



Sam Haney/The Bagpiper

# Cartoons change through the generations

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For decades, kids all over the globe have been gathering around their televisions to watch their favorite TV show. Now that most families have cable or platforms like Hulu and Netflix, kids have 24/7 access to cartoons and other children friendly programs. Although almost everyone grows up with kid shows, different generations argue over how theirs are better than the ones that are currently running.

Cartoons first appeared on television in the late 1940s and early 1950s. With the idea of bringing cartoons to television for children, it was easier to entertain children at home. Of

course, with time things evolve, including cartoons.

“Culturally we have changed what we accept. I think it’s gone from more ‘Let’s watch *Looney Toons* and watch Wile E. Coyote blow up the road runner’ to ‘Let’s talk about friendship and care about each other,’” said world history teacher Alan Hess. “It’s no longer about just fun, it has to have a positive attitude. Cartoons are so geared towards this positive vibe with this whole helping your neighbor type of thing.”

Although cartoons are changing and some people see it in negative light, there are some good or reputable changes as well.

“I feel like cartoons have

definitely grown, in animation and plot,” said junior Emily North. “Of course there are childhood cartoons that are great, but I feel like new

“[...] cartoons teach us to stand up for ourselves and one another. At any age we can take the lesson they give us.”

**Emily North**  
junior

characters try to tell a story and not just entertain.”

With new art styles and better graphics emerging through the

years, kids’ shows have changed drastically even in appearance in the past decade.

“I think that because animation has kind of expanded its audience, it has changed the way people think about [the] art and stories,” said senior Mikayluh Bowers.

While some shows improve in animation, some lack the defined style or creativity and some viewers seem to notice and pinpoint it.

“The animation has become less unique in some shows and it seems to save [them] money,” said senior Sam Baumann.

However, where some shows

lack creativity and other artistic factors, others thrive.

“Of course most of the plots are different, but I think they all motivate us to get over our challenges in life,” said North.

Although there are hundreds of thousands of cartoons, viewers also have to keep in mind the intended audience. Although it is in cartoon format it may not be aimed at children.

“Of course there’s always explicitly adult animated shows like *Family Guy* and *South Park*,” said Bowers. However, these kinds of cartoons did not hit mainstream media until the 1990s.

Another approach in recent years to animated shows is anime. Anime is a style of Japanese film and television animation that is typically aimed at adults but also children.

“Japan has been making cartoons for more than just children for a while now and Western countries are kind of just now picking up on that trend,” said Bowers.

Even though these shows seem like mind-numbing things for children at times, there are valuable lessons or morals in each show that can shape viewers.

“I think cartoons have framed my sense of humor and how I treat people with respect,” said Baumann. “Take from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, for example, [it] shows to be slow to anger and greet everyone with a smile.”

Some lessons can even be carried on through life and viewers truly believe in these lessons the plots display in their favorite shows.

“From defeating an evil triangle demon to fighting the horde for the honor of a gray skull, cartoons teach us to stand up for ourselves and one another. At any age we can take the lesson they give us,” said North.

Although these shows were some of the best of our childhoods, many see the quality of the content going downhill.

“I can see cartoons becoming more of an educational tool and even a moral guide [rather than a childhood pastime],” said Baumann.

However, some still have

hope for the future of cartoons and animation. With new releases like *Spider-Man: Into The Spiderverse*, many are seeing a bright future with cartoons being more prominent.

“I think superhero movies have really helped boost the idea that cartoons aren’t just for kids, what with the new *Spiderverse* movie,” said Bowers. “Anime [has] started becoming [more] popular in western countries so different shows have started latching onto anime elements, shows like *Teen Titans* and many of the other *DC* animated movies and shows as well as the *Amazing Spider-Man* tv show and other *Marvel* animated movies.”

Through the years, ways to animate and how animating cartoons have of course changed. With the changing times, the profession has to also mold and shape itself to the new way of cartoon animation.

“Film animation technology has come a long way since the early days of hand-drawn cartoons. The techniques used by animators to bring characters to life have improved dramatically over the years,” said Sophie Curtis of *The Telegraph* paper in the United Kingdom. “And unlike traditional animation, which made its debut in 1906 and created the illusion of movement through frame-by-frame manipulation of drawings and illustrations, most

animators today use computers to generate three-dimensional images.”

Anyone who has access to the internet at this point can also animate little cartoons and become a future creator. All one has to do is simply search for an “animation software” and Google has got their back.

“[...] due to new technology combined with the expanding of the audience, animation has changed in that it’s not just for people who grow up to work as animators. You can get free animation programs now and experiment with that way to do storytelling and making art and that’s exciting,” said Bowers. “The way that animation has expanded just overall has allowed for more people to get involved in it and make new art people have never seen before. In that way, it’s changed to be [a] more accessible and relatable thing.”

While some still view cartoons as childish and moronic, there is still an abundance of viewers who adore them. This audience hopes that cartoons will be normalized and socially acceptable.

“I hope they will become more acceptable [and] talked about [more],” said North. “I want to see more show stopping series like *Gravity Falls* or *She-Ra*. I think with new animation and our creative generation that the possibilities are endless.”

## Q&A With English Teacher Tim Romig

**Bagpiper:** As a parent, what differences did you notice in the cartoons of your generation compared to your kids’ favorite shows?

**Tim Romig:** “They tackle more personal issues like depression and divorce. They show things that kids have to deal with.”

**BP:** What shows did you watch when you were a kid? What shows did your kids watch growing up?

**TR:** “I watched *G.I. Joe* and *Scooby Doo*, but *The Addams Family* and *The Munsters* were my favorite. My kids watched *Drake and Josh*, *That’s So Raven*, and *Even Stevens*.”

**BP:** How do you feel about current kids’ shows?

**TR:** “I love them. I think they are very well written and clever. They also talk about the issues that real families have to deal with.”

**BP:** What would you change about today’s kids’ shows?

**TR:** “I wouldn’t change anything about them. They are more multi-cultural and accepting. However, I still think there is a heavy focus on looking good and always having a picture perfect appearance.”

## How do you think cartoons have changed in the last decade?



senior  
Brayden  
Payne

“They have lost their quality majorly. Cartoons just now rely on poor jokes instead of actual stories.”



sophomore  
Bailey  
Durrett

“I feel like they have taken out a lot of things that we would consider ‘offensive’ and the animation has changed.”



freshman  
Cameron  
Baumgart

“Older cartoons relied more on violence and certain scenes that were made to get a quick laugh.”



junior  
Madison  
Ruppe

“They have become open to identities. *Steven Universe* has incorporated lots of different sexualities.”



senior  
Jack  
Roution

“[Cartoons] had to dial down the number of offensive jokes because people take more offense to certain things.”