Fey broke into comedy as a featured player in the Chicago @-@ based improvisational comedy group The Second City . She then joined SNL as a writer , later becoming head writer and a performer , known for her position as co @-@ anchor in the Weekend Update segment . In 2004 , she co @-@ starred in and wrote the screenplay for Mean Girls , which was adapted from the 2002 self @-@ help book Queen Bees and Wannabes . After leaving SNL in 2006 , she created the television series 30 Rock for Broadway Video , a situation comedy loosely based on her experiences at SNL . In the series , Fey portrays the head writer of a fictional sketch comedy series . In 2008 , she starred in the comedy film Baby Mama , alongside former SNL co @-@ star Amy Poehler . Fey next appeared in the 2010 comedy film Date Night and the animated film Megamind . In 2015 , she created and produced the television series Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt , originally for NBC and eventually for Netflix . Her recent films include Sisters and Whiskey Tango Foxtrot .

Fey has received eight Emmy Awards , two Golden Globe Awards , five Screen Actors Guild Awards , and four Writers Guild of America Awards and was nominated for a Grammy Award for her autobiographical book Bossypants , which topped The New York Times Best Seller list for five weeks . In 2008 , the Associated Press gave Fey the AP Entertainer of the Year award for her satirical portrayal of Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin in a guest appearance on SNL . In 2010 , Fey was awarded the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor , becoming the youngest @-@ ever recipient of the award . On January 13 , 2013 , Fey hosted the 70th Golden Globe Awards with her long @-@ time friend and fellow comedian , Amy Poehler , to critical acclaim . The duo hosted again the following two years , generating the highest ratings for the annual ceremony in a decade and receiving similar acclaim .

### = = Early life = =

Fey was born on May 18 , 1970 , in Upper Darby , Pennsylvania , a suburb of Philadelphia . Her mother , Zenobia " Jeanne " ( née Xenakes ) , is a brokerage employee ; her father , Donald Henry Fey ( died 2015 , age 82 ) , was a university grant proposal writer . She has a brother , Peter , who is eight years older . Fey 's mother , who was born in Piraeus , Greece , is the daughter of Greek immigrants : Vasiliki Kourelakou , Fey 's maternal grandmother , left Petrina , Laconia , Greece on her own , arriving in the United States in February 1921 .

Fey 's father had English , German , and Northern Irish ancestry ; one of Fey 's paternal great @-@ great @-@ great @-@ great @-@ grandfathers was John Hewson ( 1744 ? 1821 ) , a textile manufacturer who immigrated to America with the support of Benjamin Franklin , enabling Hewson to quickly open a quilting factory in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . According to a genealogical DNA test arranged by the television series Finding Your Roots , Fey 's ancestry is 94 % European , 3 % Middle Eastern , and 3 % from the Caucasus .

Fey was exposed to comedy early:

At age 11, Fey read Joe Franklin 's Seventy Years of Great Film Comedians for a school project about comedy. She grew up watching Second City Television, and has cited Catherine O 'Hara as a role model.

Fey attended Cardington @-@ Stonehurst Elementary School and Beverly Hills Middle School in Upper Darby . By middle school , she knew she was interested in comedy . Fey attended Upper Darby High School , where she was an honors student , a member of the choir , drama club , and tennis team , and co @-@ editor of the school 's newspaper , The Acorn . She also anonymously

wrote the newspaper 's satirical column, The Colonel. Following her graduation in 1988, Fey enrolled at the University of Virginia, where she studied play @-@ writing and acting and was awarded the Pettway Prize. She graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in drama.

After college, she worked as a receptionist during the day at the Evanston YMCA and took classes at Second City at night.

```
= = Career = =
= = = Saturday Night Live ( 1997 ? 2006 ) = = =
```

While performing shows with The Second City in 1997, Fey submitted several scripts to NBC 's variety show Saturday Night Live (SNL), at the request of its head writer Adam McKay, a former performer at Second City. She was hired as a writer for SNL following a meeting with SNL creator Lorne Michaels, and moved to New York from Chicago. Fey told The New Yorker, "I'd had my eye on the show forever, the way other kids have their eye on Derek Jeter." Originally, Fey "struggled" at SNL. Her first sketch to air starred Chris Farley in a Sally Jessy Raphael satire. Fey went on to write a series of parodies, including one of ABC 's morning talk show The View. She co @-@ wrote the "Sully and Denise" sketches with Rachel Dratch, who plays one of the teens.

