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To date, eleven actors have played the lead role in the television series, with continuity maintained by the ability of the character's species to regenerate. Several other actors have played the character on stage and film, in audio dramas, and in occasional special episodes of the series. The character's enduring popularity led the Daily Telegraph to dub him "Britain's favourite alien".[1] The Doctor in his eleventh incarnation is played by Matt Smith, who took on the role in January 2010 and became the first Doctor to be nominated for a BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role in 2011.[2] On 1 June 2013, it was announced that Matt Smith would leave the series during the 2013 Christmas special.[3] On 4 August 2013, it was announced that Peter Capaldi would play the Doctor's twelfth incarnation.

The Doctor explores the universe at random, using his extensive knowledge of science, technology, and history to avert whatever crisis he encounters. The imprecise nature of his travels is initially attributed to the age and unreliability of the TARDIS's navigation system. However, the 1969 serial *The War Games* reveals that the Doctor actually stole the TARDIS, and subsequent stories such as *Frontier in Space*, *Logopolis*, "Planet of the Dead", "The Big Bang", and "The Doctor's Wife" have incorporated this, and this theft was actually seen in "The Name of the Doctor". Additionally, it has been mentioned that the TARDIS is meant to be piloted by six Time Lords, rather than just one.[7] He was presumably unfamiliar with its systems, but was able to operate it correctly until his exile when the Time Lords wiped it from his memory. The Doctor initially had the manual for operating the TARDIS but destroyed it (by throwing it into a supernova) because he disagreed with it. After his trial and exile to twentieth century Earth, the Doctor still visits other planets on missions from the Time Lords who pilot the TARDIS to precise locations for him.

After his exile is lifted, the Doctor returns to his travels and demonstrates the ability to reach a destination of his own choosing more often than not. In the 2011 episode "The Doctor's Wife", the Doctor tells the TARDIS (whose matrix, or soul, was temporarily transferred to the character Idris) that she has never been very reliable in taking him where he wanted to go. The TARDIS explains that she always took the Doctor where he needed to be. In "Journey's End", the Doctor states that the reason for the previous bumpy navigation was that the TARDIS is meant to have six pilots, but in "The Time of Angels", River Song demonstrates superior piloting skills and says the Doctor pilots the TARDIS "with the brakes on" (hence the classic noise), though she could have been teasing him. The Doctor generally travels with one or more companions. Most of these make a conscious decision to travel with him, but others, especially early in the series, are accidental passengers.

The Doctor's childhood is described very little. The classic series often refers to his time at the

academy and that he belongs to the Prydonian chapter of Time Lords, who are notoriously devious. His teachers included Borusa, who would eventually become President of the High Council, and other pupils included the Master and possibly the Rani. The Eighth Doctor, in the 1996 television movie, is the first to mention his parents or childhood before this, when he tells Grace Holloway that he remembers watching a meteorite shower from a grassy hill top in the company of his father.

During "The Girl in the Fireplace", Madame de Pompadour "saw" memories of his childhood during a telepathic exchange between the two and commented that it was "so lonely." When asked if he has a brother in "Smith and Jones", the Doctor simply replied "not anymore". In the same episode, he mentioned "playing with RÃ¶ntgen blocks in the nursery." He was also once good friends with the Master and in their confrontations during Series 3 and 4, the Master has occasionally reminisced of their childhood days.

In The Time Monster, the Doctor says he grew up in a house on the side of a mountain, and talks about a hermit who lived under a tree behind the house and inspired the Doctor when he was depressed. He is later reunited with this former mentor, now on Earth posing as the abbot Kâ€™ampo Rinpoche, in "Planet of the Spiders".

In the BBC novel The Nightmare of Black Island, the Doctor stated his favourite childhood story was Moxx In Socks. In "Mission to Magnus", the Doctor tells how at the Academy he was bullied by another Time Lord named Anzor. In "Master", the Doctor tells how he killed a bully who tormented him and the Master. It is possible this could be Anzor as well.

In "The Sound of Drums", the Doctor describes a Time Lord Academy initiation ceremony where, at the age of eight, Time Lord children are made to look into the Untempered Schism, a gap in space and time where they could view the time vortex. Some are inspired, some go mad (as he suggests happened to his nemesis, the Master), and some run away. When asked to which group he belonged, he replied, "Oh, the ones that ran away; I never stopped!"

