



The Legend of Korra

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The Legend of Korra is an American animated television series that aired on the Nickelodeon television network from 2012 to 2014. It was created by Bryan Konietzko and Michael Dante DiMartino as a sequel to *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, which aired from 2005 to 2008. Animated in a style strongly influenced by anime, the series is set in a fictional universe in which some people can manipulate, or "bend", the elements of water, earth, fire, or air. Only one person, the "Avatar", can bend all four elements, and is responsible for maintaining balance in the world. The series follows Avatar Korra, the reincarnation of Aang from the previous series, as she faces political and spiritual unrest in a modernizing world.

The main characters are voiced by Janet Varney, Seychelle Gabriel, David Faustino, P. J. Byrne, J. K. Simmons and Mindy Sterling, and supporting voice actors include Aubrey Plaza, John Michael Higgins, Lisa Edelstein, Steven Blum, Eva Marie Saint, Henry Rollins, Anne Heche and Zelda Williams. Several people involved in the creation of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, including designer Joaquim Dos Santos, writer Tim Hedrick and composers Jeremy Zuckerman and Benjamin Wynn, returned to work on *The Legend of Korra*. Most animation was done by Studio Mir of South Korea, and some by Studio Pierrot of Japan. *The Legend of Korra* ran for fifty-two episodes, separated into four seasons ("books"). It is to be continued as a comics series.

Like its parent show, *The Legend of Korra* received critical acclaim, drawing favorable comparisons with the HBO series *Game of Thrones* and the work of Hayao Miyazaki. It has been praised for its production values, such as its animation quality, art style, and musical score. The series has been nominated for and won awards from the Annie Awards, a Daytime Emmy Award, and a Gracie Award. The series was also praised for addressing sociopolitical issues such as social unrest and

The Legend of Korra



Genre	<u>Steampunk/Dieselpunk</u>
	<u>Action-Adventure</u>
	<u>Science fantasy</u>
	<u>Comedy-drama</u>
Created by	<u>Michael Dante DiMartino</u>
	<u>Bryan Konietzko</u>
Based on	<i>Avatar: The Last Airbender</i>
	by <u>Michael Dante DiMartino</u>
	<u>Bryan Konietzko</u>
Written by	<u>Michael Dante DiMartino</u>
	<u>Bryan Konietzko</u>
	(Season 1)
	<u>Tim Hedrick</u> (Seasons 2–4)
	<u>Joshua Hamilton</u> (Seasons 2–4)

terrorism, as well as for going beyond the established boundaries of youth entertainment with respect to issues of race, gender, and sexual identity.

In other media, the series has spawned a video game, stuffed animals, and figurines based on some of the characters featured in the show. There have also been 4 artbooks released.

Series overview

The Legend of Korra was initially conceived as a twelve-episode miniseries. Nickelodeon declined the creators' pitch for an *Avatar: The Last Airbender* follow-up animated movie based on what then became the three-part comics *The Promise*, *The Search* and *The Rift*, choosing instead to expand *Korra* to 26 episodes.^[3] The series was expanded further in July 2012 to 52 episodes. These episodes are grouped into four separate seasons ("Books") composed of twelve to fourteen episodes ("Chapters") each, with each season telling a stand-alone story. Beginning with episode 9 of season 3, new episodes were first distributed through the Internet rather than broadcast. *The Legend of Korra* concluded with the fourth season.^[4]

Book	Name	Episodes	Originally aired	
			First aired	Last aired
	<u>1</u> Air	12	April 14, 2012	June 23, 2012
	<u>2</u> Spirits	14	September 13, 2013	November 22, 2013
	<u>3</u> Change	13	June 27, 2014	August 22, 2014
	<u>4</u> Balance	13	October 3, 2014	December 19, 2014

Setting

The Legend of Korra is set in the fictional world of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, 70 years after the events of that series. The world is separated into four nations: the northern and southern Water Tribes, the Earth Kingdom, the Fire Nation, and the Air Nomads. The distinguishing element of the series is "bending", the ability of some people to telekinetically manipulate the classical element associated with their nation (water, earth, fire, or air). Bending is carried out by spiritual and physical exercises, portrayed as similar to Chinese martial arts.

	Katie Mattila (Seasons 3–4)
Directed by	<div>Joaquim Dos Santos (Season 1)</div> <div>Ki Hyun Ryu (Season 1)</div> <div>Colin Heck (Seasons 2–4)</div> <div>Ian Graham (Seasons 2–4)</div> <div>Melchior Zwyer (Seasons 3–4)</div> <div>Michael Dante DiMartino (Remembrances)</div>
Voices of	<i>See below</i>
Composer	Jeremy Zuckerman
Country of origin	United States
Original language	English
No. of seasons	4
No. of episodes	52 (<u>list of episodes</u>)
Production	
Executive producers	<div>Michael Dante DiMartino</div> <div>Bryan Konietzko</div> <div>Joaquim Dos Santos (co-executive)</div>
Producers	<div>Tim Yoon</div> <div>Ki Hyun Ryu (supervising)</div> <div>Lauren Montgomery (supervising)</div>
Running time	23 minutes

Only one person, the "Avatar", can bend all four elements. Cyclically reincarnating among the world's four nations, the Avatar maintains peace and balance in the world. *The Legend of Korra* focuses on Avatar Korra, a seventeen-year-old girl from the Southern Water Tribe and the successor of Avatar Aang from *The Last Airbender*.

The first season is mostly set in Republic City, the capital of the United Republic of Nations, a multicultural sovereign state that emerged from civil conflict in the Fire Nation colonies in the Earth Kingdom after the end of *The Last Airbender* founded by both Avatar Aang and then recent new Fire Lord Zuko. The residents of the metropolis, described as "if Manhattan had happened in Asia" by the series' creators,^[5] are united by their passion for "pro-bending", a spectator sport in which two teams composed of an earthbender, waterbender, and firebender throw each other out of a ring using bending techniques. The second season is mostly set in the southern polar region, while the third and fourth seasons take place mostly in the Earth Kingdom and, to a lesser degree, in Republic City.

