

= Sakura Haruno =

Sakura Haruno ( 桜 井 春 野 , Haruno Sakura ) is a fictional character in the Naruto manga and anime series created by Masashi Kishimoto . In the anime and manga , Sakura is a kunoichi affiliated with the village of Konohagakure , and part of Team 7 , which consists of herself , Naruto Uzumaki , Sasuke Uchiha , and their sensei , Kakashi Hatake . Sakura initially has an infatuation for Sasuke , praising him at every juncture , and heaping scorn upon the less skilled Naruto . Over the course of the series , she begins to shed this singularly driven persona , and grows more appreciative and accepting of Naruto . Sakura has appeared in several pieces of Naruto media , including the nine feature films in the series , all of the original video animations , and several video games .

Sakura has become the series ' female lead , although she was not immediately intended for the role . Kishimoto has had difficulty in drawing her , resulting in Kishimoto inadvertently emphasizing certain parts of her appearance , including her large forehead . Chie Nakamura voices the character in the animated adaptations of the series , while Kate Higgins plays her in the English dub .

Numerous anime and manga publications have praised and criticized Sakura 's character . She was initially noted to be a stereotypical shōnen character , serving as a love interest for the protagonist , and served little purpose in the series initially beyond being comic relief . Her emergence from this stereotype as the series progressed , however , has been celebrated by reviewers . Amongst the Naruto reader base , Sakura has been popular , placing high in some polls . Several pieces of merchandise have been released in Sakura 's likeness , including a plush doll and key chains .

= = Appearances = =

= = In Naruto = = =

Sakura is a young ninja who is part of Team 7 alongside Naruto Uzumaki and Sasuke Uchiha under the leadership from Kakashi Hatake . Within Sakura resides " Inner Sakura , " a manifestation of her inner emotions . In addition to comic relief , Inner Sakura represents Sakura 's actual opinion on things when she outwardly displays something opposite . As Sakura has a deep infatuation for Sasuke many of her earlier appearances are dedicated to her continuing effort to win his affection . She accompanies the rest of Team 7 during all of its early missions , though she does little to contribute to the battles that take place . Sakura lacks any unique traits that set her apart from the rest of Team 7 although Kakashi notes that she has an excellent control over her chakra early in Part I. As a result , Sakura sits on the sidelines , content in allowing her teammates to protect her and defeat their opponents . During the Chunin Exams , when the rest of Team 7 is left in need of her protection , Sakura realizes that relying on others to fight her battles has been unwise . She resolves to better her ninja abilities from that point further , and throughout the rest of the series takes a more active role in Team 7 's battles . After Sasuke 's defection from Konoha at the end of Part I , Naruto 's failure to bring him back , and Sakura 's inability to help either of them , she becomes Tsunade 's apprentice so that she can do more for her teammates in the future . Since then , Sakura makes it her personal goal to bring Sasuke home .

After training under Tsunade for two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years , Sakura acquires the ability to heal wounds , becoming one of the most experienced medical ninja . In order to secure her survival to heal other , Sakura also developed superhuman strength by building up chakra in her fists . Thanks to this , Sakura joins Team 7 as medical ninja to save Gaara from the criminal group Akatsuki . With help from the elder Chiyo , Sakura defeats the Akatsuki member Sasori who gives her hints of Sasuke 's whereabouts . Naruto , Sakura , and the new members of Team 7 use this intelligence to track Sasuke down , but they are once again unable to prevent him from escaping . While disappointed in their failure , Team 7 tries once again to find Sasuke , though after almost apprehending him they lose his trail and are forced to return home . As they search for Sasuke during Part II , Sakura learns of the various hardships Naruto faces : the Nine @-@ Tailed Demon Fox creature inside him which is being pursued by Akatsuki . Saddened by the impact both forces

have had on his life , Sakura becomes protective of Naruto and tries to do whatever she can to help him overcome these obstacles . Sakura later resolves to kill Sasuke after understanding he is becoming a menace to the villages . However , when she fails to do it , Naruto decides to settle things with Sasuke himself . When a war against the remaining Akatsuki is announced , Sakura participates as a medical ninja . She moves to fighting side when Akatsuki releases the Ten Tails creature and she battles it alongside Naruto and Sasuke .