The most complete glimpses into the Doctor's childhood occurs in the Virgin New Adventures novel Lungbarrow.[citation needed] Lungbarrow portrays the Doctor as being one of 45 cousins grown from the House genetic loom as an adult. (In New Adventures continuity, the Time Lords are not capable of sexual reproduction and survive through genetic looms producing a quota of cousins.) The Head of the Family Ordinal General Quences knew that the Doctor had a special destiny and built him a robot tutor called Badger and planned the Doctor's eventual rise to the post of President. His fellow cousins resented the Doctor's position and he spent most of his childhood being bullied by his cousin Glospin and was equally brutally treated by the Housekeeper Sathralope. Eventually he rebelled against Quences's grand plans and was exiled from the family, stealing a TARDIS and leaving Gallifrey. This depiction of events is seemingly contradicted by "The Sound of Drums", showing the Master as a child. The BBC Books novel The Infinity Doctors, for example, states that the Doctor was born from the loom, but it adds that he was also the son of a Gallifreyan explorer and a human mother.

During his second incarnation, when asked about his family, the Doctor says his memories of them are still alive when he wants them to be and otherwise they sleep in his mind (The Tomb of the Cybermen). In The Time Monster, the third Doctor states that as a little boy he lived in a house perched halfway up a mountain. In The Curse of Fenric, when asked if he has any family, the Seventh Doctor replies that he does not know, indirectly hinting that an unspecified fate may have befallen them.

In "Fear Her", the Tenth Doctor mentions to Rose that he "was a dad once", but then quickly changes the subject; he makes the same admission to Donna in "The Doctor's Daughter" when she assumes that he has "Dad-shock". He later clarifies in the same episode that he had been a father but that was lost to him during the Time War. In "The Empty Child", Dr. Constantine says to him, "Before this war began, I was a father and a grandfather. Now I'm neither. But I'm still a doctor." The Doctor's reply is, "Yeah. I know the feeling." When asked by Amy Pond in "The Beast Below" if he is a parent, the Doctor simply changes the subject. When the Doctor gifts Amy and Rory's newborn

daughter with an ancient bassinet in "A Good Man Goes to War", Amy again asks if he has children. The Doctor does not answer the question though he does tell Amy that the bassinet was his as a baby. In "Night Terrors", the Doctor attempts to help amuse a little boy by talking about fairy tales he used to enjoy and also uses his sonic screwdriver to make the boy's toys move. The Doctor mumbles that he is "a bit rusty at this." In "The Rings of Akhaten", the Doctor mentions to Clara Oswald that he had visited Akhaten long ago with his granddaughter.

In "The Doctor's Daughter", the Doctor had his genetic information stolen and used to create a female soldier. He comes to accept the young woman, Jenny " played by Georgia Moffett, real-life daughter of Peter Davison and wife of David Tennant " as his daughter. She is killed at the end of the episode but he leaves before she regenerates. She steals a rocket with the intention of becoming an adventurer like her father.

By the end of the series "Journey's End" a half-human Doctor is created from his severed hand, when the Tenth Doctor transfers his regeneration energy into the hand to prevent a full regeneration of his own body. Both Doctors share the same memories up until that point but the half-human Doctor also has elements of Donna Noble's personality and her DNA as a result of her touching the hand, causing the mass regeneration to occur. The "Meta-Crisis" Doctor has only one heart and cannot regenerate.

In the episode "Blink", the Doctor states that he never was good at weddings, especially his own. According to both his greeting speech to Ood Sigma in The End of Time and his breakdown to Dorium Maldovar in "The Wedding of River Song", sometime between "The Waters of Mars" and the beginning of The End of Time, the Doctor also married the former "Good Queen Bess". During his speech he states "Her nickname is no longer . . ." before being interrupted, and notes on the experience "That was a mistake." The possibility exists that the Doctor could just be having a laugh here; however, the story persisted, as her distant successor Liz Ten ("The Beast Below") comments, "And so much for the Virgin Queen, you bad, bad boy!" In "A Christmas Carol", the Doctor finds himself engaged to Marilyn Monroe but later claims the wedding did not take place in a legitimate chapel. When River Song shows up in "Time of Angels", Amy asks both the Doctor and River if they are married to each other. The Doctor initially says yes but that is in his future but her past while River's answer seems affirmative but ambiguous. In "The Big Bang", the Doctor asks River Song if she is married; she asks if he's asking and the Doctor says he is. Her answer leaves the Doctor puzzled, wondering if she had thought that he had proposed and if she had just accepted. She replies with another enigmatic, "Yes."

