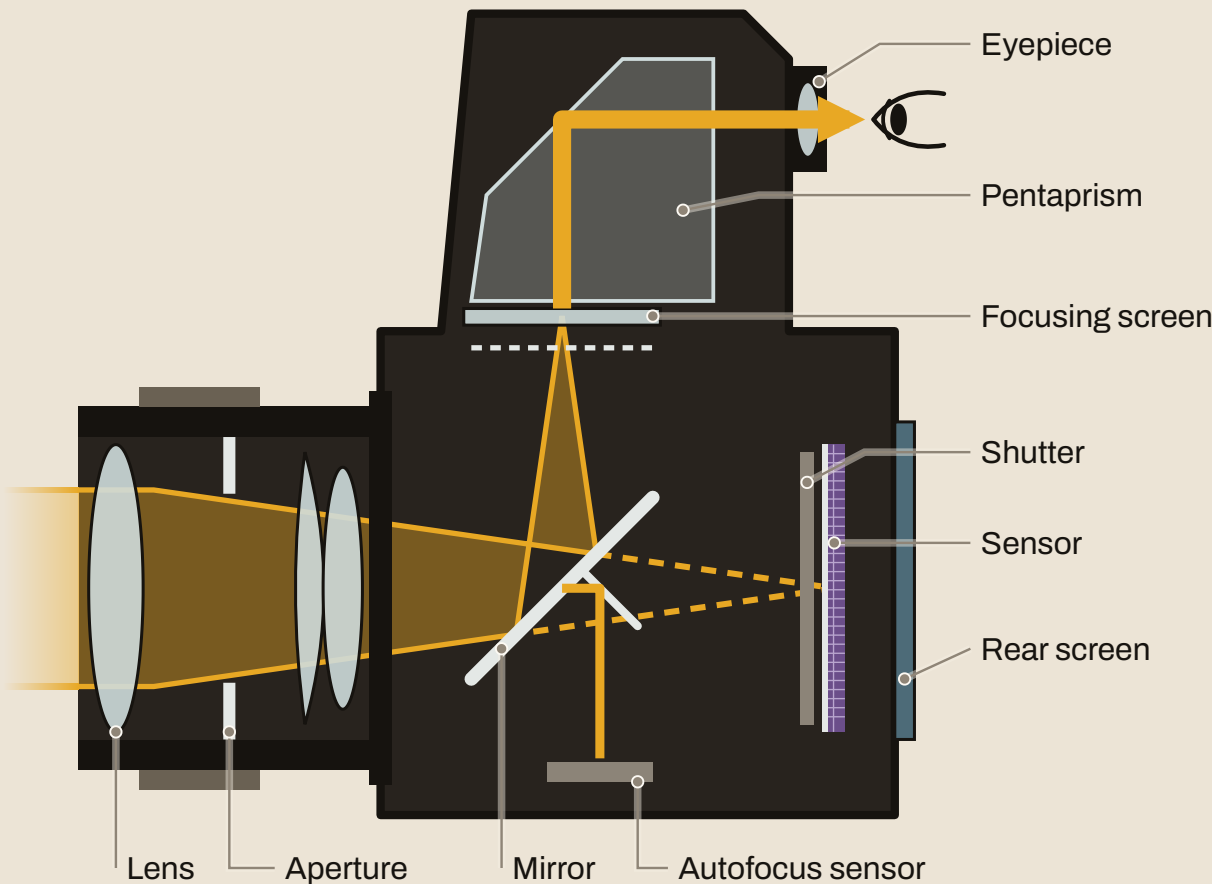


You look through: a separate window.

The picture lands on: film.

Good to know: close up, the lens sees the scene from a slightly different angle.

