

Chris Hemsworth

Australian actor

Alternate titles: [Christopher Hemsworth](#)

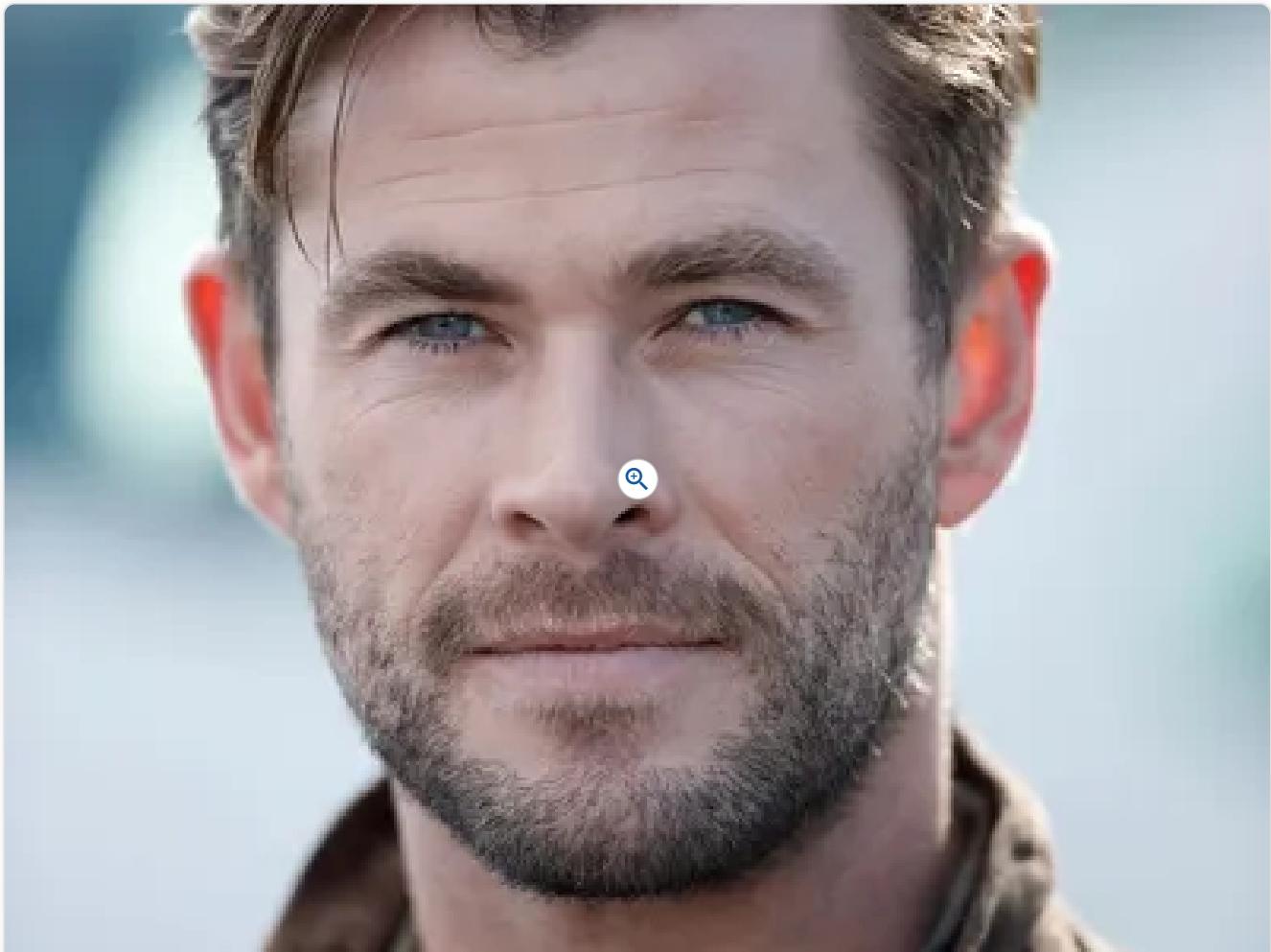
Written by [Pat Bauer](#)

Fact-checked by [The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)

Last Updated: [Article History](#)

[Actions](#)[☰ Table of Contents](#)

Listen to article 3 minutes



Chris Hemsworth

[See all media](#)

Born: August 11, 1983 (age 39) • [Melbourne](#) • [Australia](#)

[See all related content →](#)

Chris Hemsworth, in full **Christopher Hemsworth**, (born August 11, 1983, Melbourne, Australia), Australian actor who came to fame for his role as **Thor** in several **Marvel** Cinematic Universe movies.

