The Hulk is a fictional character, a superhero who appears in comic books published by Marvel Comics. Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the character first appeared in The Incredible Hulk #1 (May 1962). He is a gigantic, green, irradiated, mutated humanoid monster with incredible strength and an inability to control his rage. The Hulk is sometimes characterized as hyper-aggressive and brutal, other times as cunning, brilliant, and scheming. He is often portrayed as an antihero. The Hulk is cast as the emotional and impulsive alter ego of the withdrawn and reserved physicist Dr. Bruce Banner; Banner first transforms into the Hulk shortly after he is accidentally exposed to the blast of a test detonation of a gamma bomb he invented. Subsequently, Banner will involuntarily transform into the Hulk whenever he gets too angry or if his life is in danger, leading to extreme complications in Banner's life. Lee said the Hulk's creation was inspired by a combination of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Frankenstein.[1]

Although the Hulk's coloration has varied throughout the character's publication history, the most consistent shade is green. As the Hulk, Banner is capable of significant feats of strength, the magnitude of which increase in direct proportion to the character's anger. As the character himself puts it, "The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets!" Strong emotions such as anger, terror and grief are also triggers for forcing Banner's transformation into the Hulk. As a child, Banner's father Brian Banner often got mad and physically abused his mother, creating the psychological complex of fear, anger, and the fear of anger and the destruction it can cause that underlies the character. A common
storyline is the pursuit of both Banner and the Hulk by the U.S. armed forces, because of all the destruction that he causes. He has two main catchphrases: "Hulk is strongest there is!" and the better-known "HULK SMASH!", which has founded the basis for a number of pop culture memes.

The Hulk has been depicted in various other media, most notably by Bill Bixby as Dr. David Banner and Lou Ferrigno as the Hulk in the live-action television series and five made-for-television movies, and by Eric Bana, Edward Norton and later Mark Ruffalo in the most recent Marvel film adaptations. Other depictions include multiple animated series, through the use of CGI in Hulk (2003) and The Incredible Hulk (2008), and various video games. The most recent CGI portrayal is in the 2012 film The Avengers.

Publication history

Concept and creation

The Hulk first appeared in The Incredible Hulk #1 (May 1962), written by writer-editor Stan Lee, and penciller and co-plotter Jack Kirby, and inked by Paul Reinman. Lee cites influence from Frankenstein[2] and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the Hulk's creation:

"I combined Jekyll and Hyde with Frankenstein," he explains, "and I got myself the monster I wanted, who was really good, but nobody knew it. He was also somebody who could change from a normal man into a monster, and lo, a legend was born."[3] Lee remembers, "I had always loved the old movie Frankenstein. And it seemed to me that the monster, played by Boris Karloff, wasn't really a bad guy. He was the good guy. He didn't want to hurt anybody. It's just those idiots with torches kept running up and down the mountains, chasing him and getting him angry. And I thought, 'Wouldn't it be fun to create a monster and make him the good guy?'[3]

Lee also compared Hulk to the Golem of Jewish myth.[2] In The Science of Superheroes, Gresh and Weinberg see the Hulk as a reaction to the Cold War[4] and the threat of nuclear attack, an interpretation shared by Weinstein in Up, Up and Oy Vey.[2] This interpretation corresponds well when taken into account alongside other popularized fictional media created during this time period, which took advantage of the prevailing sense among Americans that nuclear power could produce monsters and mutants.[5] Kaplan calls Hulk "schizophrenic."[6] Jack Kirby has also commented upon his influences in drawing the character, recalling as inspiration the tale of a mother who rescues her child who is trapped beneath a car.[7]

Debut and first series

In the debut, Lee chose gray for the Hulk because he wanted a color that did not suggest any particular ethnic group.[8] Colorist Stan Goldberg, however, had problems with the gray coloring, resulting in different shades of gray, and even green, in the issue. After seeing the first published issue, Lee chose to change the skin color to green.[9] Green was used in retellings of the origin, with even reprints of the original story being recolored for the next two decades, until The Incredible Hulk vol. 2, #302 (December 1984) reintroduced the gray Hulk in flashbacks set close to the origin story. Since then, reprints of the first issue have displayed the original gray coloring, with the fictional canon specifying that the Hulk's skin had initially been gray. [An exception is the early trade paperback, Origins of Marvel Comics, from 1974, which explains the difficulties in keeping the gray color consistent in a Stan Lee written prologue, and reprints the origin story keeping the gray coloration.]

