

American Music Awards (AMAs)

History and Founding: The American Music Awards were **created in 1973 by Dick Clark** as a more populist alternative to the Grammys [en.wikipedia.org](#) . Clark, already famous for *American Bandstand*, launched the first AMA ceremony in January 1974 on ABC (the network that had originally aired the Grammys in the 1970s). The AMAs were explicitly fan- and sales-driven: nominations were to be based on objective metrics (sales, airplay) and the winners chosen by public voting. Over the decades, the show built star-studded broadcasts and expanded categories to cover new genres (pop, rock, country, R&B, rap/hip-hop, Latin, K-pop, etc.). In 2015, the *Latin American Music Awards* were spun off (in partnership with Telemundo) to honor Spanish-language pop music [en.wikipedia.org](#) . As of 2024 the show transitioned networks: ABC aired it through 2022, but with ABC losing music rights, CBS plans a revived AMA in May 2025 (hosted by Jennifer Lopez) after a one-year hiatus [en.wikipedia.org](#) .

Format, Categories, and Voting: The AMA ceremony is a live TV/music event featuring performances and award presentations. Categories mix general honors with genre-specific ones. For example, current AMA awards include "Artist of the Year" and "New Artist of the Year," as well as "Song of the Year" and "Favorite Music Video." Each major genre has categories for Male Artist, Female Artist, Duo/Group, Album, and Song. Pop categories include Favorite Pop Male/Female/Group/Album/Song; similar categories exist for R&B, Country, Hip-Hop, Latin, Rock, Dance/Electronic, and now K-Pop and Afrobeats. (For example, pop categories now include Favorite Pop Male Artist, Favorite Pop Album, Favorite Pop Song, etc.) [en.wikipedia.org](#) . Over the years some awards have been discontinued (e.g. Favorite Disco Artist, Favorite Gospel Artist).

Importantly, **winners are chosen by fan votes**. AMA nominees are still based on charts (sales, streaming, airplay, social media metrics), but once nominees are set, the **public votes** online to pick winners [en.wikipedia.org](#) . For instance, fans could vote a set number of times per day via the AMA website or social media. (Prior to 2010, nominations were purely sales/airplay and could even include older songs, whereas the Grammy nominations are limited to a specific eligibility period [en.wikipedia.org](#) .) This fan-vote system makes the AMA more of a popularity contest than the peer-judged Grammys. Industry insiders note this contrast: one blog observes that the AMAs (like the Billboard Awards) "primarily reflect commercial performance," whereas the Grammys are decided by professionals [amworldgroup.com](#) . Likewise,

AMA winners tend to see moderate sales boosts (on the order of 10–30%) as an immediate reward amworldgroup.com, reflecting their role as indicators of current popularity rather than lifetime achievement.

Major Moments and Performances: Like the Grammys or MTV VMAs, the AMAs are known for memorable performances and incidents. Some highlights over its history include:

- **1986 – “We Are the World” Ensemble:** A one-time super-group of nearly 40 artists (including Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Stevie Wonder, and others) performed the charity anthem *We Are the World* together at the 1986 AMAs, creating a historic live moment ew.com.
- **1996 – Garth Brooks Rejects Artist of the Year:** Country star Garth Brooks made headlines when he refused to accept his AMA trophy for Artist of the Year, saying he could not in good conscience take the award away from his peers ew.com.
- **2004 – Kanye West Outburst:** Early in his career, Kanye stormed out of the 2004 AMAs after losing Best New Artist to Gretchen Wilson, famously claiming he had been “robbed” ew.com. This is one of the first major on-stage confrontations in AMA history.
- **2009 – Adam Lambert Controversy:** Singer Adam Lambert’s 2009 AMA performance (of *For Your Entertainment*) shocked viewers by involving a fake gay kiss and fetish dancers, sparking debate over shock value in live TV. (He defended it by pointing out a double standard with female artists.)
- **2013 – Katy Perry & Cultural Sensitivity:** Katy Perry’s AMA performance of “Unconditionally” featured her as a geisha, drawing criticism for cultural insensitivity. It became a widely cited example of debate over appropriation in pop performances ew.com.
- **2013 – Lady Gaga’s Mechanical Horse:** On the red carpet, Lady Gaga arrived astride a life-size “mechanical” white horse (in homage to Bianca Jagger’s famous entrance) ew.com, exemplifying AMA’s tradition of over-the-top fashion moments.
- **2014 – Selena Gomez Power Ballad:** Selena Gomez delivered an emotionally raw rendition of “The Heart Wants What It Wants,” visibly moved on stage ew.com.
- **2015 – Meghan Trainor & Charlie Puth Make-Out:** The duo gave an awkward staged kiss at the 2015 AMAs that went viral, showing the show’s mix of sensational and cringeworthy moments.

