



All about Doctor Who

60 years of time-travelling

The popular sci-fi show *Doctor Who* returns for a big birthday.

In November 1963, television magazine *Radio Times* announced that "a new Saturday afternoon television series of adventures in time and space" was to be shown on the BBC. The programme, called *Doctor Who*, was a science-fiction series about the adventures of an alien called the Doctor, who travelled through space and time to save the universe. The show is still going strong and on 23 November it will be 60 years old. To celebrate, there will be three new anniversary special episodes on TV, starting on 25 November.

Who is the Doctor?

The Doctor is the main character in the show. He may look like a human but the Doctor is actually a Time Lord, a type of alien from the planet Gallifrey. Time Lords have two hearts, can read people's minds and can live for thousands of years. This is because they can regenerate (transform) when they are dying, giving them a brand-new physical appearance and personality. So far, there have been 13 versions of the Doctor in the TV series, and other actors have played the part in films and on radio. The different versions usually have their own particular look, such as a bow tie for the 11th Doctor, a long, stripy scarf for the fourth and a black leather jacket for the ninth.

Journeying through space and time

In the show, the Doctor travels using a spaceship called the TARDIS, which stands for Time and Relative Dimension In Space. The TARDIS can travel to the future and the past, and anywhere in the universe. The outside of the spaceship looks like an old blue police box. In real life, police boxes were used by police officers or members of the public to phone their local police station.

David Tennant (centre) as the Doctor.



STRANGE EFFECTS

The sound that the TARDIS makes when it flies was originally made by rubbing the strings of a piano with a key.



Three legendary enemies

Cybermen

The Cybermen are some of the longest-running enemies in *Doctor Who*. They want to turn everyone into Cybermen. During filming for their first episode, the actors found the costumes so bulky that they kept falling over.



Daleks

The Daleks are also 60 years old and are the Doctor's most famous foes. They look like robots but are actually living beings hidden inside protective metal armour. For early episodes, people had to climb inside them to control their arms and eyes.





adventures



Jodie Whittaker played the Doctor.



MISSING STORIES
Several early episodes of Doctor Who have been lost because the BBC used to record over their videotapes with other shows.

The TARDIS may look small on the outside but inside it is huge. Although the outside has stayed the same for 60 years, the inside changes to reflect the personality of the Doctor when they regenerate. During filming, the TARDIS arrives on set in sections, like a piece of flatpack furniture and crew members have to put it together. Although the TV show is set all across the universe it is mostly filmed in Cardiff.

Travelling companions

The Doctor rarely travels alone – he often has a companion who helps to save the day. The Doctor has had lots of friends through the years and most of them are humans from the present day, including one played by Karen Gillan, who later starred as Nebula in the *Guardians of the Galaxy* films. The companion who has met the most versions of the Doctor (four) is Sarah Jane Smith (played by Elisabeth Sladen), who joined the show in 1973.

What's next for the Doctor?

David Tennant, an actor who played the 10th Doctor, is returning for the special episodes, alongside an old companion, Donna Noble. Although details of the episodes are top secret, we do know that the Doctor will be facing new bad guy, The Toymaker. The cast will be joined by the next Doctor, Ncuti Gatwa, who has also been in *Horrible Histories: The Movie* and *Barbie*. Speaking about stepping into such a famous TV role, Gatwa said he was feeling "a mix of deeply honoured, beyond excited and, of course, a little bit scared".



Judon

This race of aliens, who have the head of a rhino, first appeared in *Doctor Who* in 2007. The Doctor describes them as "police-for-hire" across the universe. Although they are strong, they're not very intelligent. They are voiced by the same actor who does the voice for the Cybermen and Daleks.



The next Doctor and his companion.