

Dr. Who 50th Anniversary

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Executive producer Russell T Davies revived Doctor Who after a 16-year absence with the successful premiere of "Rose" in 2005. Following the BBC's announcement of a second series being commissioned, the story broke that Christopher Eccleston, who played the titular Ninth Doctor, would not be returning for the second series. On 16 April 2005, the BBC announced that David Tennant had been selected for the role of the Tenth Doctor. His first appearance in the series was for 20 seconds following the Ninth Doctor's regeneration at the end of "The Parting of the Ways". His first full episode as the Doctor, barring an appearance in a "mini-episode" during the 2005 Children in Need show, was the 2005 Christmas Special, "The Christmas Invasion". He then appeared in the 2006 series, the second Christmas Special, the 2007 series, the third Christmas Special, and the 2008 series. Rather than a traditional series run, 2009 features a series of five specials and a series of animated shorts, all starring Tennant as the Tenth Doctor; he also guest-starred in a two-episode serial of The Sarah Jane Adventure spin-off in that year. Tennant also appears in two animated serials: The Infinite Quest is counted with the third series, and Dreamland is counted amongst the 2008–10 specials.

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The program depicts the adventures of a Time Lord—a time-travelling humanoid alien known as the Doctor. He explores the universe in his TARDIS (acronym: Time and Relative Dimension in Space), a sentient time-travelling space ship. Its exterior appears as a blue British police box, which was a common sight in Britain in 1963 when the series first aired. Along with a succession of companions, the Doctor faces a variety of foes while working to save civilizations, help ordinary people, and right wrongs.

The show has received recognition as one of Britain's finest television programs, winning the 2006 British Academy Television Award for Best Drama Series and five consecutive (2005–2010) awards at the National Television Awards during Russell T Davies's tenure as executive producer. In 2011, Matt Smith became the first Doctor to be nominated for a BAFTA Television Award for Best Actor. In 2013, the Peabody Awards honored Doctor Who with an Institutional Peabody "for evolving with technology and the times like nothing else in the known television universe." The program is listed in Guinness World Records as the longest-running science fiction television show in the world and as the "most successful" science fiction series of all time—based on its over-all broadcast ratings, DVD and book sales, and iTunes traffic. During its original run, it was recognized for its imaginative stories, creative low-budget special effects, and pioneering use of electronic music (originally produced by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop).

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The Doctor's transitions:

- First Doctor (William Hartnell): Frail and steadily growing weaker throughout The Tenth Planet, the Doctor collapses inside the TARDIS at the serial's end after his first battle with the Cybermen.
- Second Doctor (Patrick Troughton): a forced "change in appearance" and exile to Earth by the Time Lords in the closing moments of The War Games.
- Third Doctor (Jon Pertwee): radiation poisoning from the Great One's cave of crystals on the planet Metebelis 3 at the end of Planet of the Spiders.
- Fourth Doctor (Tom Baker): fell from the Pharos Project radio telescope in Logopolis during an altercation with the Master and was assisted in the regeneration by a mysterious "in-between" incarnation identified as "The Watcher".
- Fifth Doctor (Peter Davison): spectrox toxæmia poisoning, contracted near the start of The Caves of Androzani.
- Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker): suffered unspecified injuries when the Rani attacked the TARDIS and caused it to crash land at the start of Time and the Rani [note 2]
- Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy): died in San Francisco during exploratory heart surgery by a doctor unfamiliar with Time Lord physiology, after being hospitalised for non-life threatening gunshot wounds in the 1996 television movie [note 3]
- Eighth Doctor (Paul McGann): Died in the result of a warship crashing into the planet Karn in the mini episode "The Night of the Doctor". Temporarily returned to life pre-regeneration by the Sisterhood of Karn, the Eighth Doctor purposefully chooses to adopt a form more capable of fighting the Time War.
- War Doctor (John Hurt): circumstances of regeneration unknown.
- Ninth Doctor (Christopher Eccleston): cellular degeneration caused by absorbing the energies of the time vortex from Rose Tyler, which she in turn had absorbed through the heart of the TARDIS in "The Parting of the Ways".
- Tenth Doctor (David Tennant): radiation poisoning incurred while saving the life of Wilfred Mott in The End of Time. He absorbed 500,000 rads in the process which is more than fatal to humans.

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