

Buffy the Vampire Slayer

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Created by	Joss Whedon Sarah Michelle Gellar Nicholas Brendon Alyson Hannigan Charisma Carpenter Anthony Stewart Head
Starring	David Boreanaz Seth Green James Marsters Marc Blucas Emma Caulfield Michelle Trachtenberg Amber Benson
Country of origin	United States
No. of episodes	144
Production	
Running time	42 minutes
Original release	
Network	The WB (1997–2001) UPN (2001–2003)
Release	March 10, 1997 – May 20, 2003

Buffy the Vampire Slayer is an [American television series](#). It is about a girl who fought [vampires](#) and other [monsters](#). It was written by [Joss Whedon](#). He based it on the script that he wrote for a [movie](#) with the [same title](#). The movie came out in 1992 and stars [Kristy Swanson](#), [Luke Perry](#), [Donald Sutherland](#), and [Paul Reubens](#). The television series has many [fans](#). It was originally shown from March 10, 1997 until May 20, 2003.

The main [idea](#) of the series is the opposite of what is the normal [Hollywood](#) idea about [horror](#). In [traditional Hollywood](#) horror stories, the young blonde girl is always the weakest character. She is always the one that needs to be saved. She is often the first one to [die](#). In *Buffy*, Whedon changed that. He changed that girl into the person with all the power. He changed her into the [hero](#). Many of the monsters and storylines on the series are [symbols](#) of real-life problems faced by [teenagers](#). As Whedon has said, "Highschool is a horror movie."^[1]

Buffy the Vampire Slayer was first shown on March 10, 1997 on [the WB network](#). It was a very important part of the [Warner Bros. television network](#) in its early years.^[2] After five seasons, the series left the WB and went to the United Paramount Network ([UPN](#)) for its last two seasons. In the [United Kingdom](#), the entire series was shown on [Sky One](#) and [BBC2](#). The BBC

showed the series at two different times. A [family-friendly version](#) with [violence](#) and bad [language](#) cut out was shown early in the evening and an unedited version was shown later at night.^[3] Sky One did something similar. It showed an edited version in the afternoon and the uncut version in [prime time](#). From the fourth season onwards, the BBC showed the series in [anamorphic 16:9 widescreen](#) format, but Whedon said that *Buffy* was never supposed to be watched this way.^[4]

The Slayer

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The Slayer or Chosen One is a girl who [kills](#) vampires. She had [superhuman strength](#) and [speed](#). She also [heals](#) very fast. It is her [destiny](#) to fight [evil demons](#), mainly vampires. When the Slayer [dies](#), a new girl is chosen. That girl gets all of the powers of the Slayer. Potentials (girls who might be chosen - "[potential](#) slayers") are trained from an early age by a "[Watcher](#)". In this series, Buffy Summers, Kendra Young, and Faith Lehane were the main slayers.

Plot

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The main [character](#) was [Buffy Summers](#). She was played by [Sarah Michelle Gellar](#). Buffy was an ordinary [high school student](#) in the [fictional](#) city of Sunnydale, [California](#), except for being a "[vampire](#) slayer." Buffy's Watcher was a [British](#) man named Giles. With the help of Giles and her friends, Xander and Willow, Buffy fought a different monster every episode. (aside from the main villains of each season).

Buffy and her friends went to [school](#) at Sunnydale [High School](#). They appear normal to their [families](#) while killing vampires and monsters at night.

Not all vampires were evil in the series. One vampire was named [Angel](#). He was given his [soul](#) back by a [gypsy curse](#). The curse would make him lose his [soul](#) and become evil again if he became really happy. He and Buffy fell in [love](#). The curse took his soul away when they had [sexual intercourse](#) for the first time. This caused Angel to become evil (losing his soul). When Angel got back his soul, he knew that he and Buffy could not be together because he might lose it again. Angel left Sunnydale and went to [Los Angeles](#). The television series [Angel](#) tells the story of what happened to him after he left.

Notable episodes

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- "**Earshot**" (Season 3): This episode was not shown when it was first supposed to. The episode dealt with a school violence. It was first scheduled to be shown just after the [shootings at Columbine](#) happened.