Fey was an extra in a 1998 episode , and after watching herself , decided to diet and lost 30 pounds . She told The New York Times , " I was a completely normal weight , but I was here in New York City , I had money and I couldn 't buy any clothes . After I lost weight , there was interest in putting me on camera . " In 1999 , McKay stepped down as head writer , which led Michaels to approach Fey for the position . She became SNL 's first female head writer that year .

In 2000 , Fey began performing in sketches , and she and Jimmy Fallon became co @-@ anchors of SNL 's Weekend Update segment . Fey said she did not ask to audition , but that Michaels approached her . Michaels explained that there was chemistry between Fey and Fallon , though the decision was " kind of risky " at the time . Her role in Weekend Update was well received by critics . Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly wrote : " ... Fey delivers such blow darts ? poison filled jokes written in long , precisely parsed sentences unprecedented in Update history ? with such a bright , sunny countenance makes her all the more devilishly delightful . " Dennis Miller , a former cast member of SNL and anchor of Weekend Update , was pleased with Fey as one of the anchors for the segment : " ... Fey might be the best Weekend Update anchor who ever did it . She writes the funniest jokes " . Robert Bianco of USA Today , however , commented that he was " not enamored " of the pairing .

In 2001, Fey and the rest of the writing staff won a Writers Guild of America Award for SNL 's 25th anniversary special. The following year at the 2002 Emmy Awards ceremony, they won the Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program.

When Fallon left the show in May 2004, he was replaced on Weekend Update by Amy Poehler. It was the first time that two women co @-@ anchored Weekend Update. Fey revealed that she "hired "Poehler as her co @-@ host for the segment. The reception was positive, with Rachel Sklar of the Chicago Tribune noting that the pairing "has been a hilarious, pitch @-@ perfect success as they play @-@ off each other with quick one @-@ liners and deadpan delivery ".

The 2005 ? 2006 season was her last; she departed to develop 30 Rock for Broadway Video . At the time she left, the 117 episodes she co @-@ hosted made her SNL 's longest @-@ serving Weekend Update anchor, a mark that would later be passed by her replacement, Seth Meyers . In Rolling Stone Magazine 's February , 2015 appraisal of all 141 SNL cast members to date, Fey was ranked third in importance ( behind John Belushi and Eddie Murphy ) . They credited her with " salvaging ' Update ' from a decade @-@ long losing streak, " and " slapping SNL out of its late @-@ nineties coma . "

```
= = = 30 Rock (2006 ? 2013) = = =
```

In 2002, Fey suggested a pilot episode for a situation comedy about a cable news network to NBC, which rejected it. The pilot was reworked to revolve around an SNL style series, and was accepted by NBC. She signed a contract with NBC in May 2003, which allowed her to remain in her SNL head writer position at least through the 2004? 2005 television season. As part of the contract, Fey was to develop a prime @-@ time project to be produced by Broadway Video and NBC Universal. The pilot, directed by Adam Bernstein, centered on Liz Lemon, the head writer of a variety show on NBC, and how she managed her relationships with the show 's volatile stars and the new head of the network. In October 2006, the pilot aired on NBC as 30 Rock. Although the episode received generally favorable reviews, it finished third in its timeslot.

The network renewed the series for a second season, which began in October 2007. The show 's third season premiered on October 30, 2008. The premiere episode drew 8 @.@ 5 million viewers, the highest ratings of the series.