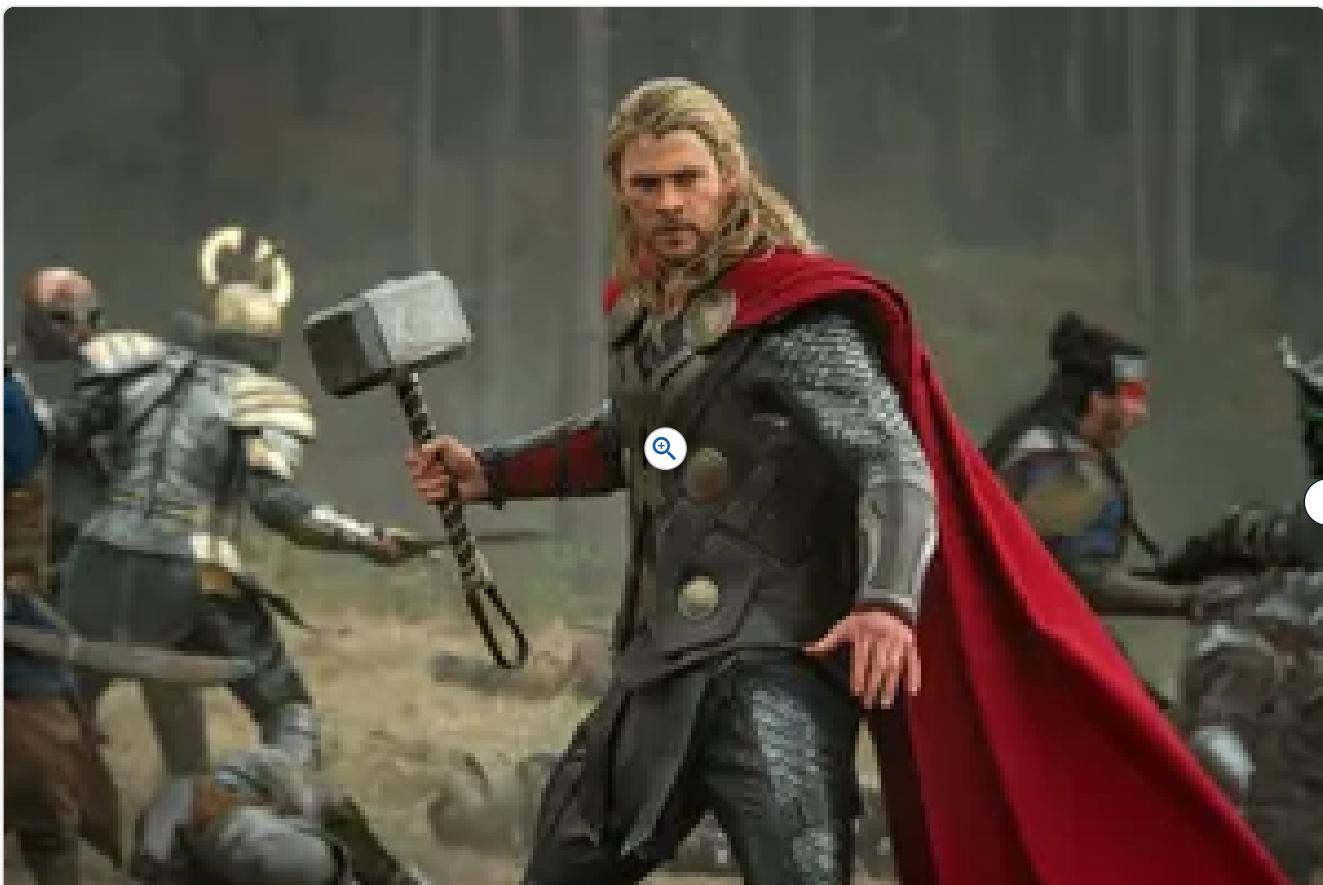
Hemsworth's mother was an English teacher and his father a social-services counselor; his two brothers, Liam Hemsworth, also became actors. The family moved back and forth between [Melbourne](#) and the United States.