Production companies	<u>Nickelodeon Animation Studio</u>
	<u>Ginormous Madman Productions</u>
	<u>Studio Mir</u>
	<u>Studio Pierrot</u>

Original release

Network	<u>Nickelodeon</u> (April 14, 2012 – July 25, 2014) <u>Nick.com</u> (August 1, 2014 – December 19, 2014) ^[1]
Release	April 14, 2012 ^[2] – December 19, 2014

Synopsis

The first season, *Book One: Air*, sees Korra move to Republic City to learn airbending from Tenzin, Avatar Aang's son. She enters the pro-bending league, and befriends the brothers Bolin and Mako, as well as Asami Sato, heiress to Future Industries, a leading engineering corporation. The ambitious politician Tarrlok enlists Korra to fight the anti-bender uprising of the "Equalists", led by the masked Amon, who strips benders of their abilities. Korra and her friends, aided by police chief Lin Beifong and United Forces General Iroh, unmask Amon as a bloodbender and Tarrlok's brother, ending the Equalists' coup. A spiritual meeting with her predecessor Aang allows Korra to realize her powers and to restore the bending abilities of Amon's victims.








The second season, *Book Two: Spirits*, begins six months later, with dark spirits terrorizing the seas. Korra turns to her spirit-attuned uncle Unalaq, chief of the Northern Water Tribe, for tutelage, and opens the polar portals to the Spirit World at his direction. Unalaq then seizes power in the Southern Water Tribe by force, starting a civil war in which he is opposed by his brother, Korra's father, Tonraq. Seeking allies against Unalaq, Korra experiences the life of the first Avatar, Wan, who fused his soul with the spirit Raava to imprison her opponent Vaatu. Aided by his twin children Eska and Desna, Unalaq frees Vaatu during the Harmonic Convergence, a decamillennial alignment of planets, and unites with him to become a dark Avatar. As Korra fights this figure, her link to the previous Avatars is broken; but with the help of Tenzin's daughter Jinora, she defeats Vaatu and Unalaq, and leaves the spirit portals open, allowing a new coexistence of spirits and humans.

The third season, *Book Three: Change*, begins two weeks later with people all over the world discovering airbending powers as a result of the Harmonic Convergence. As Tenzin, Korra, and her friends recruit them to re-establish the extinct Air Nomads, the newly airbending criminal Zaheer escapes his prison, frees his allies Ghazan, Ming-Hua, and P'Li, and attempts to kidnap the Avatar. This fails thanks to the help of Suyin Beifong, Lin's previously estranged sister. Zaheer and his team – members of the Red Lotus, an anarchic secret society – kill the Earth Queen, throwing her kingdom into chaos, and try to force Korra's surrender by taking the Air

Nomads hostage, including Suyin's daughter Opal. In the final confrontation, Zaheer's comrades are killed and he is captured by the Air Nomads led by Jinora. Two weeks later, a weakened, wheelchair-bound Korra watches as Jinora is anointed an airbending master, and Tenzin rededicates the Air Nomads to service to the world.

The final season, *Book Four: Balance*, is set three years later. Korra slowly recovers from the injuries incurred in the fight with Zaheer, traveling the world alone and haunted by fear. Meanwhile, Suyin's former head of security, Kuvira, reunites the fractured Earth Kingdom with the metalbenders loyal to her, and refuses to release power to the unpopular heir to the throne, Prince Wu. At the head of her new, totalitarian "Earth Empire", Kuvira seizes Suyin's city of Zaofu and sets her sights on the United Republic, which she claims for her nation. With Toph Beifong's help, Korra frees herself of the remnants of Zaheer's poison, but after losing a duel to Kuvira at Zaofu, she allows Zaheer to help her overcome her fears and fully reconnect with her Avatar Spirit, Raava. When Kuvira attacks Republic City with a giant mecha carrying a spirit-powered superweapon, it takes all the efforts of Korra and her friends, including the inventor Varrick and his assistant Zhu Li, to stop the colossus. Only after Kuvira's weapon blows open a third portal to the Spirit World, destroying much of the city, does she concede defeat. The series ends with the prospect of democracy for the former Earth Kingdom, and with Korra and Asami leaving together for a vacation in the Spirit World.

Cast and characters

Main cast						
						
<u>Janet Varney</u>	<u>Seychelle Gabriel</u>	<u>David Faustino</u>	<u>P. J. Byrne</u>	<u>J. K. Simmons</u>	<u>Mindy Sterling</u>	<u>Dee Bradley Baker</u>
<u>Korra</u>	<u>Asami Sato</u>	<u>Mako</u>	<u>Bolin</u>	<u>Tenzin</u>	<u>Lin Beifong</u>	<u>Naga, Pabu, Oogi, Tarrlok</u>





Korra (Janet Varney) is the series' 17-year-old "headstrong and rebellious" protagonist,^[6] and Aang's reincarnation as the Avatar. Her transformation "from brash warrior to a spiritual being", according to DiMartino, is a principal theme of the series.^[7] The character was inspired by Bryan Konietzko's "pretty tough" sister, and by female MMA fighters, notably Gina Carano.^{[8][9]}

The series focuses on Korra and her friends, sometimes called "Team Avatar": the bending brothers Mako and Bolin and the non-bender Asami. Mako (David Faustino), the older brother, is a firebender described as "dark and brooding"^{[2][10]} The character was named after Mako Iwamatsu, the voice actor for Iroh in the original series. His younger brother Bolin (P. J. Byrne) is an earthbender described as lighthearted, humorous, and "always [having] a lady on his arm".^{[2][11]} Asami Sato (Seychelle Gabriel), the only non-bender among the leading characters, is the daughter of the wealthy industrialist Hiroshi Sato.^[2]

The other main characters are the airbending master Tenzin, one of Aang's grown children (J. K. Simmons), Republic City police chief Lin Beifong (Mindy Sterling), and Korra's animal friends Naga and Pabu (both Dee Bradley Baker, the voice of a number of animals including Appa and Momo in the original series). Pabu was inspired by Futa, a famous standing Japanese red panda.^[12] Tenzin's family include his wife Pema (Maria

Bamford) and their children Jinora (Kiernan Shipka), Ikki (Darcy Rose Byrnes), Meelo (Logan Wells), and Rohan. Jinora is calm and an avid reader,^{[13][14]} Ikki is described as "fun, crazy, and a fast talker";^[14] Meelo is hyperactive; and Rohan is born during the third-to-last episode of Book One.