In 2007, Fey received an Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series. The show itself won the 2007 Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series ( and did so again for two subsequent years) . In 2008, she won the Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, and Emmy awards all in the category for Best Actress in a Comedy Series. The following year, Fey again won the Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award in the same categories, and was nominated for an Emmy Award. In early 2010, Fey received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress, and won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Lead Actress . 30 Rock was renewed for the 2010 ? 2011 season in March 2010. The series returned for the 2011? 2012 season, though due to Fey 's pregnancy with her second child, the season premiere was delayed until midseason. Fey 's performance on the show was inspired by Julia Louis @-@ Dreyfus, and later used Louis @-@ Dreyfus to play the stand @-@ in for the character of Liz Lemon in flashback scenes during the live episode of the fifth season. On May 11, 2012, it was announced that the show had been renewed for a seventh and final season, to premiere October 4, 2012, with 13 episodes. After receiving 13 Emmy Award nominations and two wins for this final season, 30 Rock ended its critically acclaimed run with 112 Emmy award nominations. It has been cited as one of the greatest TV series of all time and it is considered to have one of the greatest finales in television history.

# = = = Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt = = =

In 2015 , Fey created and produced the television comedy Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt with fellow 30 Rock @-@ alumnus Robert Carlock . The series stars Ellie Kemper as the titular character who escapes from a doomsday cult and moves to New York . It also stars Fey 's former co @-@ star Jane Krakowski , as well as Tituss Burgess ( who had previously appeared in four 30 Rock episodes ) and Carol Kane . Although it was originally produced for NBC , it was eventually sold to Netflix and immediately renewed for a second season . The show premiered on March 6 , 2015 to critical acclaim .

On July 16 , 2015 , the series was nominated for seven Primetime Emmy Awards , including Outstanding Comedy Series . Fey herself was nominated both as the creator / executive producer of the series and for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series for her guest performance as Marcia , a bumbling prosecutor in reference to Marcia Clark .

# = = = Feature films = = =

In 2002, Fey appeared in the surreal comedy Martin & Orloff. She made her debut as writer and co @-@ star of the 2004 teen comedy Mean Girls. Characters and behaviors in the movie are based on Fey 's high school life at Upper Darby High School and on the non @-@ fiction book Queen Bees and Wannabes by Rosalind Wiseman. The cast includes other past cast members of SNL including Tim Meadows, Ana Gasteyer, and Amy Poehler. The film received favorable reviews, and was a box office success, grossing US \$ 129 million worldwide.

In a 2004 interview, Fey expressed that she would like to write and direct movies. In 2006, Fey worked on a movie script for Paramount Pictures, which was to feature Sacha Baron Cohen, by the

name of Curly Oxide and Vic Thrill, based loosely on the true story of a Hasidic rock musician. In 2007, she was cast in the animated comedy film Aqua Teen Hunger Force Colon Movie Film for Theaters as the Aqua Teens' mother, a giant burrito.

She received her SAG card after appearing in Artie Lange 's Beer League released in 2006, in which she was compelled to join for " ... a thousand dollars " .

Fey and former SNL castmate Amy Poehler starred in the 2008 comedy Baby Mama . The movie was written and directed by Michael McCullers . The plot concerns Kate ( Fey ) , a business woman , who wants a child but , discovering she has only a million @-@ to @-@ one chance of getting pregnant , decides to find a surrogate : Angie ( Poehler ) , a white @-@ trash schemer . Baby Mama received mixed reviews , but critics enjoyed Fey 's performance . Todd McCarthy of Variety wrote : " Fey is a delight to watch throughout . Able to convey Kate 's intentions and feelings through the simple looks and inflections , she never melodramatizes her situation ; nor does her efficient , perfectionist side become overbearing . " The movie grossed over US \$ 64 million at the box office .

Fey 's projects after 2008 include a voice role in the English @-@ language version of the Japanese animated film Ponyo . In 2009 , she appeared in The Invention of Lying , alongside Ricky Gervais , Jennifer Garner , Rob Lowe , and Christopher Guest . Her next film role was in Shawn Levy 's 2010 comedy Date Night , a feature that focuses on a married couple , played by Fey and Steve Carell , who go on a date ; however , the night goes awry for the two . Also in the same year , she voiced Roxanne Ritchie , a television reporter , in the DreamWorks animated film Megamind ( 2010 ) . With a total worldwide gross of US \$ 321 million , Megamind is Fey 's most commercially successful picture to date . It earned US \$ 173 million outside the U.S. and US \$ 148 million domestically .