The original series was canceled with issue #6 (March 1963). Lee had written each story, with Kirby penciling the first five issues and Steve Ditko penciling and inking the sixth. The character immediately guest-starred in The Fantastic Four #12 (March 1963), and months later became a founding member of the superhero team the Avengers, appearing in the first two issues of the team's eponymous series (September & November 1963), and returning as an antagonist in issue #3 and as an ally in #5 (January–May 1964). He then guest-starred in Fantastic Four #25–26 (April–May 1964), which revealed Banner's full name as "Robert Bruce Banner," and The Amazing Spider-Man #14
(July 1964).

Around this time, co-creator Kirby received a letter from a college dormitory stating the Hulk had been chosen as its official mascot.[2] Kirby and Lee realized their character had found an audience in college-age readers.

**Tales to Astonish**

A year and a half after the series was canceled, the Hulk became one of two features in *Tales to Astonish*, beginning in issue #60 (October 1964). In the previous issue, he had appeared as an antagonist for Giant-Man, whose feature under various superhero guises had run in the title since issue #35. This phase also introduced the concept of Banner's transformations being caused by extreme emotional stress, which would become central to the character's status as an iconic figure of runaway emotion. It was also during this time that the Hulk developed a more savage and childlike personality, shifting from the brutish figure who spoke in complete sentences.

This new Hulk feature was initially scripted by writer-editor Lee and illustrated by the team of penciller Steve Ditko and inker George Roussos. Other artists later in this run included Jack Kirby from #68–87 (June 1965 – October 1966), doing full pencils or, more often, layouts for other artists; Gil Kane, credited as "Scott Edwards", in #76 (February 1966), his first Marvel Comics work; Bill Everett inking Kirby in #78–84 (April–October 1966); and John Buscema penciling Kirby's layouts in #85-87. The *Tales to Astonish* run introduced the super-villains the Leader,[1] who would become the Hulk's archnemesis, and the Abomination, another gamma-irradiated being.[1] In issue #77 (March 1966), Bruce Banner's and the Hulk's dual identity became publicly known, thus making Banner often a wanted fugitive from the authorities. Marie Severin finished out the Hulk's run in *Tales to Astonish*. Beginning with issue #102 (April 1968) the book was retitled *The Incredible Hulk* vol. 2, and ran until March 1999, when Marvel canceled the series and restarted the title with a new issue #1.

**1970s**

*The Incredible Hulk* vol. 2 was published through the 1970s, and the character also made guest appearances in other titles. Writers introduced Banner's cousin Jennifer Walters, the She-Hulk, in a title of her own. In the first issue of the *She-Hulk* comic, Banner gave some of his blood to Walters in a transfusion. She seemed fine at first, but when she later suffered stress it caused a transformation into the She-Hulk. Unlike her cousin, she maintained her intellect and personality, although her inhibitions were noticeably lowered. She later appeared in the *Hulk* comic proper, as well as other Marvel titles. Banner's guilt about causing her change became another part of his character, although Jennifer grew to prefer her She-Hulk state.

Writers changed numerous times during the decade. At times, the creative staff included Archie Goodwin, Chris Claremont, and Tony Isabella. Len Wein handled many of the stories through the 1970s, working first with Herb Trimpe, then, in 1975, with Sal Buscema, who was the regular artist for ten years. Harlan Ellison plotted a story, scripted by Roy Thomas, for issue #140 (June 1971), "The Brute that Shouted Love at the Heart of the Atom". Issues #180–181 (October–November 1974) introduced the character Wolverine, who would go on to become one of Marvel Comics' most popular.

In 1977, Marvel (under its Curtis Magazines imprint) launched a second title, *The Rampaging Hulk*, a black-and-white comics magazine.[1] Originally, the series was conceived as a flashback series, set between the end of his original, short-lived solo title and the beginning of his feature in *Tales to Astonish*. After nine issues, the magazine was retitled *The Hulk!* and printed in full color. Near the end of the magazine's run, it went back to black-and-white.[1] Back-up features included *Bloodstone*, *Man-Thing*, and *Shanna the She-Devil* during the *Rampaging Hulk* issues, and later *Moon Knight* and *Dominic Fortune*. 
1980s and 1990s

Following Roger Stern, Bill Mantlo took over the writing with issue #245 (March 1980). His "Crossroads of Eternity" stories, which ran through issues #300–313 (October 1984 – November 1985), explored the idea that Banner had suffered child abuse. Greg Pak, a later writer on The Incredible Hulk vol. 2, called Mantlo's "Crossroads" stories one of his biggest influences on approaching the character.[12] After five years, Mantlo and artist Mike Mignola left the title for Alpha Flight,[13] and Alpha Flight writer John Byrne took over the series and left it after six issues, claiming, "I took on the Hulk after a discussion with editor-in-chief Jim Shooter, in which I mentioned some of the things I would like to do with that character, given the chance. He told me to do whatever was necessary to get on the book, he liked my ideas so much. I did, and once installed he immediately changed his mind - 'You can't do this!' Six issues was as much as I could take."[14] Byrne was followed briefly by Al Milgrom, before new regular writer Peter David took over.