Because of this, they did not show it in the [United States](#) until the summer after the season had ended.

- **"Hush"**(Season 4): Nearly all of the episode was done with no talking at all. For 29 minutes, the characters could not say anything. Joss Whedon created this episode after hearing that the most important part of the series was the [dialogue](#). The episode was nominated for an [Emmy Award](#).
- **"The Body"** (Season 5): This episode had no [musical soundtrack](#) at all. The episode was about the death of Buffy's mother, Joyce Summers.
- **"Once More, With Feeling"**(Season 6): The entire episode was done as a [musical](#). Every scene included the characters singing. They usually were also dancing. The episode was nominated for an Emmy Award.

Characters

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Major characters

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Buffy Summers

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Buffy Anne Summers (played by [Sarah Michelle Gellar](#)) is "the Slayer," one in a long line of young women chosen to fight evil. She is blonde and beautiful and she is a normal cheerleading girl at the start of the movie. Being the Slayer gave her increased strength, endurance, agility and healing. She also had greater intuition, and some [ability](#) of [clairvoyance](#), usually in the form of [dreams](#) that tell the [future](#). She was born January 19, 1981 and grew up in [Los Angeles, California](#). Buffy died two times in the normal series. There have also been [magical](#) times that she died in, but these periods of time were stopped and do not affect normal times. The first time she died, she [drowned](#) and was brought back to life with [CPR](#). The second time, magic was used to bring her back to life.

Rupert Giles

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Rupert "Ripper" Giles (played by [Anthony Stewart Head](#)) is Buffy's Watcher. He was an [Englishman](#). He was Buffy's second Watcher. Her first watcher was killed in the movie version of the story but this fact is not talked about in the series. Unlike most slayers, it was not known that Buffy was a potential slayer at an early age. When she was chosen, the Watcher's council sent a watcher to help her. When he died, the Council sent Giles to Sunnydale to become her watcher. In the past, Giles used magic and had a lot of [knowledge](#) about demons and vampires.

Willow Rosenberg

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Willow Rosenberg (played by [Alyson Hannigan](#)) was Buffy's [schoolmate](#) and best friend. She was very smart and good with [computers](#). During the series, she learned more and more about magic. She found out that she is very good at magic and became a powerful [witch](#). While in highschool, she had a boyfriend named Oz, who was a guitarist in a local band called Dingoes Ate My Baby, and he was also a werewolf. After Oz left in college, Willow fell in love with another witch, Tara Maclay. When Tara was killed, Willow tried to destroy the world, but Xander stopped her. Later on, at the end of season seven, she developed a relationship with a potential slayer named Kennedy.

Xander Harris

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Alexander Lavelle "Xander" Harris (played by [Nicholas Brendon](#)) was another good friend of Buffy. During season 4, Xander becomes romantically involved with an ex-vengeance demon, Anya (Anyanka), whom he later became engaged to, but left during the wedding in the episode "Hells Bells". It was said many times during the series that Xander was the person in the group who had no special powers at all, but still fought as much as everyone else, and, in season 7 ("Potential") Xander is named the "Seer" because he sees everything that is going on, because he's never actually in the spotlight, just next to it. Xander was often the character the writers used for [comic](#) moments. Xander was a major character in the series and saved the world (from Willow) at the end of Season 6, by telling her he loved her repeatedly, accessing the human love inside of her "evil" persona, created by [Tara Maclay](#)'s death.

Dawn Summers

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Dawn Summers (played by [Michelle Trachtenberg](#)) was a magical energy (The Key) that was turned into a person and Buffy's sister. At first, Dawn had the special ability to open the way to a hell dimension (with her blood). After Buffy's death closed that way, Dawn's only special [abilities](#) was being very good with languages and a very fast learner. She could have made a very good Watcher.