In 2013, Fey starred alongside Paul Rudd in the romantic comedy @-@ drama film Admission, based on the Jean Hanff Korelitz novel by the same name. The film was directed by Paul Weitz. Fey later starred in the 2014 comedy @-@ drama This Is Where I Leave You, helmed by Date Night director Shawn Levy. As was the case with Baby Mama, although both of these films received generally mixed reviews, Fey 's performances were well received by film critics.

In 2015, it was announced Fey would be the narrator for the Disney Nature film Monkey Kingdom, which was released in theaters on April 17, 2015. She then re @-@ teamed with Poehler, starring in the 2015 comedy film Sisters as the title characters, and received positive reviews for her role. In 2016, Fey starred in the biographical war comedy @-@ drama Whiskey Tango Foxtrot, based on the memoir The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to positive reviews.

#### = = = Subsequent SNL appearances = = =

On February 23, 2008, Fey hosted the first episode of SNL after the 2007? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike. For this appearance, she was nominated for an Emmy in the category of Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program. Fey hosted SNL for a second time on April 10, 2010, and for her appearance she received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series.

From September to November 2008, Fey made multiple guest appearances on SNL to perform a series of parodies of Republican vice @-@ presidential candidate Sarah Palin. On the 34th season premiere episode, aired September 13, 2008, Fey imitated Palin in a sketch, alongside Amy Poehler as Hillary Clinton. Their repartee included Clinton needling Palin about her " Tina Fey glasses". The sketch quickly became NBC 's most @-@ watched viral video ever, with 5 @.@ 7 million views by the following Wednesday. Fey reprised this role on the October 4 show, on the October 18 show where she was joined by the real Sarah Palin, and on the November 1 show, where she was joined by John McCain and his wife Cindy. The October 18 show had the best ratings of any SNL show since 1994. The following year Fey won an Emmy in the category of Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series for her impersonation of Palin. Fey returned to SNL in April 2010, and reprised her impression of Palin in one sketch titled the " Sarah Palin Network ". Fey once again did her impression of Palin when she hosted Saturday Night Live on May 8, 2011. In December 2009, Entertainment Weekly put her Palin impersonation on its end @-@ of @-@ the

@-@ decade " best @-@ of " list , writing , " Fey 's freakishly spot @-@ on SNL impersonation of the wannabe VP ( and her ability to strike a balance between comedy and cruelty ) made for truly transcendent television . " Rolling Stone called her Palin impression " [ arguably ] the most brilliant move SNL ever made " .

### = = = Other work = = =

In 1997, Fey and other members of The Second City provided voices for the pinball game Medieval Madness.

In 2000, Fey partnered with fellow SNL cast member Rachel Dratch in the Off Broadway two @-@ woman show Dratch & Fey at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater in New York City. The production was well received by critics. Tim Townsend of The Wall Street Journal wrote that the fun part of watching Fey and Dratch perform was "seeing how comfortable they are with each other ". He concluded that the production " isn 't about two women being funny ... Dratch and Fey are just funny. Period." One of the SNL sketches, "Sully and Denise", originated at The Second City.

On August 13, 2007, Fey made a guest appearance in the Sesame Street episode "The Bookaneers". She appeared as a guest judge on the November 25, 2007 episode of the Food Network program Iron Chef America.

Fey has appeared as Tinker Bell in Disney 's campaign " Year of a Million Dreams " . She has also done commercials for American Express and Garnier Nutrisse .

On April 5 , 2011 , Fey 's autobiography , Bossypants , was released to a positive review from The New York Times .

In 2011, Fey narrated The Secret Life of Girls, a two @-@ hour @-@ long radio documentary produced by The Kitchen Sisters. She introduced stories of women and girls from around the world, and also shared memories of her own girlhood and mother.

In 2012, Fey made her rapping debut on the Childish Gambino (Donald Glover) mixtape Royalty. Glover is a former writer on 30 Rock, on which he worked with Fey. Fey was also featured as herself in the iCarly episode "iShock America".