In The End of Time, a mysterious individual, referred to only in the credits as "The Woman", appears unexpectedly to Wilfred Mott throughout both episodes. She is later revealed to be a dissident Time Lady, who opposed the Time Lord High Council's plan to escape the Time War. When she reveals her face to the Doctor, his reaction indicates that he recognises her. Julie Gardner, in the episode's commentary, states that while some have speculated that the Time Lady is the Doctor's mother, neither she nor Russell T. Davies are willing to comment on her identity. When later asked by Wilfred who she was, the Doctor evades answering the question, making their connection unclear. In Doctor Who: The Writer's Tale " The Final Chapter, Russell T Davies states that he created the character to be the Doctor's mother and this is what actress Claire Bloom was told when she was cast.

Two different accounts exist on the descendants of Susan after leaving the Doctor. In the audio "An Earthly Child", it is revealed that Susan has had a child, Alex Campbell, the Doctor's great-grandson. Alternatively, in the novel Legacy of the Daleks, Susan and her husband David adopt three children whom they name David Campbell Jr, Ian and Barbara; named after David himself, Ian Chesterton, and Barbara Wright respectively.

In the novel Father Time, the Eighth Doctor, during his hundred-year-long exile on Earth, found an orphaned Time Lord girl named Miranda whom he adopted and raised till she was 16. Later she returned to the Doctor along with her daughter Zezanne in the novel Sometime Never.... She was also the central character in a three-issue comic book series published by Comeuppance Comics in

2003. Author Lance Parkin, who devised the character of Miranda, has hinted that her real father is actually a future incarnation of the Doctor which, if so, would make Zezanne the Doctor's biological granddaughter as well.

The character of the Doctor was created by the BBC's Head of Drama Sydney Newman.[8] The first format document for the series that was to become Doctor Who – then provisionally titled The Troubleshooters – was written up in March 1963 by C. E. Webber, a BBC staff writer who had been brought in to help develop the project. Webber's document contained a main character described as "The maturer man, 35–40, with some 'character twist.'" However, Newman was not keen on this idea and – along with several other changes to Webber's initial format – created an alternative lead character named Dr Who, a crotchety older man piloting a stolen time machine, on the run from his own far future world.[8] No written record of Newman's conveyance of these ideas – believed to have taken place in April 1963 – exists, and the character of Dr Who first begins appearing in existing documentation from May of that year.[8]

The character was first portrayed by William Hartnell in 1963. At the programme's beginning, nothing at all is known of the Doctor: not even his name, the actual form of which remains a mystery. In the first serial, *An Unearthly Child*, two teachers from Coal Hill School in London, Barbara Wright and Ian Chesterton, become intrigued by one of their pupils, Susan Foreman, who exhibits high intelligence and unusually advanced knowledge. Trailing her to a junk yard at 76 Totter's Lane, they encounter a strange old man and hear Susan's voice coming from inside what appears to be a police box. Pushing their way inside, the two find that the exterior is actually camouflage for the dimensionally transcendental interior of the TARDIS. The old man, whom Susan calls "Grandfather", subsequently kidnaps Barbara and Ian to prevent them from telling anyone about the existence of the ship, taking them on an adventure in time and space. The first Doctor, says cultural scholar John Paul Green, "explicitly positioned the Doctor as grandfather to his companion Susan." [9] He wore a long white wig and Edwardian costume, reflecting, Green says, a "definite sense of Englishness". [9]

When, after three years, Hartnell left the series due to ill health, the role was handed over to character actor Patrick Troughton. To date, official television productions have depicted eleven distinct incarnations of the Doctor (following Hartnell's death in 1975, actor Richard Hurndall substituted in his role as the First Doctor in 1983's *The Five Doctors*). Of those, the longest-lasting on-screen incarnation is the Fourth Doctor, as played by Tom Baker. [10] Currently, the Eleventh Doctor is portrayed by Matt Smith, who is to be replaced by the Twelfth Doctor, portrayed by Peter Capaldi in the Christmas Special.

