

Cartoon Characters

The general origin of cartoon characters (from animated cartoons) initially started from printed comics in newspapers and comic books, when there was no television and no real animation.

Felix the Cat was one of the earliest cartoon characters, going all the way back to the era of silent movies. When movies began to be popular, in the 1920s, animated cartoons soon became popular shorts shown with the feature films [notice the 's' on the 'films'. When I was a kid, say later 1950s, any theatre venue included two feature films, a news reel, one or more cartoons, and previews of coming attractions...all for 75¢...Another Golden Age gone!]. Most of these cartoons were made by Warner Brothers and Disney. From the 1930s on, this is where most people became familiar with their favorite cartoon characters.

In 1937, cartoon characters expanded to their own full-length feature films with the debut of Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*. Following that film's success, Disney began cranking out such cartoon features on a nearly annual basis—*Pinocchio*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*...and the list continues on right up to today.

By the 1960s, when many people had televisions, it became feasible to feature cartoon characters in their own televised series. The *Jetsons*, *Scooby Doo*, the *Flintstones*, and others became familiar household names.

Today, cartoon characters have moved into advertising, CDs, video games, and more. What are the most popular cartoon characters in the world? In order—Bugs Bunny, Homer Simpson, Mickey Mouse, Bart Simpson, Charlie Brown, Fred Flintstone, The Grinch, Popeye, and Wile E. Coyote.



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