## = = Comedic and acting style = =

Fey is known for her deadpan humor and delivery; her " sardonic wit " has become a trademark of hers, upon which several critics have commented in their reviews of Fey 's work. According to Los Angeles Times critic Mary McNamara, Fey " project [ s ] both oblivious security and hyper @-@ alert insecurity with the same expression " in her performances, while The Chronicle 's Dillon Fernando wrote that the actress specializes in " delectable, situational and ironic comedy ". On Fey 's comedic prowess, Saturday Night Live creator Lorne Michaels enthused that his former employee " has a very clear take on things ... It always comes from a place of intelligence and there is just an edge to it. " Michaels concluded, " It 's not fearful. It 's strong and confident and you recognise the voice and most of the time you agree with it. " Writing for The Guardian, Christopher Goodwin believes that Fey " fashioned her comic persona around her glasses ", which she has worn since 1995; Fey joked that " Glasses make anyone look smarter ".

Seldom hesitating to use herself as the butt of her own jokes , Fey is also well known for practicing self @-@ deprecating humor , as demonstrated throughout her performance as Liz Lemon in 30 Rock . In an article ranking Fey 's six greatest jokes , David Renshaw of The Guardian wrote that the performer 's work continues to feature her " trademark mix of snark , self @-@ deprecation and pop @-@ culture smarts . " Fey 's self @-@ deprecating comedic style inspired Ashley Fetters of The Atlantic to recognize her as comedian Phyllis Diller 's successor because of their similar humor . Critics have been divided in their opinions and discussions of Fey 's use of self @-@ deprecating humor , and its effect on women as a female comic ; while blogger Kate Harding disapproved of Fey 's performance in 30 Rock because " I 'm torn between being sad that she apparently doesn 't see [ beauty ] in herself and being pissed off that she 's reinforcing the idea that having brown hair , glasses , and a figure that 's maybe a size 2 instead of a 0 actually equals ugly " , Jessica G. of

Jezebel defended the actress, writing that Fey 's performance is " supposed to be parodying precisely the kinds of media that reinforce ideas that unconventional women are unworthy. " Writing that Harding misunderstood Fey 's intentions, the author concluded that her self @-@ deprecation " is precisely what makes her relatable ", elaborating that "[women] have many moments of self @-@ doubt, and seeing someone as successful as Tina Fey be self @-@ deprecating gives us all permission to be imperfect . " Sophie Caldecott of Verily defended Fey 's modesty and tendency to downplay her own physical appearance: " She mocks her own appearance, sure, but she does so in a way that consistently shows up our culture for placing so much importance on how women look , as if that ? s the most interesting thing about us ... Her comic persona on 30 Rock, Liz Lemon, can be laughed at for many things, but her career managerial style and ability is not one of them. " Caldecott concluded, " In reality, self @-@ deprecation is an art that comedians everywhere dabble in ... In fact, I defy you to find a good male comedian who isn? t a master of self @-@ deprecation. Comedians make fun of themselves for many reasons, mostly because it is the most readily accessible source of inspiration but also because it is the most generous one. " Observing that Fey 's material lacks " whining ", Gina Barreca of the Hartford Courant wrote that Fey 's comedy " is not simply an iteration of self @-@ deprecating femininity passing itself off as humor . In itself, this demarcates the current generation of female humorists from earlier generations of performers who were told, more or less, to use themselves not as a sounding board for ideas but as a punching bag for insults . "

As an actress , Fey has developed a reputation for portraying " the hilarious , self @-@ deprecating unmarried career woman " in most of her films to @-@ date . The Boston Globe 's Janice Paige defended her limited filmography by writing that , unlike most film actors , Fey remains " realistic about her range as a leading lady and says she ? s been deliberate about only taking on parts for which she actually seems suited . " Fey explained that she approaches each role asking herself , " Would I be plausible in this role , in this job ? " However , her role as Kate Ellis in 2015 's Sisters provided Fey with an opportunity to stray from playing the type @-@ A female characters for which she has become known . The New York Times film critic A. O. Scott wrote , " We ? re used to seeing Ms. Fey ... as an anxious overthinker using her caustic sarcasm as a weapon against both her own insecurities and the flakes and train wrecks who surround her . This time , she gets to be the train wreck . " In 30 Rock , Fey 's comedic acting was heavily influenced by both physical and improvisational comedy while , as a writer , her " carefully written scripts " were often quirky and character @-@ driven .