The Doctor is an adventurer and scientist with a strong moral sense. He usually solves problems with his wits rather than with force, and is more likely to wield a sonic screwdriver than a gun, although he has been seen to use weapons as a last resort. According to the alien villain Chedaki in the episode *The Android Invasion*, "his long association with libertarian causes" shows that "his entire history is one of opposition to conquest."

As a time traveller, the Doctor has been present at, or directly involved in, countless major historical events on the planet Earth and elsewhere – sometimes more than once. In the 2005 series premiere, "Rose", it is revealed that the Ninth Doctor was instrumental in preventing a family from boarding the Titanic prior to her fateful voyage. In "The End of the World", the Doctor recalls having been on board and surviving the Titanic's sinking to find himself "clinging to an iceberg". The Fourth Doctor also mentioned this event in *Robot* and *The Invasion of Time*, where he insists that the sinking was not his fault; the Seventh Doctor became involved in the sinking when tracking an alien entity in the novel *The Left-Handed Hummingbird*, but this may not be canonical.

It is this penchant for becoming "involved" with the universe – in direct violation of official Time Lord policy – that has caused the Doctor to be labelled a renegade by the Time Lords. (His defence of his involvement, first made in *The War Games*, notes and maintains that while most of his fellow Time Lords have been content merely to observe the evil in the Universe, he has been actively fighting against it.) Most of the time, however, his actions are tolerated, especially given that he has saved not just Gallifrey but also the universe several times over. The Time Lords are also

partial to sending him on missions when deniability or expendability is needed, implied to have begun after his capture during "The War Games" – see Season 6B – and being witnessed further in later stories, the Time Lords directing the Doctor and/or the TARDIS to specific locations in Colony in Space, The Curse of Peladon, The Mutants, Genesis of the Daleks, The Brain of Morbius, and Attack of the Cybermen. The Doctor's standing in Time Lord society has waxed and waned over the years, from being a hunted man who was eventually punished with a forced regeneration and an exile sentence on Earth, to being appointed Lord President of the High Council. He does not assume the office for very long, fleeing Gallifrey after his appointment rather than accepting the limitations on his freedom that the role would place on him ("The Five Doctors"), and is eventually removed from it in his absence (The Trial of a Time Lord).

Although Time Lords resemble humans, their physiology differs in some key respects. For example, like other members of his race, the Doctor has two hearts^[1] (binary vascular system), a "respiratory bypass system" that allows him to go without air, an internal body temperature of 15–16 degrees Celsius (60 degrees Fahrenheit)^[11] and he occasionally exhibits a super-human level of stamina, and the ability to absorb, withstand, and expel large amounts of certain types of radiation (the Tenth Doctor stated they used to play with Röntgen bricks in the nursery, after absorbing the radiation from an x-ray of significantly magnified power). This ability would seem to have limitations which have yet to be fully explained, as he is harmed by radiation in The Daleks, Planet of the Spiders, and The End of Time. Additionally, he has withstood exposure to electricity deadly enough to kill a human with minimal damage (Terror of the Zygons, Genesis of the Daleks, Aliens of London, The Christmas Invasion, The Idiot's Lantern, Evolution of the Daleks, spin-off audio Spare Parts). Certain stories also imply that he is somewhat resistant to cold temperatures (42). To counter extreme trauma, such as exposure to the poisonous fungus in The Seeds of Death and after being shot in Spearhead from Space, he can go into a self-induced coma until he recovers. His hypersensitive body and senses enables him to detect anomalies human cannot, such as identifying alien species, blood type or chemical composition by taste and determining location or time period by sniffing the air. In The Unicorn and the Wasp he was able sense the changes in his body's enzymes (i.e. cyanide poisoning) and expel the cyanide from his body by ingesting a concoction of ginger beer, protein foods and salts.