Chris Hemsworth and his family have been involved in various community projects and charities.

Bulman, [Northern Territory](#), eventually settling on [Phillip Island](#). Hemsworth's first [acting](#) job came in 2002, when he played [King Arthur](#) in two episodes of the fantasy television series *Guinevere Jones*. Like many Australian actors, he cut his teeth with a role (2004–07) on the [soap opera](#) *Home and Away*.



Britannica Quiz
[Pop Culture Quiz](#)



[Thor](#)

Hemsworth then moved to the [United States](#) in hopes of transitioning his acting career to [film](#). He was cast in the role of Captain Kirk's father in [J.J. Abrams](#)'s 2009 movie *Star Trek*, and that same year he played a menacing hitchhiker in the thriller *A Perfect Getaway*. He appeared in the minor action movie *Ca\$h* (2010) before his first outing as the [title Norse god](#) in [Kenneth Branagh](#)'s *Thor* (2011). The movie told the story of Thor's [arrogant breaching](#) of a peace and being banished to 21st-century Earth to learn humility. Hemsworth's light, self-mocking, and human touch in his portrayal of the comic [superhero](#) made the film a hit and launched a popular franchise. He later starred in *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017) and *Thor: Love and Thunder* (2022), both of which were directed by [Taika Waititi](#). Hemsworth also played the character in other Marvel movies, including *The Avengers* (2012).

During this time Hemsworth appeared in numerous other films. He had a leading role in the horror movie *The Cabin in the Woods*, filmed in 2009 but not released until 2011. He then portrayed the Huntsman in the reimagined [fairy tale](#) *Snow White and*

the Huntsman (2012), a character he repeated in the less-successful *The Huntsman: Winter's War* (2016). Other notable roles included that of Formula One race driver James Hunt in Ron Howard's critically praised *Rush* (2013), a computer hacker in Michael Mann's crime thriller *Blackhat* (2015), and a sexy receptionist in the gender-flipped remake *Ghostbusters* (2016). He gave a well-received performance as an underestimated Green Beret captain in the Afghanistan War story *12 Strong* (2018), and he played a heroic mercenary in the action movie *Extraction* (2020).

In 2022 Hemsworth starred in the docuseries *Limitless*, which centres on wellness and self-improvement. Throughout the series, he undertakes various health-related challenges that test his limits.

Pat Bauer

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

Home > Entertainment & Pop Culture > Movie, TV & Stage Directors

Denzel Washington

American actor

Actions

Written and fact-checked by [The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)
Last Updated: Article History

≡ Table of Contents

Listen to article 6 minutes



Denzel Washington

[See all media](#)**Born:** December 28, 1954 (age 68) • [Mount Vernon](#) • [New York](#)**Awards And Honors:** [Presidential Medal of Freedom \(2022\)](#) • [Tony Awards \(2010\)](#) • [Academy Award \(2002\)](#) • [Academy Award \(1990\)](#) • [Academy Award \(2002\): Actor in a Leading Role](#) • [Academy Award \(1990\): Actor in a Supporting Role](#) • [Cecil B. DeMille Award \(2016\)](#) • [Golden Globe Award \(2000\): Best Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama](#) • [Golden Globe Award \(1990\): Best Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture](#) • [Tony Award \(2010\): Best Actor in a Play](#) [...\(Show more\)](#)**Notable Works:** ["A Journal for Jordan"](#) • ["Antwone Fisher"](#) • ["Fences"](#) • ["The Great Debaters"](#)[See all related content →](#)**Top Questions**

Who is Denzel Washington?

What was Denzel Washington's first film?

Where did Denzel Washington grow up?

Was Denzel Washington ever on Broadway?

What are some of Denzel Washington's most memorable portrayals of real people?

Denzel Washington, (born December 28, 1954, Mount Vernon, [New York](#), U.S.), American actor celebrated for his engaging and powerful performances. Throughout his career he was regularly praised by critics, and his consistent success at the box office helped to dispel the perception that [African American](#) actors could not draw mainstream white audiences.