Anya Jenkins

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Anya Christina Emmanuella Jenkins, or Anyanka, or Aud (played by [Emma Caulfield](#)) was an 1100 year old [vengeance](#) demon. She was born with the name Aud somewhere in [Scandinavia](#) during the [9th century](#). She became a vengeance demon after casting a magic spell on her [lover](#), Olaf. The spell

turned him into a [troll](#). Anya spent the next 1100 years as Anyanka. As a vengeance demon, she would use magic to give a [wish](#) to a woman who had been treated wrong by a man. Anyaka lost her powers during a wish she cast for Cordelia Chase. When the wish was ended, Anyanka was trapped in the [human body](#) of 17 year old Anya. Anya and Xander got together after graduation and later were engaged. But Xander left her at the wedding, realising he was not ready to get married, but still loved her. She then got her vengeance powers back from D'Hoffryn (head of vengeance) but later lost them again after she realized how unfulfilling maiming human men was (her human side).

Angel

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Angel (played by [David Boreanaz](#)) was an [Irish](#) vampire first named Liam. He was born in 1727, in Galway, Ireland. After being turned into a vampire in 1753, he spent the next 145 year creating [terror](#) as "Angelus" ([face](#) of an [angel](#)). In 1898, he killed the daughter of [gypsies](#). As [punishment](#), the Gypsies returned Angelus human soul to him. This caused him to have to feel all the pain he had caused. Angel went to the [United States](#) and lived on the streets. He stopped killing people to drink their blood because with a soul he knew it was wrong. He lived a very poor life drinking the blood of [rats](#) until a [messenger](#) from the Powers That Be took him to [California](#) to show him Buffy. He fell in love with her and changed his life so he could help her. Buffy fell in love with Angel but he turned evil after she gave him one true moment of happiness (after they had sex). Then he turned into Angelus and when he was finally changed back (after months, by Willow), Buffy stabbed him in order to once again save the world by closing acathla (against her feelings of love for him).

Cordelia Chase

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Cordelia "Cordy" Chase (played by [Charisma Carpenter](#)) went to Sunnydale High with Buffy. She was a [cheerleader](#) who only thought of herself. She would help Buffy every now and then, but most often was the one that needed help. During her senior year of high school, all the money Cordelia's parents had was taken away by the government because Cordy's dad had not fully paid his family's taxes. Cordy had to get a job at a dress store to pay for a dress for her senior prom.

Although Cordelia started off as a self-involved character, she grew throughout the first three seasons, learning to love others (spawning a relationship with [Xander Harris](#), above). After Season 3 of *Buffy*, Cordelia moves away to L.A. to become an actress. After having little luck, she meets [Angel](#) and they work together in the detective business- [Angel Investigations](#). Cordelia's character grows even further throughout *Angel* as well, and by Season 4/5 of *Angel*, she seems to be a completely different person.

Spike

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Spike, or William the Bloody, (played by [James Marsters](#)) was an [English](#) vampire. He was born in [London](#) around 1853. He was turned into a vampire in 1880 by Drusilla, a pretty vampire created by Angelus. He spent the next 20 years with Angelus, Drusilla and Darla as they killed throughout [Europe](#) and [Asia](#). After Angelus got his soul back and left, Spike and Drusilla continued for 100 years before going to Sunnydale to try and find him. Later, Spike fell in love with Buffy. He fought a demon (initially to get his chip removed) and got his soul back and helped save the world in the last episode ("[Chosen](#)"). He was sent, by the amulet he wore, to Angel. (Stars in the final season of [Angel](#)).

Faith Lehane

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Faith Lehane (played by [Eliza Dushku](#)) was a vampire slayer. Buffy's first death caused Kendra Young to be chosen as the Slayer. When Kendra died, Faith was chosen. Faith is in many ways the opposite of Buffy. While Buffy had family and friends for support, Faith was alone. Faith tried to fight evil, but later chose to be evil instead. In the end, Faith learns from her mistakes and helps Buffy in her fight.

Oz

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Daniel "Oz" Osborne (played by [Seth Green](#)) was a musician and [werewolf](#). He was Willow's first [boyfriend](#). For three nights each [month](#), Oz would change shape. If he was not put into a cage or locked up, he would roam Sunnydale from the time the [sun](#) set until it came up again in the morning. Being a werewolf gave him increased strength, endurance and healing. As a werewolf, his mind was similar to an animal and not a human.