#### = = In the media = =

In 2002, Fey was ranked in the Hot 100 List at number 80 on Maxim magazine, which used photos taken earlier by Rolling Stone calling her " the thinking man 's sex symbol " . She was named one of People magazine 's 50 Most Beautiful People in 2003, and one of People magazine 's 100 Most Beautiful People in 2007, 2008, and 2009. In 2007, Fey placed seventh on the Hot 100 List on AfterEllen.com. She repeated the appearance the following year, being voted as number one on the list.

In 2001, Entertainment Weekly named Fey as one of their Entertainers of the Year for her work on Weekend Update . In 2007, she was named one of the magazine 's Entertainers of the Year, and placed number two in 2008 . In 2009, Fey was named as Entertainment Weekly 's fifth individual in their 15 Entertainers of the 2000s list . In 2013, Entertainment Weekly crowned Fey as " The Once and Future Queen " ( an allusion to The Once and Future King ) in their feature on " Women Who Run TV, " calling her " the funniest woman in the free world . " EW quoted Mindy Kaling as saying, " I always feel unoriginal bringing up Tina as my inspiration, but she 's everyone 's inspiration for a reason . " The column also quoted praise by Zooey Deschanel and Lena Dunham .

The newspaper editors and broadcast producers of the Associated Press voted Fey the AP Entertainer of the Year as the performer who had the greatest impact on culture and entertainment in 2008, citing her impression of Sarah Palin on SNL. She has appeared on Forbes 'annual Celebrity 100 list of the 100 most powerful celebrities in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 at No.

99, No. 86, No. 90, No. 92, and No. 79 respectively.

In 2007, the New York Post included Fey in New York 's 50 Most Powerful Women, ranking her at number 33. Fey was among the Time 100, a list of the 100 most influential people in the world, in 2007 and 2009, as selected annually by Time magazine. Fey 's featured article for the 2009 list was written by 30 Rock co @-@ star, Alec Baldwin. She was selected by Barbara Walters as one of America 's 10 Most Fascinating People of 2008.

In September 2011, Fey was ranked at the top of Forbes magazine 's list of the highest @-@ paid TV actresses.

In June 2010, it was announced Fey would receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2011.

In 2014, Fey was recognized by Elle Magazine during The Women in Hollywood Awards, honoring women for their outstanding achievements in film, spanning all aspects of the motion picture industry, including acting, directing, and producing.

```
= = Charity work = =
```

Fey 's charity work includes support of Autism Speaks, an organization that sponsors autism research. In April 2008, she participated in Night of Too Many Stars, a comedy benefit show for autism education.

Fey is also a supporter of Mercy Corps , a global relief and development organization , in their campaign to end world hunger . Fey narrated a video for Mercy Corps 's Action Center in New York City , describing hunger as a symptom of many wider world problems . She also supports the Love Our Children USA organization , which fights violence against children , who named her among their Mothers Who Make a Difference , in 2009 . She was the 2009 national spokesperson for the Light the Night Walk , which benefits the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society .

```
= = Personal life = =
```

In 1994, two years after Fey joined Chicago 's Second City improvisational theatre troupe, she began dating Jeff Richmond, a piano player who later became Second City 's musical director and then a composer on 30 Rock. They married in a Greek Orthodox ceremony on June 3, 2001. They have two daughters: Alice Zenobia Richmond (born September 10, 2005) and Penelope Athena Richmond (born August 10, 2011). In April 2009, Fey and Richmond purchased a US \$ 3 @ . @ 4 million apartment on the Upper West Side in New York City.

Fey has a scar a few inches long on the left side of her chin and cheek , the cause of which remained unexplained to the public until a 2008 Vanity Fair profile by Maureen Dowd , and subsequently in her autobiographical book , where she revealed that " during the spring semester of kindergarten , I was slashed in the face by a stranger in the alley behind my house " .

```
= = Filmography = =

= = = Film = = =

= = Television = = =

= = Video games = = =

= = Awards and nominations = =
```