The romantic interests of Korra and her companions are less in the foreground than in *Avatar*, and feature mainly in the first two seasons.^[15] In Book One, Bolin pines for Korra, who is interested in Mako, who dates Asami. By the end of the season, Mako has broken up with Asami and entered a relationship with Korra. This ends around the end of Book Two, during which Bolin suffers from an abusive relationship with the waterbender Eska. In the fourth season, Bolin dates the airbender Opal Beifong, while Asami and Korra become closer friends. The series' final scene indicates a romantic connection between them.^[16] Mike DiMartino wrote that the scene "symbolizes their evolution from being friends to being a couple".^[17]







Book 1 recurring cast			
			
<u>Steve Blum</u>	<u>Lance Henriksen</u>	<u>Daniel Dae Kim</u>	<u>Clancy Brown</u>
Amon	Amon's lieutenant	Hiroshi Sato	Yakone

Book One: Air features two main adversaries for Korra: the Equalists' masked leader Amon (Steve Blum) who has the power to remove a person's bending-powers,^{[2][18]} and the ambitious, charismatic politician Tarrlok (Dee Bradley Baker), who resorts to increasingly repressive methods against the Equalists.^[19] Amon's lieutenant is voiced by Lance Henriksen, and Asami's father Hiroshi Sato by Daniel Dae Kim. Sato's character, the self-made founder of Future Industries, was inspired by Theodore Roosevelt and by the Japanese industrialists Keita Goto and Iwasaki Yatarō.^[20] Both Amon and Tarrlok are identified as the sons of mob boss Yakone (Clancy Brown). Spencer Garrett joined the cast as the voice for Raiko, the president of the United Republic. Korra is also supported by General Iroh (Dante Basco, who voiced Zuko in the original series), a member of the United Forces who is described as "a swashbuckling hero-type guy".^{[21][22]} He is named after Iroh, Zuko's uncle in the original series.^[23]

Book 2 recurring cast					
					
<u>Lisa Edelstein</u>	<u>Aubrey Plaza</u>	<u>James Remar</u>	<u>Stephanie Sheh</u>	<u>Eva Marie Saint</u>	<u>Steven Yeun</u>
Kya	Eska	Tonraq	Zhu Li	Katara	Wan

Book Two: Spirits features Tenzin's and Korra's families, including Tenzin's elder siblings Kya (Lisa Edelstein) and Bumi (Richard Riehle) as well as Korra's father Tonraq (James Remar) and mother Senna (Alex McKenna). Tenzin's mother Katara (Eva Marie Saint), a main character of the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* series, also made

recurring appearances in the season. Book 2 also introduces John Michael Higgins as the corrupt businessman and inventor Varrick, with Stephanie Sheh voicing his assistant Zhu Li, along with Korra's uncle Unalaq (Adrian LaTourelle), aided by his twin children Desna (Aaron Himelstein) and Eska (Aubrey Plaza), and Vaatu (Jonathan Adams), the spirit of disorder. The season also explains the Avatar mythos through the first Avatar Wan (Steven Yeun) and Vaatu's polar opposite Raava (April Stewart). Making a few appearances in Books Two and Three, Greg Baldwin reprises Iroh from the previous series. Set six months after the events of the first season, *Book Two: Spirits* sees Mako as a police officer, Asami in charge of Future Industries, and Bolin leading a new pro-bending team with little success.

<i>Book 3 and 4 recurring cast</i>						
						
<u>Henry Rollins</u>	<u>Grey DeLisle</u>	<u>Bruce Davison</u>	<u>Alyson Stoner</u>	<u>Anne Heche</u>	<u>Jim Meskimen</u>	<u>Zelda Williams</u>
<u>Zaheer</u>	<u>Ming-Hua</u>	<u>Zuko</u>	<u>Opal</u>	<u>Suyin Beifong</u>	<u>Baatar, Daw</u>	<u>Kuvira</u>

The anarchist antagonists introduced in *Book Three: Change*, the Red Lotus, comprise the new airbender Zaheer (Henry Rollins), the armless waterbender Ming-Hua (Grey DeLisle, who previously voiced a dark spirit^[24]), the combustionbender P'Li (Kristy Wu), and the lavabender Ghazan (Peter Giles). Supporting characters include the Earth Queen Hou-Ting (Jayne Taini), the retired Fire Lord Zuko (Bruce Davison), Lin's half-sister Suyin Beifong (Anne Heche), and her captain of the guards Kuvira (Zelda Williams). New airbenders are also introduced in the season including the young thief Kai (Skyler Briggmann) and Suyin's daughter Opal (Alyson Stoner), both of Earth Kingdom origins and the love interests of Jinora and Bolin respectively. Jim Meskimen voices a Republic City merchant and later airbender named Daw, as well as Suyin's husband, the architect Baatar.