- **2017 – P!nk’s Aerial Stunt:** Perhaps one of the AMA’s most lauded performances was P!nk singing “Beautiful Trauma” while **hanging from the side of a high-rise hotel** ew.com . This death-defying stunt went viral and was hailed as a show-of-strength moment.

These examples illustrate the AMA’s blend of awards and spectacle. *Entertainment Weekly* notes that when Hollywood’s stars gather at the AMAs, “there are bound to be surprises,” and the show often delivers jaw-dropping or heartwarming live moments ew.com . The **performance aspect** – elaborate staging, dancers, and special effects – is a major draw of the AMA broadcast, often on par with or exceeding other music shows.

Cultural Influence and Comparison: The AMAs have carved out a distinct niche in music culture. They are often seen as more **populist and youth-oriented** than the Grammys. Because they allow fans to vote, the AMAs tend to favor mainstream, commercially successful artists. Analysts contrast this with the Grammys: “American Music Awards... primarily reflect commercial performance” and fan tastes amworldgroup.com , whereas Grammys are judged by artists and industry professionals. The AMAs are thus viewed more as a barometer of “what’s hot now.” They often recognize genres that the Grammys overlook; for example, the early introduction of a Favorite Rap/Hip-Hop category in 1989 (versus the first Rap Grammy in 1996) showed the AMA’s responsiveness to popular trends. In recent years the AMAs have also embraced **global pop trends**. For example, K-pop group BTS not only performed their hit “Butter” at the 2021 show commons.wikimedia.org but also won awards, reflecting the AMA’s international scope.

In contrast to the Grammys, which confer long-term prestige and often lead to sustained career boosts, the AMAs offer **immediate popularity recognition**. Industry data suggests AMA winners see a short-term sales bump (roughly 10–30% increase) rather than the outsized “Grammy effect” amworldgroup.com . The AMA’s **live TV spectacle** also resembles the MTV Video Music Awards in its energy (though the VMAs focus on videos and tend to court edgier controversies). Ultimately, the AMA remains important today as a major annual event that **reflects and shapes pop culture**. It gives fans a voice in selecting winners, amplifying whatever genres or artists are trending. Its memorable performances and moments (from Lady Gaga’s red carpet entrance to P!nk’s aerial act ew.com ew.com) frequently make headlines and influence fashion and social media.

Importance Today: In summary, both kinds of “AMA” play significant roles in modern society. The Reddit “Ask Me Anything” sessions are important as **new media forums**: they democratize conversation, enabling transparency and direct engagement in politics, science,

and entertainment bigthink.com theatlantic.com . They have changed expectations for celebrity Q&A and shown that audiences value authenticity. Meanwhile, the American Music Awards remain important as a gauge of popular musical tastes and a yearly celebration of the music industry. By letting fans vote and by producing high-impact performances, the AMAs keep large audiences engaged and help drive artists' commercial success. Both uses of "AMA" emphasize connection – one connects people with information and discourse, the other connects audiences with their favorite music stars – and each highlights how interactive, participatory culture is reshaping media in the 21st century.

Sources: Information above is drawn from analyses of AMA sessions and American Music Awards history en.wikipedia.org en.wikipedia.org theatlantic.com bigthink.com ew.com ew.com ew.com , along with contemporary reporting on notable AMA events watchmojo.com amworldgroup.com .

Ask Me Anything (AMA) Sessions

Origins: The AMA concept traces back to early online forums. In 1999, tech site Slashdot held "10 Questions" interviews, and the gaming forum Something Awful ran Ask/Tell threads with everyday people en.wikipedia.org . Reddit expanded this idea: co-founders Alexis Ohanian and staff began informal AMAs (often video chats), then in May 2009 launched the dedicated r/IAmA subreddit. From the start it **required proof of identity** (for example, posting a live selfie or sign), to ensure authenticity en.wikipedia.org . Over time AMAs spread to other platforms (Tumblr, Twitter, etc.) as a new form of interactive media.

Format: AMA sessions follow a simple, crowd-driven Q&A format. A *host* (a person of interest, from a celebrity to an expert or ordinary person) **announces an AMA** by posting a short introduction on Reddit (usually on r/IAmA), often proving who they are (e.g. holding up a sign) ourmental.health commons.wikimedia.org . Community members then **submit questions as comments**. These questions are *voted* up or down by other users, so that the most popular or interesting questions float to the top ourmental.health . The host then **answers publicly** in the same thread, typically for a set period (often a few hours to a full day) ourmental.health . Volunteer moderators play key roles: they verify the host's identity (to prevent impostors), enforce

rules, and help keep the session organized [ourmental.health](#) [ourmental.health](#) . Moderators may also coordinate posting the AMA (timing it and providing any proof photo required). The result is a live, unscripted Q&A where anyone can “ask me anything” and the host can answer freely.