Riley Finn

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Riley Finn was a member of a [secret](#) part of [American military](#). During the day, he was a helper to a [professor](#) at Sunnydale University. At night, he lead a military team that hunted and captured demons. He had increased strength and endurance, but he was not as strong as Buffy. He gave Buffy an ultimatum and at the last minute she decided on him. But when she got to his helicopter they had already taken off and he did not see her. When he comes back in a later episode Buffy finds out that he is married.

Tara Maclay

Tara was a member of the [Wicca](#) group Willow joined in her first year in [college](#). Willow and Tara started as friends. Over time, they became [lovers](#). When Tara is first introduced, she is very shy. Tara has a very obvious [stutter](#) in her first season. Through season five, Tara becomes more confident. Eventually, her family comes back to take Tara home, but she (with Buffy and the gang's help) stands up to them. She became more and more confident until Glory took her sanity. Willow got it back in the season five finale, and Tara was sane again.

In season 6, Willow used dark magic (magic that hurt other people) more and more. Eventually, she used it to make Tara forget a [fight](#) they had had. Tara broke up with Willow. Tara came back when Willow stopped using dark magic. A very short time later, Tara died after being hit by a [bullet](#) meant for Buffy.

Recurring characters

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- **Joyce Summers:** Joyce was Buffy's mother. She died of a [aneurysm](#) shortly after having [surgery](#) to take a [tumor](#) out of her [head](#).
- **Jonathan Levinson:** Jonathan went to school with Buffy. He was often only used for [comic](#) moments. In season 6, he played a larger part as a member of the Trio. He was killed by Andrew Wells in season 7 in an attempt to open the Hellmouth.
- **Harmony Kendall:** Harmony was one of Cordelia's friends. She was turned into a vampire at their [high school graduation](#).
- **Principal Snyder:** Snyder was the high school [principal](#) for a lot of Buffy's time at Sunnydale High. He made Buffy's daily life very hard. He is one of the few people other than the main cast that shows he knows about the weird things in town such as vampires and demons. After Mayor Wilkins turned into a giant demon snake at the graduation, he killed Principal Snyder.
- **Kennedy:** Kennedy was one of the potential slayers. She had a [lesbian relationship](#) with Willow.
- **Principal Robin Wood:** Wood was the son of a Slayer (Nikki Woods). His mother was killed by Spike. He became the principal of Sunnydale High after it was rebuilt. He tried and failed to get [revenge](#) on Spike for killing his mother. He later joined Buffy in her fight and got into a relationship with Faith.
- **Andrew Wells:** Andrew was a [obnoxious](#), possibly [bi-sexual nerdy](#) member of the Trio. He has a [talent](#) for [languages](#) and [summoning](#) demons.
- **Jenny Calendar:** Jenny was the high school [computer](#) teacher. She was also a member of the same [gypsy clan](#) that [cursed](#) Angel. She was in Sunnydale to watch Angel. She had a [romance](#) with Giles. Angelus broke her [neck](#), killing her.