The final season, *Book Four: Balance*, features Kuvira as Korra's antagonist at the head of an army bent on uniting the Earth Kingdom. The cast is also joined by Sunil Malhotra as Prince Wu, the vain heir to the Earth Kingdom throne, and Todd Haberkorn as Baatar Jr., Suyin's estranged son who is Kuvira's fiancé and second-in-command. Philece Sampler voices the aged Toph Beifong, another returning character from *Avatar* whose young adult version was voiced by Kate Higgins in Books 1 and 3. April Stewart was cast as Zuko's daughter, Fire Lord Izumi, in a minor role.^[25]

Production

Development

The Legend of Korra was co-created and produced by Bryan Konietzko and Michael Dante DiMartino (together referred to as "Bryke" by fans,^[26] in reference to "shipping" naming conventions) at Nickelodeon Animation Studios in Burbank, California. To illustrate the length of the production process (about 10 to 12 months per

episode)^[27] and the overlap of the various phases, Konietzko wrote in July 2013 that their team was already developing the storyboards for the first episode of *Book 4* while the last episodes of *Book 2* were not yet finished.^[28]



Concept art of Korra overlooking Republic City, released after the announcement of the series

Production of the series was announced at the annual Comic-Con in San Diego on July 22, 2010. It was originally due for release in October 2011.^{[29][30]} Tentatively titled *Avatar: Legend of Korra* at the time, it was intended to be a twelve-episode^[31] mini series set in the same fictional universe as the original show,^[30] but seventy years later.^[32] In 2011, the title was changed to *The Last Airbender: Legend of Korra*, and again in March 2012 to *The Legend of Korra*. The premiere was eventually delayed to April 14, 2012.^[30] Animation work was mostly done by the South Korean animation studio Studio Mir.

According to animation director Yoo Jae-myung, Nickelodeon was initially reluctant to approve the series and suspended production because, unlike in almost all American animated series, the protagonist was a girl.^[33] Conventional wisdom, according to Konietzko, had it that "girls will watch shows about boys, but boys won't watch shows about girls". The creators eventually persuaded the channel's executives to change their mind. Konietzko related that in test screenings, boys said that Korra being a girl did not matter to them: "They just said she was awesome."^[34]

The creators wrote all of the episodes of the first season themselves, omitting "filler episodes" to allow for a concise story.^[35] Once the series was expanded from its original 12-episode schedule to 26 and then to 52, more writers were brought in so that the creators could focus on design work.^[36] Joaquim Dos Santos and Ryu Ki-Hyun, who worked on the animation and design of the original series, also became involved with creating *The Legend of Korra*, as is storyboarder Ian Graham. Jeremy Zuckerman and Benjamin Wynn, who composed the soundtrack for the original series as "The Track Team," also returned to score *The Legend of Korra*.^[37]

The second season, *Book Two: Spirits*, premiered on September 13, 2013 and concluded on November 22, 2013. It consists of fourteen episodes. Animation work was done by the South Korean animation studio Studio Mir as well as the Japanese animation studio Studio Pierrot.^[38] Studio Mir was expected to solely work on *Book 2*, but executive director Jae-myung Yoo decided that Studio Mir would animate *The Boondocks* instead because the animation process was less rigorous. Studio Pierrot was eventually called in to fill the void and animate *Book 2*. According to Jae-myung Yoo, Studio Mir was later contacted and re-asked to animate *Book 2*. Yoo feared that, if *Book 2* failed, Studio Mir and Korean animators would have their reputations tarnished for Studio Pierrot's failures. Consequently, Studio Mir accepted the offer and worked alongside Studio Pierrot.^[39]

The third season, *Book Three: Change*, aired its first three episodes on June 27, 2014, soon after some episodes were leaked online.^[40] It takes place two weeks after the events of *Book Two: Spirits*. Episodes nine to thirteen were streamed online, rather than being broadcast as a television program.^[41]

Book Four: Balance, the final season, was produced in parallel to the previous two seasons. The crew, at one point, worked on approximately 30 episodes at the same time: post-production for season 2, production for season 3 and pre-production for season 4.^[42] Some production steps, such as color correction and retakes,

continued up until the date of the series finale, December 19, 2014.^[43] Season 4 started online distribution a few months after the third season's finale on October 3, 2014. After Nickelodeon cut the season's budget by the amount required for one episode, DiMartino and Konietzko decided to include a clip show, which reuses previously produced animation, as episode 8 ("Remembrances") instead of dismissing many of the creative staff.^[44] Studio Mir was helped by its companion studio, a subunit called Studio Reve, while working on Book 4.^{[45][46][47]}

Concerning the development of the much-discussed final scene intended to show the friends Korra and Asami becoming a romantic couple, Bryan Konietzko explained that at first he and DiMartino did not give the idea much weight, assuming they would not be able to get approval for portraying their relationship. But during the production of the finale they decided to test that assumption, approached the network and found them supportive up to a certain limit. They decided to change the final scene from Korra and Asami only holding hands to also facing each other in a pose referencing the marriage scene a few minutes prior.^[48]

Style

The Legend of Korra was produced mainly as traditional animation, with most frames drawn on paper in South Korea by the animators at Studio Mir and scanned for digital processing. Each episode comprises about 15,000 drawings.^[49] The series makes occasional use of computer-generated imagery for complex scenes or objects, most noticeably in the animations of the pro-bending arena or the mecha-suits of the later seasons.

While *The Legend of Korra* was produced in the United States and therefore not a work of Japanese animation ("anime") in the strict sense, *The Escapist* magazine argued that the series is so strongly influenced by anime that it would otherwise easily be classified as such: its protagonists (a superpowered heroine, her group of talented, supporting friends, a near-impervious villain who wants to reshape the world), its themes (family, friendship, romance, fear, and death) and the quality of its voice acting as well as the visual style are similar to those of leading anime series such as *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*, *Bleach* or *Trigun*.^[50] A notable difference from such series is the absence of lengthy opening and ending sequences set to J-pop songs;^[50] to save broadcast time, *The Legend of Korra*'s openings and endings last only a few seconds. The series mostly abstains from using the visual tropes characteristic of anime, but does occasionally use exaggerated facial expressions to highlight emotions for comic effect.

As in *Avatar*, the series adds to its Asian aesthetic by presenting all text that appears in its fictional world in traditional Chinese characters, without translating it. For example, on the "Wanted" posters seen in season 4, the names of the protagonists are written as 科拉 (Korra), 馬可 (Mako) and 波林 (Bolin).