David became the writer of the series with issue #331 (May 1987), marking the start of a 12-year tenure. David's run altered Banner's pre-Hulk characterization and the nature of the relationship between Banner and the Hulk. David returned to the Stern and Mantlo abuse storyline, expanding the damage caused, and depicting Banner as suffering dissociative identity disorder (DID). David's stories showed that Banner had serious mental problems long before he became the Hulk. David revamped the personality significantly, giving the gray Hulk the alias "Joe Fixit," and setting him up as a morally ambiguous Las Vegas enforcer and tough guy. David worked with numerous artists over his run on the series, including Dale Keown, Todd McFarlane, Sam Kieth, Gary Frank, Liam Sharp, Terry Dodson, Mike Deodato, George Pérez, and Adam Kubert.[1]

In issue #377 (January 1991), David revamped the Hulk again, using a storyline involving hypnosis to have the splintered personalities of Banner, Joe Fixit and the savage green Hulk synthesize into a new Hulk, who has the vast power of the Savage Hulk, the cunning of the gray Hulk, and the intelligence of Bruce Banner.

In the 1993 Future Imperfect miniseries, writer David and penciller George Pérez introduced readers to the Hulk of a dystopian future. Calling himself the Maestro, the Hulk rules over a world where most of the heroes have been killed, and only Rick Jones and a small band of rebels fight against the Maestro's rule. Although the Maestro seemed to be destroyed by the end, he returned in The Incredible Hulk vol. 2, #460 (January 1998), also written by David.

In 1998, David followed editor Bobbie Chase's suggestion to kill Betty Ross. In the introduction to the Hulk trade paperback Beauty and the Behemoth, David said that his wife had recently left him, providing inspiration for the storyline. Marvel executives used Ross' death as an opportunity to push the idea of bringing back the Savage Hulk. David disagreed, leading to his parting ways with Marvel.[15] His last issue of Hulk was #467 (August 1998), his 137th.

Also in 1998, Marvel relaunched The Rampaging Hulk as a standard comic book rather than as a comics magazine.[1]

Relaunch

Following David's departure, Joe Casey took over as writer until the series' relaunch after issue #474 (March 1999). Hulk vol. 1[16] began immediately the following month, scripted by John Byrne and penciled by Ron Garney. In particular, the 1999 Hulk Annual (which retconned the Skrulls as being responsible for the gamma bomb explosion that turned Banner into Hulk) was mocked in the pages of Peter David's Captain Marvel series,[17] published concurrently as Byrne's Hulk run.

Erik Larsen and Jerry Ordway briefly took over scripting, and the title returned to The Incredible Hulk vol. 3[18] with the arrival of Paul Jenkins in issue #12 (March 2000). Jenkins wrote a story arc in which Banner and the three Hulks (Savage Hulk, gray Hulk, and the Merged Hulk, now considered a separate personality and referred to as the Professor) are able to mentally interact with one another, each personality taking over the shared body. During this, the four personalities (including Banner) confronted yet another submerged personality, a sadistic "Devil" intent on
attacking the world for revenge.[19]

Bruce Jones followed as the series' writer, and his run features Banner using yoga to take control of the Hulk while he is pursued by a secret conspiracy and aided by the mysterious Mr. Blue. Jones appended his 43-issue Incredible Hulk run with the limited series Hulk/Thing: Hard Knocks #1–4 (November 2004 – February 2005), which Marvel published after putting the ongoing series on hiatus.

Peter David, who had initially signed a contract for the six-issue Tempest Fugit limited series, returned as writer when it was decided to make the story, now only five parts, part of the ongoing series instead.[20] David contracted to complete a year on the title. Tempest Fugit revealed that Nightmare has manipulated the Hulk for years, tormenting him in various ways for "inconveniences" that the Hulk had caused him, including the sadistic Hulk Jenkins had introduced. It also implied that some or all of the recent storylines by Bruce Jones may have been just illusion.[21] After a four-part tie-in to the House of M crossover and a one-issue epilogue, David left the series once more, citing the need to do non-Hulk work for the sake of his career.[22]