Digital SLR (DSLR)

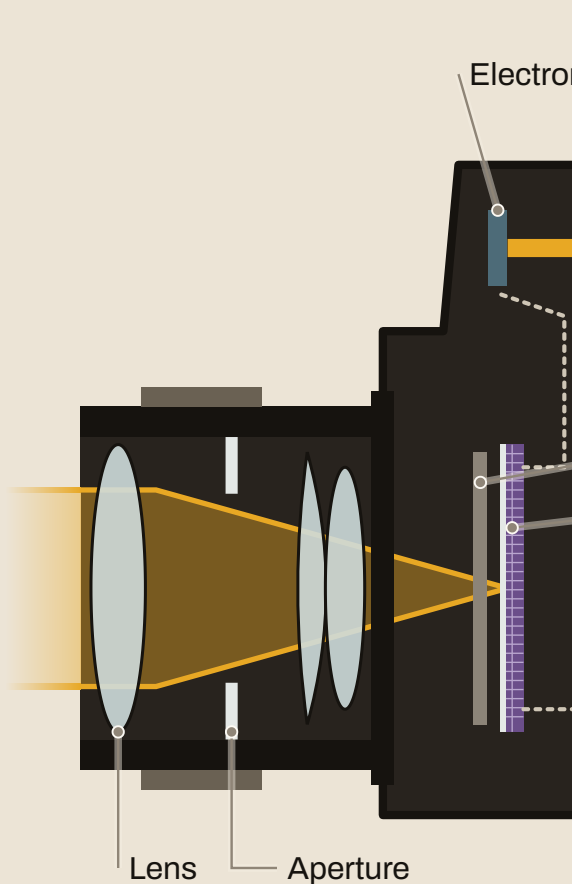


You look through: the lens, via a mirror, just like a film SLR.

The picture lands on: a sensor.

Good to know: the viewfinder shows the real scene through glass, using no battery.

Mirrorless



You look through: a tiny screen showing the scene.

The picture lands on: a sensor.

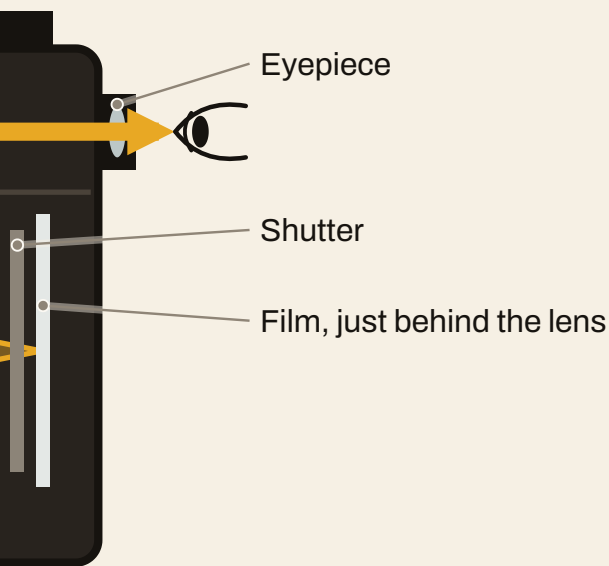
Good to know: you see the exposure as it is, without a lag.



The difference is how you see the picture first.