After graduating from [Fordham University](#) (B.A., 1977), Washington began to pursue [acting](#) as a career and joined the American Conservatory Theater in [San Francisco](#). After several successful stage performances in California and New York, he made his screen debut in the comedy *Carbon Copy* (1981). He first began to receive national attention for his work on the television [drama](#)

St. Elsewhere (1982–88). For the film *Cry Freedom* (1987), he portrayed South African activist Stephen Biko, and he received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor. Two years later he won the Oscar for best supporting actor for his performance as a freed slave fighting in the Union army in the American Civil War film *Glory* (1989).

[Britannica Quiz](#)[Pop Culture Quiz](#)

[Much Ado About Nothing](#)

Washington's skill as an actor and his popular appeal as a leading man were firmly established in the 1990s. He gave memorable performances in the romantic comedy *Mississippi Masala* (1991), the Shakespearean comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), the courtroom drama *Philadelphia* (1993), the hard-boiled mystery *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995), and the military thriller *Crimson Tide* (1995). The latter was the first of several popular movies he made with director Tony Scott. During this time he also frequently worked with director Spike Lee, starring in *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *He Got Game* (1998), and most significantly *Malcolm X* (1992). Portraying the civil rights activist Malcolm X, Washington gave a complex and powerful performance and earned an Academy Award nomination for best actor. He received a second best-actor nomination for his portrayal of boxer Rubin Carter in the film *The Hurricane* (1999).



Denzel Washington

In *Training Day* (2001), Washington played a corrupt and violent police detective, the performance for which he became only the second African American actor (the first was Sidney Poitier) to win an Oscar for best actor. After starring in director Jonathan Demme's 2004 update of the 1962 thriller *The Manchurian Candidate*, Washington reteamed with Lee for the crime drama

Inside Man (2006). He later appeared as a drug kingpin opposite [Russell Crowe](#)'s determined narcotics officer in *American Gangster* (2007) and as a dispatcher caught in the middle of a subway train hijacking in Scott's *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3* (2009).

In 2010 Washington starred in the postapocalyptic action drama *The Book of Eli* and [collaborated](#) again with Scott on the action thriller *Unstoppable*. He subsequently portrayed a rogue CIA agent in *South Africa* in the spy thriller *Safe House* (2012) before giving an Oscar-nominated performance in *Flight* (2012) as a heroic airplane pilot hiding a substance-abuse problem. The action comedy *2 Guns*, in which Washington was cast as a covert drug-enforcement operative, followed in 2013. After playing Robert McCall, a mysterious vigilante, in the action thriller *The Equalizer* (2014), Washington appeared in *The Magnificent Seven* (2016), a remake of the [1960 classic western](#). In 2017 he starred in *Roman J. Israel, Esq.*, portraying an idealistic *Los Angeles* lawyer who begins to question his principles. For his performance, Washington received his eighth Oscar nomination for acting. He then [reprised](#) his role as Robert McCall in *The Equalizer 2* (2018). In the crime drama *The Little Things* (2021) he played a detective hunting a [serial killer](#). Also in 2021 Washington starred with [Frances McDormand](#) in *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, [Joel Coen](#)'s [adaptation](#) of Shakespeare's [play](#). Washington received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of the [titular character](#).

Additionally, Washington directed and appeared in the biographical films *Antwone Fisher* (2002), about a U.S. serviceman with a troubled past, and *The Great Debaters* (2007), which centres on an inspirational debate coach at an African American college in the 1930s. He also helmed *A Journal for Jordan* (2021), a drama based on a true story about a journalist's romantic relationship with a soldier.



Get a Britannica Premium subscription and gain access to exclusive content.

[Subscribe Now](#)



Fences

In addition to his film work, Washington occasionally acted onstage. In 2005 he starred as Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Five years later he appeared in the Broadway revival of August Wilson's *Fences*, a family drama set in the 1950s that explores issues of identity and racism. For his performance, Washington won a Tony Award in 2010. He later directed and starred in a film adaptation (2016) of the play, and his performance earned him an Oscar nomination. In 2018 he returned to Broadway as Hickey in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*.

In 2016 Washington received the Cecil B. DeMille Award (a Golden Globe Award for “outstanding contributions to the world of entertainment”). He later was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2022).

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

This article was most recently revised and updated by Amy Tikkainen.

Load Next Page ▾