Music

The Legend of Korra is set to music by Jeremy Zuckerman, who previously wrote the music for *Avatar: The Last Airbender* with Benjamin Wynn. For *The Legend of Korra*, Zuckerman is the sole composer while Wynn is the lead sound designer; the two collaborate with Foley artist Aran Tanchum and showrunner Mike DiMartino on the soundscape of the series.^[51] Konietzko and DiMartino's concept for the score was to blend traditional Chinese music with early jazz. On that basis, Zuckerman composed a score combining elements of Dixieland, traditional Chinese music and Western orchestration. It is performed mainly by a string sextet and various Chinese solo instruments,^[52] including a dizi (flute), paigu (drums), a guqin and a Mongolian matouqin.^[53]

A soundtrack CD, *The Legend of Korra: Original Music from Book One*, was published on July 16, 2013.^[54] Music from *Korra* and *Avatar* was also played in concert at the PlayFest festival in Málaga, Spain in September 2014.^[55] The series's soundtrack was nominated as best TV soundtrack for the 2013 *GoldSpirit Awards*.^[56]

Release

Broadcast

United States

The first season (*Book One: Air*) aired in the United States on Nickelodeon on Saturday mornings between April 14, 2012 and June 23, 2012. It was broadcast in other countries on the local Nickelodeon channels beginning in August 2012.

The second season (*Book Two: Spirits*) began airing on Nickelodeon in the United States on September 13, 2013 on Friday evenings. The season ended on November 22, 2013.

The third season (*Book Three: Change*) began airing on Nickelodeon in the United States on June 27, 2014, also on Friday evenings, two episodes at a time. The broadcast was announced one week in advance after several episodes of the new season were leaked on the Internet. After the first seven episodes aired to low ratings, Nickelodeon removed the last five episodes from its broadcast schedule. The remainder of the episodes were then distributed online via Amazon Video, Google Play, Xbox Video and Hulu as well as the Nickelodeon site and apps.^[57] *The Escapist* compared *The Legend of Korra* to *Firefly* as "a Friday night genre series with a loyal fan following built up from previous works by the creators that is taken off the air after the network fails to advertise it properly or broadcast episodes in a logical manner."^[1] Series creator Michael DiMartino said that the series' move to online distribution reflected a "sea change" in the industry: While *Korra* did not fit in well with Nickelodeon's other programming, the series did extremely well online, with the season 2 finale having been Nickelodeon's biggest online event.^[58]

The fourth season (*Book Four: Balance*) began distribution in the United States on October 3, 2014 through Nick.com, Amazon Video, iTunes and Hulu.^[59] Beginning on November 28, 2014, with episode 9, the fourth season was again broadcast on Fridays on Nicktoons.^[60]

Worldwide

The Legend of Korra is broadcast subtitled or dubbed on Nickelodeon channels outside of the U.S.

In Germany, the first and second seasons received a German-language broadcast on Nickelodeon Germany. The third and fourth seasons are broadcast in 2015 on the German Nicktoons pay TV channel. In France, only the first season has been broadcast on Nickelodeon France and J-One. A fandub project to complete the French dub was launched in 2015.^[61]

In 2017, the Kenya Film Classification Board banned *The Legend of Korra*, together with the cartoon series *Loud House*, *Hey Arnold*, *Steven Universe* and *Adventure Time*, from being broadcast in Kenya. According to the Board, the reason was that these series were "glorifying homosexual behavior".^[62]

Home media

All episodes of the series have been released through digital download services, DVD and Blu-ray formats. The DVD releases contain extra features such as audio commentary from the creators, cast and crew for some episodes, and the Blu-ray releases contain commentary for additional episodes.

The following table indicates the release dates of the DVD and Blu-ray versions of the series:

Season		Episodes	DVD and Blu-ray release dates		
			Region 1	Region 2	Region 4
1	<i>Air</i>	12	July 9, 2013 ^[63]	October 28, 2013 ^[64]	September 4, 2013 ^[65]
2	<i>Spirits</i>	14	July 1, 2014 ^[66]	October 20, 2014 ^[67]	August 20, 2014 ^[68]
3	<i>Change</i>	13	December 2, 2014 ^[69]	April 27, 2015 ^[70]	December 17, 2014 ^[71]
4	<i>Balance</i>	13	March 10, 2015 ^[72]	November 16, 2015 ^[73]	August 5, 2015 ^[74]
1, 2, 3, and 4	The Complete Series	52	December 13, 2016 ^[75]	February 15, 2017 ^[76]	March 12, 2017 ^[77]

Reception

Ratings

Template:The Legend of Korra ratings The series premiere averaged 4.5 million viewers, ranking it as basic cable's number-one kids' show and top animated program for the week with total viewers. *The Legend of Korra* also ranks as the network's most-watched animated series premiere in three years.^[78]

Book One: Air drew an average of 3.8 million viewers per episode. This was the highest audience total for an animated series in the United States in 2012.^[79]

Book Two: Spirits premiered with 2.6 million viewers. Suggested explanations for the reduced number of broadcast viewers were: the long period between seasons, a change in time slot (Friday evening instead of Saturday morning), the increased availability of digital download services, and generally reduced ratings for the Nickelodeon channel.^[80]

Book Three: Change aired on short notice in June 2014 after Spanish-language versions of some episodes were leaked on the Internet. The season premiered with 1.5 million viewers.^[40] After declining TV ratings in the third season, Nickelodeon stopped airing the series on television and shifted its distribution to online outlets, where the show had proven to be much more successful.^{[58][81]}

Critical response

The Legend of Korra received critical acclaim for its production values, the quality of its writing, its challenging themes and its transgression of the conventions of youth entertainment. On the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the third season has a rating of 100% positive reviews, based on 5 reviews, with an average rating of 8.5/10.^[82]