..... Electronic signal

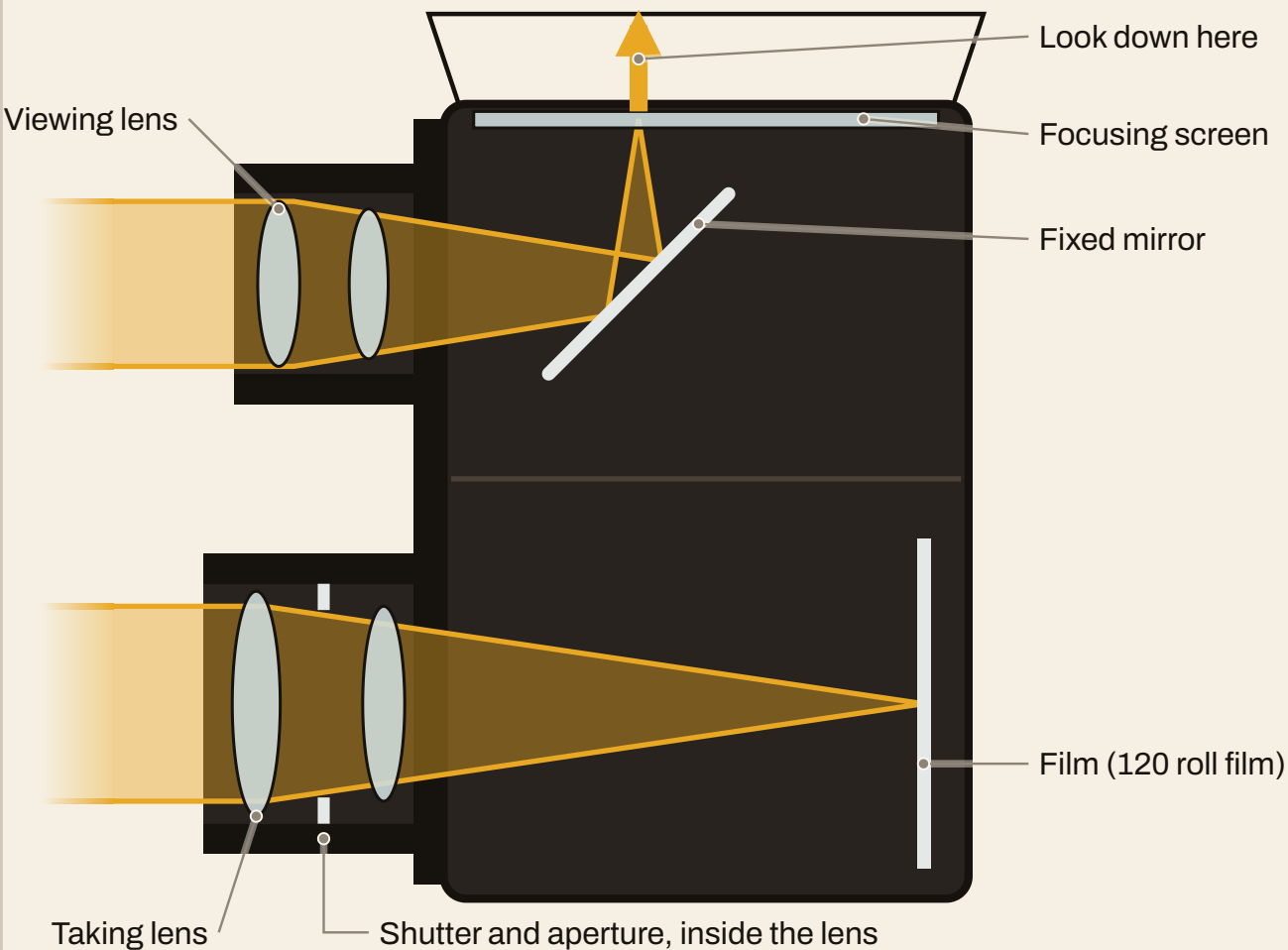
Two windows, a little apart, see the subject from slightly different angles. Line up the double image to focus.



above the lens.

is a little lower than you do (parallax).

Twin-lens reflex (TLR)

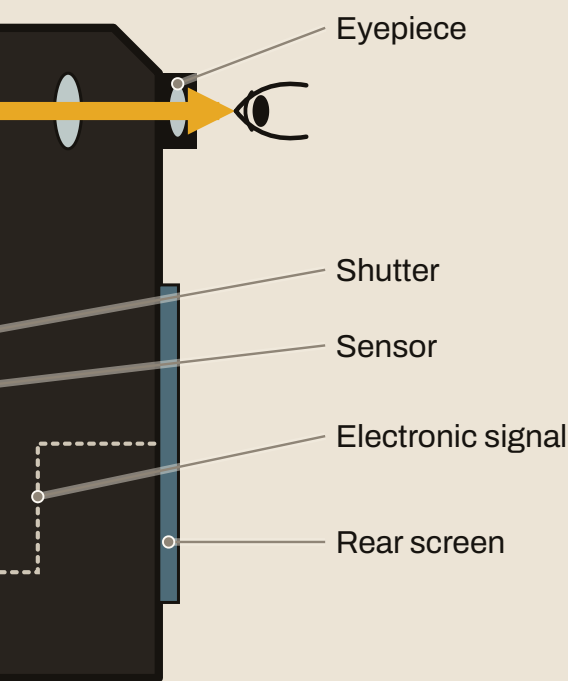


You look through: the top lens, down onto a screen.