**Planet Hulk and World War Hulk**

In the 2006 crossover storyline Planet Hulk by writer Greg Pak, a secret group of superhero leaders, the Illuminati, consider the Hulk an unacceptable potential risk to Earth, and rocket him into space to live a peaceful existence on a planet uninhabited by intelligent life. After a trajectory malfunction, the Hulk crashes on the violent planet Sakaar, where he rises from a captured gladiator to rebel leader, then usurps Sakaar's throne, becoming the new emperor. This story was followed by World War Hulk, also written by Pak, and drawn by John Romita, Jr., in which the vessel used to send the Hulk to Sakaar explodes, killing millions, including the Hulk's pregnant queen, Caiera, and damages the tectonic plates, nearly destroying the planet. Enraged, the Hulk returns to Earth with Sakaar's citizens and his allies, the Warbound, for retribution against the Illuminati. After laying siege to Manhattan, the Hulk learns one of his allies allowed the explosion to happen when Red King troops planted the bomb. He reverts to his Bruce Banner form after a fight with the Sentry and is taken into S.H.I.E.L.D. custody.

**Retitling and new Hulk series**

As of issue #113 (February 2008), the series was retitled The Incredible Hercules, still written by Greg Pak but starring the mythological demigod Hercules and teenage genius Amadeus Cho.

Marvel also launched a new volume of Hulk, (volume 2) written by Jeph Loeb and drawn by Ed McGuinness. The series featured the debut of a new Red Hulk, and Banner emerging from a coma and resuming his changes into the Green Hulk. After issue #12, The Incredible Hulk #600 was released, in which Red Hulk absorbs Hulk's radiation and claims Banner can never turn into the Hulk again. The series then continued with issue #13, with Banner questioning whether he should be glad that Hulk is gone or even if the Hulk is truly gone. The Incredible Hulk also continued with #601 onward, in which Banner seeks out his son Skaar, offering to train him to kill the Hulk in the eventuality of the Hulk's return. Under the aegis of megalomaniac Norman Osborn, Banner is re-exposed to gamma radiation, re-initiating the radiation in his body, thus allowing Banner to turn into the Hulk once more. Osborn explains he wants the Hulk to return, taking Banner out of the equation, and having him fight Skaar, hopefully killing each other.

In the company crossover story arc "Fall of the Hulks", beginning December 2009, Banner allies himself with the Red Hulk, revealed as a former agent of the supervillain group Intelligencia,[23] and, in fact, General Thunderbolt Ross (the one Banner had killed was a Life Model Decoy).[24] In the concurrent "Hulked Out Heroes" arc, writer Jeff Parker has the Intelligencia irradiate several heroes, turning them into destructive Hulk versions of themselves until they are cured.

In the since-retitled The Incredible Hulks #612, Banner tries to rekindle his marriage with Betty Ross, who is now the Red She-Hulk. Bruce and Betty resume their romantic relationship after defeating Fin Fang Foom.[25]
The Incredible Hulk vol. 4 began in October 2011, written by Jason Aaron and drawn by Marc Silvestri. At the start of this new series, Hulk and Banner have somehow become separate entities. The Hulk has been living as a hunter for an underground tribe of Moloids in Subterranea while Banner has become a deranged scientist living on an island and conducting experiments to try to re-trigger his transformations into the Hulk. When Hulk works with the MAD Squad to stop Bruce Banner, a flashback reveals that Doctor Doom was responsible for performing different surgeries that separated Hulk from Bruce Banner. The storyline concludes with Banner being destroyed in the blast from his new gamma bomb, but the Hulk's close proximity to Banner when the explosion occurred resulted in Hulk and Banner becoming one being once more, with their previous existence reversed; now Hulk is the 'dominant' personality, reverting into the criminally insane Banner when he becomes too calm. It soon turns out that Bruce Banner has been using Hulk into gathering components for him as Bruce Banner has found a way to cure himself of the Hulk, but informs the Hulk via video that he has decided not to use the cure as he has accepted that the Hulk made him a better person than he would have been if he had remained himself, the two accepting their joint destiny as they prepare to move against Doctor Doom's latest plan.

During the Avengers vs. X-Men storyline, Captain America finds Hulk in Colorado and asks for his help to fight a Phoenix Force-empowered Cyclops and Emma Frost. Hulk accepts and joins up with the Avengers, Captain America noting that, despite his complicated relationship with the team, he has always been there when the crisis is large enough. During the battle, Hulk manages to take down Emma Frost. After Cyclops killed Professor X, Hulk did the fastball special with Wolverine which does not work.