- **Example of Steps:**

- **Host introduction:** The guest posts “I am X doing AMA,” describing who they are and why they’re on Reddit [ourmental.health](#) .
- **Proof of identity:** The host provides proof (e.g. a signed note or photo) to moderators to confirm they really are who they claim (a requirement noted early in the subreddit's rules) [ourmental.health](#) [en.wikipedia.org](#) .
- **Question submission:** Redditors post questions as replies. Each question can be *upvoted* by other users, so the most popular ones appear first [ourmental.health](#) .
- **Answering:** The host answers the top-voted questions in real time, often over the course of an hour or more. Sessions sometimes last days if the host continues answering. [ourmental.health](#)

Many AMA hosts verify their identity with a real-time photo or sign. The photo above shows former MLB pitcher Jack Morris holding a board reading “Jack Morris AMA” during his 2016 Reddit session

[commons.wikimedia.org](#) . This kind of live proof helps assure participants that the host is genuine [en.wikipedia.org](#) [ourmental.health](#) .



Cultural Impact & Notable AMAs: AMAs quickly became a **media phenomenon**. They have given ordinary people and famous figures alike a direct channel to large audiences. Hundreds of high-profile AMAs have made news. Notable examples include:

- **Barack Obama (2012):** The U.S. President held a live AMA during his re-election campaign. It drew **millions of viewers** and even briefly crashed Reddit due to the traffic surge [en.wikipedia.org](#) . Analysts praised it as an unprecedented move for accessibility and transparency [bigthink.com](#) .
- **Bill Gates, Bernie Sanders, Stephen Hawking (2010s):** Tech titan Bill Gates has done multiple popular AMAs (once calling it “fun [and] productive” [en.wikipedia.org](#)). Senator Bernie Sanders’s 2018 AMA generated buzz (though some critics said it felt like promotion).

Renowned scientists like Stephen Hawking and Jane Goodall used AMAs to explain their research and interact with the public. Indeed, professional groups (AAAS, ACS, journals like *PLOS ONE*) began **sponsoring r/science AMAs** to engage public with experts journals.plos.org .

- **Celebrity Endorsements:** Actors, musicians, and athletes have flocked to AMAs. For example, rapper Snoop Dogg's 2012 AMA (done jointly with Jimmy Kimmel) was candid and well-received (over 1.6 million pageviews) en.wikipedia.org . In contrast, actor Woody Harrelson's 2012 AMA drew criticism because he stuck to promoting his film and avoided many questions, showing that fans expect genuine engagement en.wikipedia.org .
- **Controversial/Trolled Sessions:** Some AMAs became infamous. Morgan Freeman's 2017 AMA was widely panned: users complained the answers were bland and suspected a publicist was responding watchmojo.com . A 2012 AMA by the Westboro Baptist Church was almost entirely derailed by trolls, who downvoted every hateful post into obscurity watchmojo.com . These episodes illustrate how the Reddit community actively shapes each AMA's tone.

Each event is widely reported in tech and news media, giving AMAs cultural significance beyond Reddit. As *The Atlantic* noted, AMA sessions "import the aspirational norms of honesty and authenticity" into a large public forum theatlantic.com . The AMA format has even entered common parlance: many people joke "I did X, ask me anything," referring to everyday situations.

Evolution & Role: Over time, AMAs have grown into a standard part of public discourse. Politicians have used them to appear more accessible; for instance, administration officials (like President Obama) participated in AMAs to project transparency bigthink.com (though critics note they sometimes avoided certain questions). Scientists and experts use AMAs for public outreach: a *PLOS ONE* study describes Reddit science AMAs (2014–2018) as "an emerging form of public engagement" journals.plos.org . In turn, major media and organizations have adopted AMA-style Q&As on other platforms (Twitter Spaces, Instagram Live, etc.), mimicking Reddit's model ourmental.health . Social media even has official AMA features or hashtags to facilitate such events.

By bypassing traditional media gatekeepers, AMAs have increased *transparency and authenticity* in how figures communicate. As one analysis put it, they "disrupted traditional media gatekeeping," letting celebrities and officials talk directly to audiences ourmental.health .

Reddit's GM Erik Martin aptly summed it up: "there are no rules" in an AMA, freeing people from normal interview constraints theatlantic.com. In today's online culture, AMA sessions are important because they **democratize dialogue**. They allow fans to interact directly with subjects (from movie stars to ordinary survivors), making public figures seem more relatable. In an era of skepticism about media, the AMA's promise of unscripted Q&A has become a valued way for people to ask tough questions and get candid answers.

Citas  **r/IAmA -**

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