Additionally, he has shown a resistance to temporal effects and has demonstrated some telepathic ability, both the ability to mentally connect to other incarnations of himself he encountered (The Five Doctors), and an ability to enter into the memories of other individuals ("The Girl in the Fireplace"). He can apparently reverse this process, sharing his memory with another, as seen most recently in The Big Bang. Some humans can also enter the Doctor's memories after he enters theirs, as demonstrated by Madame de Pompadour (much to the Doctor's surprise) in "The Girl in the Fireplace", when she explains, "A door, once opened, may be stepped through in either direction." In "The Fires of Pompeii", the Doctor reveals that he is able to perceive the fabric of time, discerning "fixed points" and "points in flux" – moments when history must remain as it was originally versus moments when he can change or influence the original course of events, as well as all past, present and possible future events. Like many other alien species in the show, the Doctor is able to sense when his own species is within proximity through an inherent telepathic connection.

The Doctor also exhibits some weaknesses uncommon to humans. For example, according to The Mind of Evil (1971), a tablet of aspirin could kill him. In Cold Blood, a process meant to decontaminate him of bacteria from the surface of Earth causes him intense pain, and he says it could have killed him if allowed to proceed to completion. In the Eighth Doctor Adventures novel The Adventuress of Henrietta Street the Doctor lost some of his biological advantages over humans when his second heart was surgically removed when it appeared to be poisoning him, resulting in him losing the ability to metabolise drugs in his system and his respiratory bypass system, but these are restored to him when he begins to grow a new heart after his old one 'dies' (Camera Obscura). Events from the novels may or may not be canonical.

In his final serial, the Second Doctor states that Time Lords can live forever, "barring accidents." When "accidents" do occur, Time Lords can usually regenerate into a new body. However, it is stated in The Deadly Assassin that Time Lords can only regenerate a total of twelve times, giving a

theoretical final total of thirteen incarnations. It may be possible to exceed this: in *The Five Doctors* the Time Lords offer the Master, who is inhabiting a Trakenite body, a regeneration cycle as reward for his help and cooperation, and at some point during the Time War they resurrected him, with his new body having at least one regeneration of its own. Regeneration is apparently optional, as in *"Last of the Time Lords"* the Master refuses to regenerate despite the Tenth Doctor's pleading. In addition, there are ways of killing a Time Lord that do not permit regeneration; for example, more than once it has been implied that stopping both the Doctor's hearts simultaneously would accomplish this. In the events of *"The Impossible Astronaut"*, it appeared that shooting the Doctor during his regeneration into a Twelfth Doctor killed him permanently. However, *"The Wedding of River Song"* revealed that this was not actually the Doctor, but the Teselecta robot pretending to be him, so the efficacy of a mid-regeneration killing has not been confirmed. The Chancellery Guard (Gallifrey's equivalent of a police force) are armed with stasers, weapons capable of suppressing regeneration.

In an October 2010 episode of the spin-off series, *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, when asked by Clyde how many times he can regenerate, the Doctor (Matt Smith) flippantly replies "507". Whether this is true or just a joke is unclear, but the writer of that episode, Russell T. Davies, said it was "...too good an opportunity to miss."

Other skills include his mental communication with other Time Lords, in some cases over a galaxy's distance. His skill with hypnosis is such that he requires only a second's glance into a subject's eyes to put him/her under his spell. The Doctor can read an entire book cover to cover in a second by thumb-flipping the pages before his eyes (*City of Death*, *"Rose"*, *"The Time of Angels"*). Though any medical skills he shows early in the series are rudimentary, by *Remembrance of the Daleks* he can perform sophisticated medical diagnoses merely by touching someone's ear. He is an excellent cricket player (*Black Orchid*) and in *"The Lodger"* he proves to be a prodigiously talented footballer despite unfamiliarity with some of the game's basic rules. Though reluctant to engage in combat against living opponents, this is not for any lack of skill in doing so; the Doctor is conversant with both real and fictitious styles of unarmed combat (most obviously the *"Venusian Aki-Do"* practised by the Third Doctor), has won several swordfights against skilled opponents, and is able to make extremely difficult shots with firearms and, in one instance (in *The Face of Evil*), with a crossbow. Thanks to exposure to many of history's greatest experts, including those from the future, the Doctor is a talented boxer, musician, organist, scientist, singer (able to shatter windows with his voice), and has a PhD in cheesemaking (*The God Complex*).

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