Style and production values

David Hinckley of the New York Daily News wrote that the "visually striking" series is "full of little tricks and nuances that only true fans will notice and savor, but nothing prevents civilians from enjoying it as well."^[83] Writing for Vulture, Matt Patches highlighted the second season's loose, handheld-style cinematography – challenging for an animated series – and the "weird, wonderful", wildly imagined spirits fought by Korra; "a Kaiju parade with beasts that mirror velociraptors".^[84] Max Nicholson for IGN described the third season as "easily the show's most consistent season to date, delivering complex themes, excellent storylines and unmatched production values."^[85] And Oliver Sava, for The A.V. Club, characterized it as a "truly magnificent season of television, delivering loads of character development, world building, socio-political commentary, and heart-racing action, all presented with beautifully smooth animation and impeccable voice acting".^[86]

Writing and themes

Before the first season's finale, Scott Thill of Wired hailed *The Legend of Korra* as "the smartest cartoon on TV," able to address adults' spiritual and sociopolitical concerns while presenting an "alternately riveting and hilarious ride packed with fantasy naturalism, steampunk grandeur, kinetic conflicts, sci-fi weaponry and self-aware comedy."^[87] In The Atlantic, Julie Beck characterized the series as "some of the highest quality fantasy of our time", appreciating it for combining nuanced social commentary with *Avatar: The Last Airbender*'s "warmth, whimsy, and self-referential wit".^[88] Brian Lowry of Variety felt that the series "represents a bit more ambitious storytelling for older kids, and perhaps a few adults with the geek gene."^[89]

At TV.com, Noel Kirkpatrick commented favorably on how the second season of "one of television's best programs" handled the necessary quantity of exposition, and on its introduction of the theme of conflict between spiritualism and secularism.^[90] Covering the third season, Scott Thill at Salon described Korra as one of the toughest, most complex female characters on TV, despite being in a cartoon, and considered that the "surreal, lovely sequel" to *Avatar* "lastingly and accessibly critiques power, gender, extinction, spirit and more — all wrapped up in a kinetic 'toon as lyrical and expansive as anything dreamt up by Hayao Miyazaki or George Lucas".^[91] David Levesley at The Daily Beast recommended the series to those looking for "beautifully shot and well-written fantasy on television" after the end of *Game of Thrones*'s most recent season, noting that in both series "the fantastical and the outlandish are carefully balanced with human relationships and political intrigue".^[92]

Several reviewers noted the sociopolitical issues that, unusually for an animated series on a children's channel, run through *The Legend of Korra*. According to *Forbes*, by telling "some of the darkest, most mature stories" ever animated, *The Legend of Korra* has created a new genre, "the world's first animated television drama".^[93] Thill proposed that the Equalists' cause in season 1 reflected the recent appearance of the Occupy movement, and DiMartino responded that though the series was written before Occupy Wall Street began, he agreed that the show similarly depicted "a large group of people who felt powerless up against a relatively small group of people in power."^[94] Beck wrote that *The Legend of Korra* used magic to illustrate "the growing pains of a modernizing world seeing the rise of technology and capitalism, and taking halting, jerky steps toward self-governance", while portraying no side of the conflict as entirely flawless.^[88] Alyssa Rosenberg praised the show for examining issues of class in an urban setting, and a guest post in her column argued that the struggle between Korra and Amon's Equalists reflected some of the ideas of John Rawls' "luck egalitarianism", praising the series for tackling moral issues of inequality and redistribution.^{[95][96]}

Writing for *The Escapist*, Mike Hoffman noted how the series respected its younger viewers by explicitly showing, but also giving emotional weight to the death of major characters, including "one of the most brutal and sudden deaths in children's television" in the case of P'Li in season 3. By portraying Korra's opponents not as stereotypical villains, but as human beings with understandable motivations corrupted by an excess of zeal, the series trusted in viewers to be able to "resolve the dissonance between understanding someone's view and disagreeing with their methods". And, Hoffman wrote, by showing Korra to suffer from "full-on depression" at the end of the third season, and devoting much of the fourth to her recovery, the series helped normalize mental health issues, a theme generally unaddressed in children's television, which made them less oppressive for the viewers.^[26]

Gender, race and sexual orientation

Summing up Book Four, Joanna Robinson for *Vanity Fair* described it as "the most subversive television event of the year", noting how much of the season and series pushed the boundaries of what is nominally children's television by "breaking racial, sexual, and political ground": It featured a brave, strong, brown-skinned female lead character as well as a bevy of diverse female characters of all ages, focused on challenging issues such as weapons of mass destruction, PTSD and fascism, and was infused with an Eastern spirituality based on tenets such as balance and mindfulness.^[97] Levesley also highlighted the "many examples of well-written women, predominantly of color" in the series.^[92] Oliver Sava at *The A.V. Club* noted that the series had "consistently delivered captivating female figures"; he considered it to be first and foremost about women, and about how they relate to each other "as friends, family, and rivals in romance and politics".^[16]



The series' final shot, intended to show Asami and Korra becoming a romantic couple, was seen as pushing the boundaries of LGBT representation in children's TV.^[16]

Moreover, according to Robinson, the series' final scene, in which Korra and Asami gaze into each other's eyes in a shot mirroring the composition of *Avatar*'s final moments in which Aang and Katara kiss, "changed the face of TV" by going further than any other work of children's television in depicting same-sex relationships^[97] – an assessment shared by reviewers for *TV.com*,^[98] *The A.V. Club*,^[16] *USA Today*,^[99] *IGN*^[100] and *Moviepilot*.^[101] Mike Hoffman, on the other hand, felt that Korra and Asami's relationship was not intended as particularly subversive, but as something the writers trusted younger viewers,

now often familiar with same-sex relationships, to be mature enough to understand.^[26] Megan Farokhmanesh of *Polygon* wrote that by portraying Korra and Asami as bisexual, the series even avoided the error of assuming sexual orientation, as many other TV series did, to be a strict divide between "gay" and "straight".^[102]

Accolades

The first season of *The Legend of Korra* received numerous accolades. It received two nominations for the 2012 Annie Awards; Bryan Konietzko, Joaquim Dos Santos Ryu Ki-Hyun, Kim Il Kwang and Kim Jin Sun were nominated in the category of Best Character Design in an Animated Television Production, and the first two episodes were nominated in the category of Best Animated Television Production for Children.^[103] The series was also nominated for the "Outstanding Children's Program" award from among the 2012 NAACP Image Awards, which "celebrates the accomplishments of people of color".^[104] IGN editors and readers awarded the series the "IGN People's Choice Award" and the "Best TV Animated Series" award in 2012, and it was also nominated for "Best TV Series" and "Best TV Hero" for Korra.^[105] The series also took second place (after *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*) in a TV.com readers' poll for the "Best Animated Series" of 2012.^[106] The first season also received three Daytime Emmy Award nominations, winning in the category of "Outstanding Casting For an Animated Series or Special."