= = = Post Naruto = = =

After Sasuke is pardoned of his crimes , Sakura sees him off as he decides to travel the world in search for redemption and shows signs that he finally accepts her feelings for him . In the epilogue , set years after the end of the Fourth Ninja War , it is shown that Sakura and Sasuke had married and had a daughter , Sarada . Sasuke 's travels keep him away from their daughter , his whereabouts becoming a touchy subject for Sakura who insists over the years that Sasuke will return home once having completed his mission . After punching the ground in a fit of rage over Sarada asking if her and Sasuke are married , Sakura wakes to discover her daughter has left the village in search of Sasuke . By the time she catches up to the two , they are in the presence of Shin Uchiha , who Sakura attacks and in doing so is teleported away with to his hideout where she declines to assist him with her medical skills and pretends to be helpless in order to gain information on him , returning to the village after his defeat and seeing Sasuke off . She later serves as a spectator for Sarada while she participates in the Chunin Exams and saves both herself and other onlookers from falling debris , afterward healing Hinata .

= = = In other media = = =

Sakura has made several appearances outside of the Naruto anime and manga . She is in all ten of the featured films in the series : in the first movie , she battles Mizore Fuyukuma , and later defeats him ; in the second she helps Naruto and Shikamaru Nara in their battle against Haido and his subordinates ; the third has Sakura battling the hired ninja Karenbana , whom she defeats using her enhanced strength ; in the fourth , Sakura , alongside Naruto , Rock Lee , and Neji Hyuga are assigned to escort the maiden Shion ; in the fifth , Sakura is assigned alongside Naruto and Hinata Hyuga to help a girl , Amaru , and her sensei , Shinn? , return to their village and in the process learning of an upcoming invasion of the Sky Country ; the sixth has Sakura with Naruto desperately following and trying to bring back their sensei , Kakashi who has gone on a suicide mission to prevent the Fourth Great Ninja World War ; in the seventh , Sakura and the rest of Team Kakashi are sent to capture a missing nin , Mukade ; in the eighth , Sakura assists in the battle against the demon Satori who has been released from the Box of Enlightenment ; in the ninth , Sakura and Naruto are transported to an illusion world by Obito Uchiha in which instead of Naruto 's parents , it were Sakura 's parents who had sacrificed their lives in preventing the Nine Tails from destroying Konoha as thus deemed as the village 's heroes ; and finally , in the tenth , Sakura , in her young adult years , sets out alongside Naruto , Sai , Shikamaru , and Hinata to rescue a kidnapped Hanabi Hyuga , Hinata 's younger sister . She is also present in all three of the original video animations produced for the series , helping Naruto and Konohamaru to find a four leaf clover in the first original video animation , joining her team in escorting a ninja named Shibuki to his village and helping him fight the missing @-@ nin that stole the village 's " Hero 's Water " in the second , and participating in a tournament in the third . A light novel titled Sakura Hiden : Thoughts of Love , Riding Upon a Spring Breeze , written by Tomohito Osaki and illustrated by Kishimoto , focuses on Sakura sometime after the events of The Last : Naruto the Movie , where she , now a celebrated medical ninja who is in the middle of opening a new mental clinic with Ino , becomes worried when a conspiracy that threatens to destroy Konoha is using Sasuke as a scapegoat , potentially ruining his chance at redemption amongst the villagers .

Sakura is a playable character in nearly all Naruto video games , including the Clash of Ninja series and the Ultimate Ninja series . In some games , she uses " Inner Sakura " in combat , as well as

numerous different genjutsu . Naruto Shippuden : Gekitō Ninja Taisen ! EX marks the first appearance of Sakura in her Part II appearance in a video game , with the second one being Naruto Shippuden : Ultimate Ninja 4 . Meanwhile , Naruto Shippuden : Ultimate Ninja Storm 4 would mark the first appearance of Sakura post Part II ; specifically , her appearance in The Last : Naruto the Movie , set two years after Chapter 699 of the manga .