Characterization

Bruce Banner

The core of the Hulk, Bruce Banner has been portrayed differently by different writers, but common themes persist. Banner, a physicist, is sarcastic and seemingly very self-assured when he first appears in Incredible Hulk #1, but is also emotionally withdrawn in most fashions. Banner designed the gamma bomb which caused his affliction, and the ironic twist of his self-inflicted fate has been one of the most persistent common themes. Arie Kaplan describes the character thus: "Bruce Banner lives in a constant state of panic, always wary that the monster inside him will erupt, and therefore he can't form meaningful bonds with anyone." Throughout the Hulk's published history, writers have continued to frame Bruce Banner in these themes. Under different writers, his fractured personality led to transformations into different versions of the Hulk. These transformations are usually involuntary, and often writers have tied the transformation to emotional triggers, such as rage and fear. As the series has progressed, different writers have adapted the Hulk, changing Hulk's personality to reflect changes in Banner's physiology or psyche. Writers have also refined and changed some aspects of Banner's personality, showing him as emotionally repressed, but capable of deep love for Betty Ross, and for solving problems posed to him. Under the writing of Paul Jenkins, Banner was shown to be a capable fugitive, applying deductive reasoning and observation to figure out the events transpiring around him. On the occasions that Banner has controlled the Hulk's body, he has applied principles of physics to problems and challenges and used deductive reasoning. It was shown after his ability to turn into the Hulk was taken away by the Red Hulk that Banner has been extremely versatile as well as cunning when dealing with the many situations that followed. When he was briefly separated from the Hulk by Doom, Banner became criminally insane, driven by his desire to regain the power of the Hulk, but once the two recombined he came to accept that he was a better person with the Hulk to provide something for him to focus on controlling rather than allowing his intellect to run without restraint against the world.
The Hulk

During the experimental detonation of a gamma bomb, scientist Bruce Banner rushes to save a teenager who has driven onto the testing field. Pushing the teen, Rick Jones, into a trench, Banner himself is caught in the blast, absorbing massive amounts of radiation. He awakens later in an infirmary, seeming relatively unscathed, but that night transforms into a lumbering gray form that breaks through the wall and escapes. A soldier in the ensuing search party dubs the otherwise unidentified creature a "hulk."[30]

The original version of the Hulk was often shown as simple and quick to anger. His first transformations were triggered by sundown, and his return to Banner by dawn. However, in Incredible Hulk #4, Banner started using a gamma-ray device to transform at will.[31] In more recent Hulk stories, emotions trigger the change. Although gray in his debut, difficulties for the printer led to a change in his color to green. In the original tale, the Hulk divorces his identity from Banner's, decrying Banner as "that puny weakling in the picture."[30] From his earliest stories, the Hulk has been concerned with finding sanctuary and quiet[2] and often is shown reacting emotionally to situations quickly. Grest and Weinberg call Hulk the "dark, primordial side of [Banner's] psyche."[4] Even in the earliest appearances, Hulk spoke in the third person. The Hulk retains a modest intelligence, thinking and talking in full sentences, and Lee even gives the Hulk expository dialogue in issue six, allowing readers to learn just what capabilities the Hulk has, when the Hulk says, "But these muscles ain't just for show! All I gotta do is spring up and just keep goin'!" In Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics, Les Daniels addresses the Hulk as an embodiment of cultural fears of radiation and nuclear science. He quotes Jack Kirby thus: "As long as we're experimenting with radioactivity, there's no telling what may happen, or how much our advancements may cost us." Daniels continues, "The Hulk became Marvel's most disturbing embodiment of the perils inherent in the atomic age."[32]

Though usually a loner, the Hulk helped to form both the Avengers[33] and the Defenders.[34] He was able to determine that the changes were now triggered by emotional stress.[35]

The Fantastic Four #12 (March 1963), featured the Hulk's first battle with the Thing. Although many early Hulk stories involve General Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross trying to capture or destroy the Hulk, the main villain is often, like Hulk, a radiation-based character, like the Gargoyle or the Leader, along with other foes such as the Toad Men, or Asian warlord General Fang. Ross' daughter, Betty, loves Banner and criticizes her father for pursuing the Hulk. General Ross' right-hand man, Major Glenn Talbot, also loves Betty and is torn between pursuing the Hulk and trying to gain Betty's love more honorably. Rick Jones serves as the Hulk's friend and sidekick in these early tales.

In the 1970s, Hulk was shown as more prone to anger and rage, and less talkative. Writers played with the nature of his transformations,[36] briefly giving Banner control over the change, and the ability to maintain control of his Hulk form.

Hulk stories began to involve other dimensions, and in one, Hulk met the empress Jarella. Jarella used magic to bring Banner's intelligence to Hulk, and came to love him, asking him to become her mate. Though Hulk returned to Earth before he could become her king, he would return to Jarella's kingdom of K'ai again.