The second season received fewer awards and total nominations than the first; it was nominated for three Annie Awards in 2014, winning in the category of "Outstanding Achievement, Production Design in an Animated TV/Broadcast Production." It was nominated for two more IGN awards, being nominated for "Best TV Animated Series" and winning the "IGN People's Choice Award" for the second year in a row.^[107]

The third and fourth seasons, combined into one entry, were nominated for six IGN awards, winning the "People's Choice Award" for the third time in a row, as well as "Best TV Animated Series" for the second time, "People's Choice Award for Best TV Episode" for *Korra Alone*, and "People's Choice Award for Best TV Series" for the first time.^[108] The third and fourth seasons were nominated for two Annie Awards; "Best Animated TV/Broadcast Production for Children's Audience," and winning "Outstanding Achievement, Storyboarding in an Animated TV/Broadcast Production."

Awards					
Book	Year	Award	Category	Name	Outcome
<u>Book 1</u>	2012	IGN's Best of 2012 Awards	Best TV Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			IGN People's Choice Award for Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			Best TV Hero	<u>Janet Varney</u> (<u>Korra</u>)	Nominated
	2013	Annie Awards	<u>Best Animated Television Production for Children</u>	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			Best Character Design in an Animated Television Production	<u>Bryan Konietzko</u> , <u>Joaquim Dos Santos</u> , <u>Ryu Ki-Hyun</u> , <u>Kim Il Kwang</u> and <u>Kim Jin Sun</u>	Nominated
		2nd Annual BTVA Awards ^[109]	Best Vocal Ensemble in a New Television Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Vocal Ensemble in a New Television Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			Best Female Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	<u>Janet Varney</u> (<u>Korra</u>)	Won
			Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Guest Role	<u>Eva Marie Saint</u> (<u>Katara</u>)	Won
			Best Male Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	JK Simmons (Tenzin)	Nominated
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Steve Blum (Amon)	Won
			Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Dee Bradley Baker (<u>Tarrlok</u>)	Nominated
			Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Mindy Sterling (<u>Lin Beifong</u>)	Nominated
		Daytime Emmy Awards	Outstanding Special Class Animated Program	<u>Joaquim Dos Santos</u> , <u>Tim Yoon</u> , <u>Ki Hyun Ryu</u> , <u>Michael Dante DiMartino</u> and <u>Bryan Konietzko</u>	Nominated
			Outstanding Directing In An Animated Program	<u>Joaquim Dos Santos</u> , <u>Ki-Hyun Ryu</u> , <u>Andrea Romano</u>	Nominated
			Outstanding Casting For An Animated Series Or Special	Shannon Reed, Sarah Noonan, Gene Vassilaros	Won
		NAACP Image Awards	Outstanding Children's Program	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
		Young Artist Awards	Best Performance in a Voice-Over Role (Television) - Young Actress	<u>Kiernan Shipka</u> (<u>Jinora</u>)	Nominated

<u>Book 2</u>	2014	<u>Annie Awards</u>	Best Animated TV/Broadcast Production for Children's Audience	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			Outstanding Achievement, Directing in an Animated TV/Broadcast Production	Colin Heck	Nominated
			Outstanding Achievement, Production Design in an Animated TV/Broadcast Production	Angela Sung, William Niu, Christine Bian, Emily Tetri, Frederic Stewart	Won
		IGN's Best of 2013 Awards ^[107]	Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			IGN People's Choice Award for Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
		3rd Annual BTVA Awards	BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Vocal Ensemble in a Television Series — Action/Drama	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Female Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	Janet Varney (Korra)	Won
			Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Guest Role	April Stewart (Raava)	Won
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Guest Role	April Stewart (Raava)	Won
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	John Michael Higgins (Varrick)	Won
			BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Guest Role	<u>Jason Marsden</u> (Aye-Aye)	Won
<u>Book 3 & Book 4</u>	2015	IGN's Best of 2014 Awards ^[110]	Best TV Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			IGN People's Choice Award for Best TV Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			IGN People's Choice Award for Best TV Animated Series	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
			Best TV Episode	" <u>Korra Alone</u> "	Nominated
			IGN People's Choice Award for Best TV Episode	"Korra Alone"	Won
		<u>Annie Awards</u> ^[111]	Best Animated TV/Broadcast Production for Children's Audience	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated
			Outstanding Achievement, Storyboarding in an Animated TV/Broadcast Production	Joaquim Dos Santos for "Venom of the Red Lotus"	Won
		<u>Daytime Emmy Awards</u>	Outstanding Casting For An Animated Series Or Special	Shannon Reed, Sarah Noonan, Gene Vassilaros	Nominated
			Outstanding Sound Mixing — Animation	Justin Brinsfield, Matt Corey, Manny Grijalva,	Nominated

			Adrian Ordonez, Aran Tanchum	
	<u>Gracie Allen Awards</u>	Outstanding Animated Programming — Production	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
	4th Annual BTVA Awards	BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Vocal Ensemble in a Television Series — Action/Drama	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Won
		BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Male Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	PJ Byrne (Bolin)	Won
		Best Female Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	Janet Varney (Korra)	Won
		BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Female Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	Janet Varney (Korra)	Won
		Best Female Lead Vocal Performance in a Television Series — Action/Drama	Seychelle Gabriel (Asami Sato)	Nominated
		BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Henry Rollins (Zaheer)	Won
		Best Male Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	<u>Maurice LaMarche</u> (Aiwei)	Nominated
		BTVA People's Choice Award for Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Philece Sampler (<u>Toph Beifong</u>)	Won
		Best Female Vocal Performance in a Television Series in a Supporting Role — Action/Drama	Zelda Williams (Kuvira)	Nominated
	<u>31st TCA Awards</u>	<u>Outstanding Achievement in Youth Programming</u>	<i>The Legend of Korra</i>	Nominated