The picture lands on: film, through the bottom lens.

Good to know: the screen shows the scene flipped left to right.

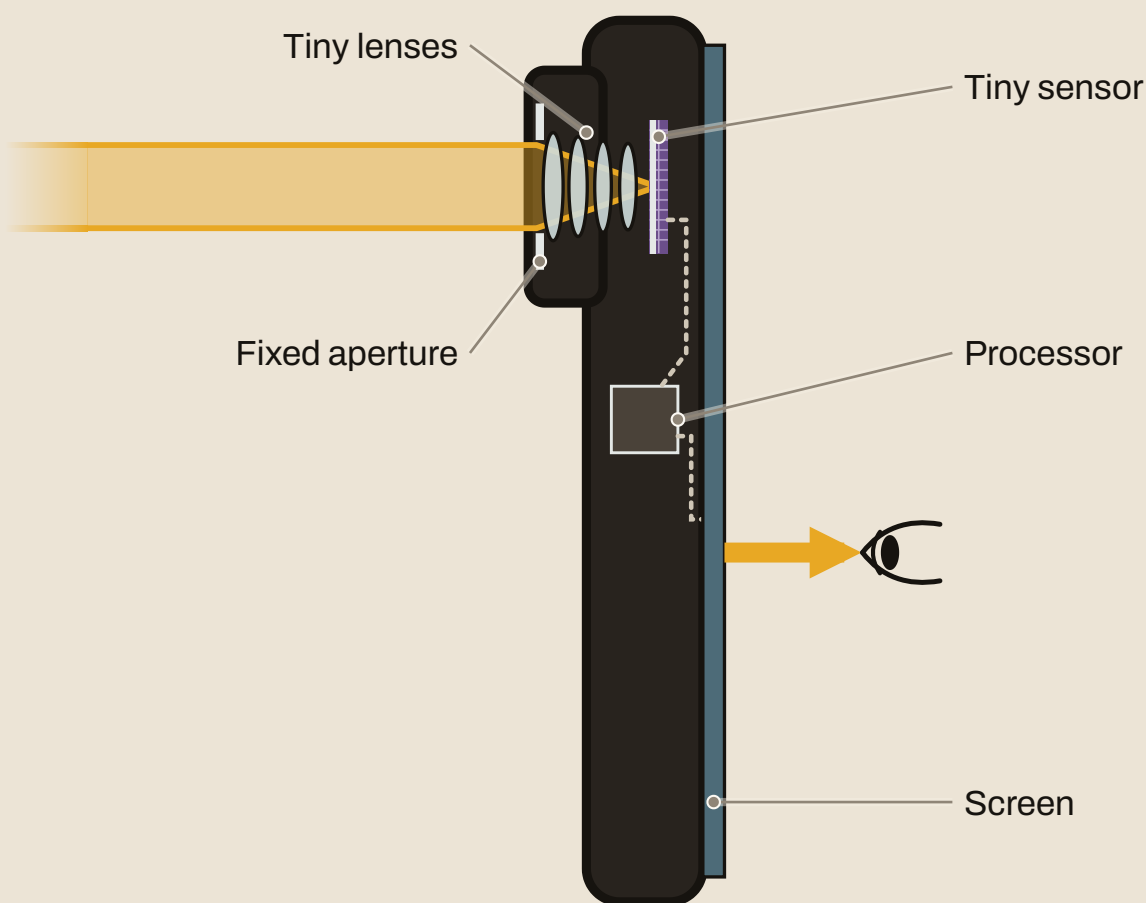
Electronic viewfinder: a tiny screen



ing what the sensor sees.

before you shoot; the screens need power.

Phone



You look through: the main screen, live from the sensor.

The picture lands on: a tiny sensor.

Good to know: most phone lenses have a fixed aperture.