When Bill Mantlo took on writing duties, he led the character into the arena of political commentary when Hulk traveled to Tel Aviv, Israel, encountering both the violence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and the Jewish Israeli heroine Sabra. Soon after, Hulk encountered the Arabian Knight, a Bedouin superhero.[2]

Under Mantlo's writing, a mindless Hulk was sent to the "Crossroads of Eternity", where Banner was revealed to have suffered childhood traumas which engendered Bruce's repressed rage.[37]

Having come to terms with his issues, at least for a time, Hulk and Banner physically separated under John Byrne's writing. Separated from the Hulk by Doc Samson,[38] Banner was recruited by the U.S. government to create the Hulkbusters, a government team dedicated to catching Hulk. Banner and Ross married,[39] but Byrne's change in the character was reversed by Al Milgrom, who reunited the two personas,[40] and with issue #324, returned the Hulk to his gray coloration, with the changes occurring at night, regardless of Banner's emotional state. The Hulk appeared to perish in a gamma bomb explosion, but was instead sent to Jarella's home dimension of K'ai.
Shortly after returning to Earth, Hulk took on the identity of "Joe Fixit," a shadowy behind the scenes figure, working in Las Vegas on behalf of a casino owner, Michael Berengetti. For months, Banner was repressed in Hulk’s mind, but slowly began to reappear. Hulk and Banner began to change back and forth again at dusk and dawn, as the character initially had, but this time, they worked together to advance both their goals, using written notes as communication as well as meeting on a mental plane to have conversations. In *The Incredible Hulk* #333, the Leader describes the gray Hulk persona as strongest during the night of the new moon and weakest during the full moon. Eventually, the Green Hulk began to reemerge.

In issue #377, David revamped the Hulk again; Doctor Leonard Samson engages the Ringmaster's services to hypnotize Bruce Banner and force him, the Savage Hulk (Green Hulk) and Mr. Fixit (Gray Hulk) to confront Banner's past abuse at the hands of his father Brian Banner. During the session, the three identities confront a "Guilt Hulk," which sadistically torments the three with the abuse of Banner's father. Facing down this abuse, a new larger and smarter Hulk emerges and completely replaces the "human" Bruce Banner and Hulk personae. This Hulk is a culmination of the three aspects of Banner. He has the vast power of the Savage Hulk, the cunning of the gray Hulk, and the intelligence of Bruce Banner.

Peter David then introduces the Hulk to the Pantheon, a secretive organization built around an extended family of superpowered people. The family members, mostly distant cousins to each other, had codenames based in the mythos of the Trojan War, and were descendants of the founder of the group, Agamemnon. When Agamemnon leaves, he puts the Hulk in charge of the organization. The storyline ends when it is revealed Agamemnon has traded his offspring to an alien race to gain power. The Hulk leads the Pantheon against the aliens, and then moves on. During his leadership of the Pantheon, Hulk encounters a depraved version of himself from the future called Maestro, who Delphi saw in a vision back in *The Incredible Hulk* vol. 2, #401 with part of the events occurring concurrently in *The Incredible Hulk* vol. 2, #415.

Thrown into the future, Hulk finds himself allied with Rick Jones, now an old man, in an effort to destroy the tyrant Maestro. Unable to stop him in any other manner, Hulk uses the time machine that brought him to the future to send the Maestro back into the heart of the very Gamma Bomb test that spawned the Hulk.

Artistically, the character has been depicted as progressively more muscular in the years since his debut.

### Primary series

- *Incredible Hulk* vol. 1, #1-6 (May 1962 – March 1963)
- *Tales to Astonish* #60-101 (October 1964 – March 1968)
- *Hulk* vol. 1, #1-11 (April 1999 – February 2000)
- *Hulk* vol. 2, #1-11 (January 2008 – June 2009) (continued as Hulk vol. 2 #12 featuring Red Hulk)
- *Incredible Hulks* #612-635 (November 2010 – August 2011)
- *Incredible Hulk* vol. 4, #1-15 (October 2011 – October 2012)
- *Indestructible Hulk* #1- (November 2012)

### Powers, appearance, and abilities

The Hulk possesses the potential for limitless physical strength depending directly on his emotional state, particularly his anger. This has been reflected in the repeated comment, "The madder Hulk gets, the stronger Hulk gets." After probing, the entity Beyonder once claimed that the Hulk's potential strength had "no finite element inside." His durability, regeneration, and endurance also increase in proportion to his temper. Greg Pak described the Worldbreaker Hulk shown during *World War Hulk* as having a level of physical power where "Hulk was stronger than any mortal—and most immortals—who ever walked the Earth."
The Hulk's level of strength is normally limited by Banner's subconscious influence. When Hulk allowed Jean Grey to psionically "shut Banner off", he reached a scale of power on which he managed to overpower and destroy the physical form of the villain Onslaught.\[49\]