Fandom

Like its predecessor series, *The Legend of Korra* has a broad and active fandom, including on social media and at fan conventions. Most fans are young adults, according to *The Escapist*, but many are children and younger teenagers.^[26]



Two fans cosplaying as Korra and Mako in 2012

According to Merrill Barr writing for *Forbes*, few series "boast as vocal a fan base as *The Legend of Korra*", including such popular series as *Game of Thrones* and *Orphan Black*.^[112] In January 2015, after the series ended, the media reported on a fan petition to have Netflix produce a series in the *Avatar* universe garnering more than 10,000 signatures.^[113]

Influence

The *A.V. Club* and *io9* noted that the live-action TV series *Warrior*, for which NBC ordered a pilot in early 2015, has a premise almost identical to that of *The Legend of Korra*: It is to be about "a damaged heroine" who "works undercover with physical and spiritual guidance from a mysterious martial arts master to bring down an international crime lord" in a "contemporary multicultural and sometimes magical milieu".^{[114][115]}

Other media

Comics

The Legend of Korra is to be continued in a three-part comics series, *The Legend of Korra: Turf Wars*, written by DiMartino and drawn by Irene Koh. It is to take place immediately following the series finale, and will be "focusing on Korra and Asami's relationship as a new threat emerges". The first volume is to be published in June 2017 by Dark Horse Comics.^[116]

Art

Hardcover art books detailing each season's creative process have been published by Dark Horse, similar to the art book published about *Avatar: The Last Airbender*:

Title	Date	Authors	ISBN	Notes
<i>The Legend of Korra</i> <i>Book 1: Air</i> – <i>The Art of the Animated Series</i>	19 July 2013	Michael Dante DiMartino Bryan Konietzko Joaquim Dos Santos	ISBN 9781616551681	^[117]
<i>The Legend of Korra</i> <i>Book 2: Spirits</i> – <i>The Art of the Animated Series</i>	16 September 2014	Michael Dante DiMartino Bryan Konietzko Joaquim Dos Santos	ISBN 9781616554620	^[118]
<i>The Legend of Korra</i> <i>Book 3: Change</i> – <i>The Art of the Animated Series</i>	20 January 2015	Michael Dante DiMartino Bryan Konietzko Joaquim Dos Santos	ISBN 9781616555658	^[119]
<i>The Legend of Korra</i> <i>Book 4: Balance</i> – <i>The Art of the Animated Series</i>	15 September 2015	Michael Dante DiMartino Bryan Konietzko Joaquim Dos Santos	ISBN 9781616556877	^[120]

In July 2013, Nickelodeon published a free interactive e-book, *The Legend of Korra: Enhanced Experience*, on iTunes.^[121] It contained material such as concept art, character biographies, animatics and storyboards.^[122]

In March 2013, PixelDrip Gallery organized a *The Legend of Korra* fan art exhibition in Los Angeles with the support of the series's creators, and later published a documentary video about it.^[123] Another art exhibition supported by Nickelodeon to pay tribute to *The Legend of Korra* and *Avatar* was held from March 7 to 22, 2015 at Gallery Nucleus in Alhambra, California.^{[124][125]}

An adult coloring book, *The Legend of Korra Coloring Book* (ISBN 978-1-50670-246-9) with art by Jed Henry is to be released in July 2017.^[126]

Novels

Book One: Air was adapted as two novels by Erica David, aimed at readers ages twelve and up. The novelizations were published by Random House in 2013.^[127]

- *Revolution* (ISBN 978-0449815540), adapting episodes one to six, published on January 8, 2013
- *Endgame* (ISBN 978-0449817346), adapting episodes seven to twelve, published on July 23, 2013

Games

Activision published two video games based on the series in October 2014. The first, titled only *The Legend of Korra*, is a third-person beat 'em up game for Xbox One, Xbox 360, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 3, and PC. Despite the developer PlatinumGames's reputation for action games, the game received mixed reviews. The second game, *The Legend of Korra: A New Era Begins*, is a turn-based strategy game developed by Webfoot Technologies for the Nintendo 3DS. Nickelodeon also makes several Adobe Flash-based browser games based on *The Legend of Korra* available on their website.^[128]

IDW Publishing is to release a series of board games based on *The Legend of Korra*. The first will be an adaptation of the series' pro-bending game; it is to be financed through Kickstarter and released in fall 2017.^[129]

Merchandise

A 12-inch figurine of Lin Beifong, among other merchandise, was announced at the 2015 San Diego Comic-Con.^[130]

Spin-offs

Web series

In 2013, before the premiere of *Book Two: Spirits*, Nickelodeon released online three animated short videos titled *Republic City Hustle* that cover part of the lives of Mako and Bolin as street hustlers before the events of the first season.^[131] They are written by Tim Hedrick, one of the writers for *Book Two: Spirits*, and designed by Evon Freeman.^[132]

Possible film

In August 2012, Variety reported that Paramount Animation, a sister company of Nickelodeon, was starting development of several animated movies, with budgets of around US\$100 million. According to *Variety*, a possible candidate for one of the films was *The Legend of Korra*.^[133] Series creator Bryan Konietzko later

wrote on his blog that no such movie was in development.^[134] In July 2013, he said that he and DiMartino were far too busy working on multiple seasons of the TV series in parallel to consider developing a film adaptation at that time.^[135]

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External links

- Official website (<http://www.nick.com/legend-of-korra/>)
- *The Legend of Korra* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1695360/>) at IMDb
- Template:Bcdb
- Studio Mir (Animation Production Studio) (<http://www.studiomir.co.kr/>)

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