Villains

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- **The Master:** The Master was one of the oldest living vampires. He was the first major villain that Buffy faced in Sunnydale. The Master was the leader of a vampire [cult](#) called the [Order of Aurelius](#). The cult included Darla who The Master turned into a vampire. Buffy killed the Master in season 1.
- **Darla:** Darla was a very old vampire. She was turned into a vampire in 1609. She was a prostitute who was dying of [syphilis](#), when the Master turned her into a vampire. She was the vampire who sired Liam turning him into Angelus (Angel). Darla was killed by Angel in season 1 of *Buffy*. She was later brought back to life on the spin-off *Angel*.
- **Drusilla:** Drusilla is a vampire created by Angelus around 1860. Angelus made her [insane](#) before turning her into a vampire. She has the ability to see the future and [hypnotize](#) people. Drusilla created Spike in 1880. It is not known if Drusilla has been killed or if she still lives.
- **Mayor Richard Wilkins III:** Wilkins was the [mayor](#) of Sunnydale. He first came to the area in the [19th century](#) to search for [gold](#). He is the [founder](#) of Sunnydale. Wilkins made a deal with demons. He created the town so that demons would have a place to feed and the demons said they would turn him into a pure demon. It would take over 100 years to turn into a demon. Wilkins turned into a giant [snake](#) at Buffy's [graduation](#). She killed him by blowing up the school with him inside it. Wilkins was the major villain in season 3.
- **Adam:** Adam was a [cyborg](#). He was made out of parts of [humans](#), demons, and [electronic machines](#). Adam was created in [The Initiative's lab](#) 314. He was the major villain in season 4. Buffy killed Adam by taking his [power source](#) out of his [chest](#).
- **Glorificus:** Glorificus, or Glory, was an [evil goddess](#) from a different [dimension](#). She was trapped in the body of a baby boy named Ben. Many years later, she began to take control of the body. After a while she could take full control and change the body into that of her own form for a short time. Glory was trying to find the key that would let her go back to her own dimension. Buffy stopped her. She beat her very badly and Glory was trapped inside Ben again. Knowing that she would become strong enough to come back one day, Giles killed Ben which also killed Glory. Glory was the main villain of season 5.
- **The First:** The First, or The First Evil, is the creator of evil itself. The First has no body (incorporeal) and can not physically affect things. It can look like anyone who has ever died. This includes dead humans (Buffy's mother Joyce), vampires (Drusilla, Spike), and even Buffy herself. The First had an [army](#) of very very old vampires called [Turok-Han](#) and a cult of humans called [The Bringers](#) that did things for it because it could not do them itself. The First can not be killed. Its army and cult were destroyed in the final episode of the series and its plans were stopped. The First was the main villain in season 7.

Whedon's Trademarks

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Joss Whedon uses several [themes](#) throughout his works. These are often found in the writing done for *Buffy*.

- **Strong female characters:** As a supporter of [feminism](#), Whedon likes to create teenage girls with [superpowers](#). Many of the most powerful characters in the series are female. Buffy and Willow are examples.
- **Homosexuality:** Whedon uses [gay](#) characters both for major parts (Willow and Tara) and for minor parts (Larry Blaisdall and Scott Hope).
- **Witty dialogue:** The dialogue in Joss Whedon's series and movies is [notable](#). It often has [rapid-fire wit](#) and [pop culture references](#). Some are easy to notice others are more difficult.
- **Death:** No one is safe in a story written by Whedon. Major characters can die at any time. Minor characters die more often. In a world with magic, not all deaths are forever though. Buffy herself died at least four times and was brought back to life twice. Tara Maclay, Jenny Calender, Joyce Summers, and [Principal](#) Snyder were all regular characters that died and did not return. Other characters such as Harmony Kendall died and came back as vampires.
- **Relationships:** A good [romantic relationship](#) makes for a bad story. Whedon does not like relationships that have a happy ending. Every relationship in the series ended badly.

Angel and Buffy: Angel loses his soul and turns evil.

Spike and Buffy: Spike later tries to [rape](#) Buffy, but she stops him. At the end of the series, Spike dies to save the world.

Willow and Tara: Tara is shot and killed.

Xander and Anya: They almost got married, but Xander leaves Anya at the [altar](#). They never get back together. Anya dies at the end of the series.

- **Family:** In a Whedon story, family is not who you were born to. Family is who you chose to be with. In *Buffy*, Buffy, Giles, Willow and Xander, as well as the others with them, were more of a family than any of their [biological](#) families.
- **Fatherhood:** Fathers in Whedon's stories are almost always shown badly. Buffy's father left her mother and her. He is rarely talked about or seen in the series. Xander's father is always shown as being [abusive](#). [Father figures](#) replace the [traditional](#) father in the same way Whedon replaced the traditional family. Giles takes the place of the father in *Buffy*. At times, even he is shown badly in the [role](#).

Related pages

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- [Angel \(TV series\)](#)

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4. [↑ "Angel Creator Joss Whedon Sees Evolution of TV Shows on DVD"](#) *Video Store Mag* (August 28, 2003).

Other websites

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