The Hulk is resistant to most forms of injury or damage. The extent varies between interpretations, but he has withstood the equivalent of solar temperatures,\[50\] nuclear explosions,\[51\] and planet-shattering impacts.\[52\] Despite his remarkable resiliency, continuous barrages of high-caliber gunfire can hinder his movement to some degree, and this has been consistently portrayed outside the comic books, in both live-action films and animation. He has been shown to have both regenerative and adaptive healing abilities, including growing tissues to allow him to breathe underwater,\[53\] surviving unprotected in space for extended periods,\[54\][55] and when injured, healing from most wounds within seconds.\[56\] As an effect, he has an extremely prolonged lifespan.\[57\]

The Hulk's powerful legs allow him to leap into lower Earth orbit or across continents,\[58\] and he has displayed sufficient superhuman speed to match Thor,\[59\] and Sentry.\[60\]

He also possesses less commonly described powers, including abilities allowing him to "home in" to his place of origin in New Mexico,\[61\] resist psychic control,\[62\] or unwilling transformation;\[63\] grow stronger from radiation\[64\] or dark magic;\[65\] and to see and interact with astral forms.\[66\] The Hulk is also able to generate omnidirectional "worldbreaker" bursts of kinetic energy that completely shook the United States & could potentially destroy the world or the planet he is standing on.\[67\]

In the early days of the first Hulk comic series, "massive" doses of gamma rays (such as from the explosion of a hand-held nuclear grenade) would cause the Hulk to transform back to Bruce Banner, although this ability was written out of the character by the 1970s.

As Bruce Banner, he is considered one of the greatest minds on Earth. He has developed expertise in the fields of biology, chemistry, engineering, and physiology, and holds a Ph.D. in nuclear physics. He possesses "a mind so brilliant it cannot be measured on any known intelligence test."\[68\] Bruce Banner also makes use of his intelligence to create highly advanced technology labelled as "Bannertech", which is on par with technological development from Tony Stark or Doctor Doom. The most common Bannertech Bruce uses is a force field able to shrug off blows from Hulk-level entities, along with a teleporter, which can be used to transport an unknown number of people. Bannertech is also used by Amadeus Cho, as well as the Hulk persona itself.

In *The Science of Superheroes*, Lois Grest and Robert Weinberg examined Hulk's powers, explaining the scientific flaws in them. Most notably, they point out that the level of gamma radiation Banner is exposed to at the initial blast would induce radiation sickness and kill him, or if not, create significant cancer risks for Banner, because hard radiation strips cells of their ability to function. They go on to offer up an alternate origin, in which a Hulk might be created by biological experimentation with adrenal glands and GFP.

Charles Q. Choi from LiveScience.com further explains that unlike the Hulk, gamma rays are not green; existing as they do beyond the visible spectrum, gamma rays have no color at all that we can describe. He also explains that gamma rays are so powerful (the most powerful form of electromagnetic radiation and 10,000 times more powerful than visible light) that they can even convert energy into matter - a possible explanation for the increased mass that Bruce Banner takes on during transformations. "Just as the Incredible Hulk 'is the strongest one there is,' as he says himself, so too are gamma ray bursts the most powerful explosions known."\[69\]
Critical reception

In 2008, *Wizard* magazine named the Hulk as the 7th Greatest Marvel Comics Character.[70] *Empire* magazine named him as the 14th Greatest Comic Book Character and the Fifth Greatest Marvel Character.[71]

Related characters

Over the long publication history of the Hulk's adventures, many recurring characters have featured prominently, including his sidekick Rick Jones, love interest Betty Ross, and her father, the often adversarial General "Thunderbolt" Ross.

Family

Bruce Banner's father, Brian, was abusive to Bruce because he was convinced his son must be a mutant due to his (Brian's) radiation work; he also was jealous of the attention Bruce received from his mother. Bruce's mother protected him during his father's fits of rage. Once his mother tried to run away with Bruce, and his dad accidentally killed her by smacking her across the face with great force. Bruce had a stillborn child with his first wife, Betty Ross Banner (who became the Red She-Hulk in the 2010 comics). He has two sons with his deceased second wife Caiera Oldstrong on the planet Sakaar named Skaar and Hiro-Kala and a daughter named Lyra with Thundra the warrior woman.[72] Since childhood, Banner has been close to his cousin, Jennifer Walters, who in adulthood became the She-Hulk.[73]

Other versions

In addition to his mainstream incarnation, Hulk has also been depicted in other fictional universes, in which Bruce Banner's transformation, behavior, or circumstances vary from the mainstream setting. In some stories, someone other than Bruce Banner is the Hulk.