= = Creation and conception = =

Although Sakura is the most recurring female character in Naruto , Masashi Kishimoto did not originally intend for Sakura to be the heroine of the series . Kishimoto attributes this to his being unable to draw good heroine characters , and fashioned Sakura as a girl who cannot understand men , the best example of a heroine he could come up with . Sakura 's creation is a result of Kishimoto 's desire to make a somewhat irritating character who was well intentioned . Despite these elements , Kishimoto is fond of Sakura , as he feels that many of her personality traits are common among all people , thus giving her a sense of real humanity . When asked in an interview if there is something about Sakura 's background that was never revealed , Kishimoto explains that he has never thought of Sakura as she is a " normal girl . "

When designing Sakura , Kishimoto focused on her silhouette and created a costume as simple as possible . This is a divergence from the other main characters of the series , whose costumes are very detailed . The leggings are the most notable aspect of her design , as they are meant to show that she is very active . At the start of the series her leggings extended below her knees and closely resembled trousers . As Part I progressed , the leggings became increasingly shorter and tighter . Similar to his inexperience with drawing heroines , Kishimoto lacked the experience needed to make Sakura " cute " when he first began drawing her . Although he implies that her appearance has become cuter since then , Kishimoto and much of the Naruto manga staff agree that Sakura was " far from cute " at the start of the series .

Sakura 's most well known physical characteristic is her broad forehead . Because of this , Kishimoto at times focuses too much effort on drawing it in scenes or promotional artwork where Sakura is featured prominently . This results in her forehead appearing too large . When designing Sakura in her Part II appearance , Kishimoto decided to change her clothes to a more lively karate suit style . The upper part , though , still has a Chinaesque feeling to it , so as to make her more feminine .

= = Reception = =

In the Weekly Shōnen Jump character popularity polls , Sakura has many times been placed in the top ten and reached the top five once ; however , she was ranked twelfth in the most recent poll . In an interview , Kate Higgins , who does the voice acting for Sakura in the English dub , notes the development of Sakura in the series , remarking that she becomes a more complex character as she becomes more sensitive and caring . Numerous pieces of merchandise based on Sakura have been released , including a plush doll , key chains of her Part I and Part II appearances , and various character patches .

Several publications for manga , anime , video games , and other related media have provided praise and criticism on Sakura 's character . IGN writer A.E. Sparrow commented that every anime and manga benefited from a strong female presence that Sakura provided for the Naruto series , although characterizing her as " stereotypically girly . " In a review of episode 110 of the anime , IGN celebrated the culmination of the development of Sakura 's character throughout the series , and the growing out of the " girly " personality . GameSpot noted that Sakura 's character has largely been used in the series as a form of comic relief , as well as often stating the obvious . T.H.E.M. Anime Reviews considered Sakura to be a stereotypical echo of similar love interests of protagonists in other shōnen manga , and that she was not likable . On the other hand , she was also regarded as " an interesting character to throw into the mix [ of Naruto ] " by Mania Entertainment 's Dani Moure due to how her differences with Sasuke and Naruto help to balance Team 7 . In the book New

Media Literacies and Participatory Popular Culture Across Borders , Amy A. Zenger notes Sasuke and Sakura 's relationship to be popular within fans of the series even though the former does not reciprocate to the latter 's feelings .

The character 's change in Part II has been praised for being one of the most developed ones in the series by Anime News Network 's Casey Brienza , as she has become stronger than her Part I counterpart which was considerably weaker than Naruto and Sasuke . This allows her to take a more active and appealing role in the series . Major praise has been given to her encounters with Satori and Sasuke owing to her fighting skills and mature reactions , respectively . Sakura 's love confession to Naruto in later parts has been commented to be one of the deepest ones parts from its story arc , for bringing confusion regarding whether or not she is serious as she intended to stop Naruto 's suffering . It also came as a surprise as fans wondered what were Sakura 's real intention regarding Sasuke who had become a dangerous criminal during such time of the series . Jason Thompson believes Sakura 's feelings were well @-@ handled by Kishimoto .

Critic Yukari Fujimoto says that Sakura is an example of Naruto showing a conservative view of women . Ino , Sakura and Hinata place priority on love , treating it as more important than exceling as ninja . Fujimoto states that during the ninja examinations , Sakura 's climactic fight with Ino , her love rival , is conducted on a purely physical level , contrasting this level of skill with the supernatural abilities displayed by her male classmates at this point . When the medical ninja Tsunade is introduced , Sakura takes on a daughter @-@ like role , learning to heal others from Tsunade , which Fujimoto regards as reinforcing a conservative idea of women - that women do not belong on the battlefield as warriors , only as nurses .