In other media

The Hulk character and the concepts behind it have been raised to the level of iconic status by many within and outside the comic book industry. In 2003, *Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine* claimed the character had "stood the test of time as a genuine icon of American pop culture."[74]

The Hulk is often viewed as a reaction to war. As well as being a reaction to the Cold War, the character has been a cipher for the frustrations the Vietnam War raised, and Ang Lee said that the Iraq War influenced his direction.[4][75][76] In the Michael Nyman edited edition of *The Guardian*, Stefanie Diekmann explored Marvel Comics' reaction to the September 11 attacks. Diekmann discussed The Hulk's appearance in the 9/11 tribute comic *Heroes*, claiming that his greater prominence, alongside Captain America, aided in "stressing the connection between anger and justified violence without having to depict anything more than a well-known and well-respected protagonist."[77]

In *Comic Book Nation*, Wright alludes to Hulk's counterculture status, referring to a 1965 *Esquire* magazine poll amongst college students which "revealed that student radicals ranked Spider-Man and the Hulk alongside the likes of Bob Dylan and Che Guevara as their favorite revolutionary icons." Wright goes on to cite examples of his anti-authority symbol status. Two of these are "The Ballad of the Hulk" by Jerry Jeff Walker, and the *Rolling Stone* cover for September 30, 1971, a full color Herb Trimpe piece commissioned for the magazine.[36][78] The Hulk has been caricatured in such animated television series as *The Simpsons*,[79] *Robot Chicken*, and *Family Guy,[80]* and such comedy TV series as *The Young Ones.[81]* The character is also used as a cultural reference point for someone displaying anger or agitation. For example, in a 2008 *Daily Mirror* review of an *EastEnders* episode, a character is described as going "into Incredible Hulk mode, smashing up his flat."[82] The Hulk, especially his alter-ego Bruce
Banner, is also a common reference in rap music. The term was represented as an analogue to marijuana in Dr. Dre’s 2001, while more conventional references are made in Ludacris and Jermaine Dupri’s popular single “Welcome to Atlanta.”

The 2003 Ang Lee directed Hulk film saw discussion of the character's appeal to Asian Americans. The Taiwanese born Ang Lee commented on the "subcurrent of repression" that underscored the character of The Hulk, and how that mirrored his own experience: "Growing up, my artistic leanings were always repressed—there was always pressure to do something 'useful,' like being a doctor." Jeff Yang, writing for the San Francisco Chronicle, extended this self-identification to Asian American culture, arguing that "the passive-aggressive streak runs deep among Asian Americans—especially those who have entered creative careers, often against their parents' wishes."

Television

Animated

• 1966: Hulk (part of The Marvel Super Heroes); Max Ferguson first voicing the Hulk and Paul Soles as the first voice of Bruce Banner
• 1982–83: The Incredible Hulk; Bob Holt as Hulk, Michael Bell as Bruce Banner
• 1996–97: The Incredible Hulk; Lou Ferrigno as Hulk, Michael Donovan as Grey Hulk, Neal McDonough as Bruce Banner
• 2006: Fantastic Four: World's Greatest Heroes; Mark Gibbon as Hulk, Andrew Kavadas as Bruce Banner
• 2008–12: Iron Man: Armored Adventures; Mark Gibbon as Hulk/Grey Hulk
• 2009: Wolverine and the X-Men; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Gabriel Mann as Bruce Banner
• 2009–11: The Super Hero Squad Show; Travis Willingham as Hulk/Grey Hulk
• 2010–12: The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Gabriel Mann as Bruce Banner
• 2012: Ultimate Spider-Man; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk

Live action

• 1977–82, 1988–90: The Incredible Hulk (series and movies); Lou Ferrigno as Hulk, Bill Bixby in a different concept as David Banner instead of Bruce Banner; by Universal Studios

Movies

Live action

• 2003: Hulk; Ang Lee as Hulk (voice), Eric Bana as Bruce Banner
• 2008: The Incredible Hulk; Lou Ferrigno as Hulk (voice), Edward Norton as Bruce Banner
• 2012: The Avengers; Mark Ruffalo as Bruce Banner/Hulk (motion capturing and voice for Hulk), Lou Ferrigno also contributed to voice of Hulk (unccredited)
• 2015: Untitled Avengers Sequel

Animated

• 2006: Ultimate Avengers; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Michael Massee as Bruce Banner
• 2006: Ultimate Avengers 2; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Michael Massee as Bruce Banner
• 2008: Next Avengers: Heroes of Tomorrow; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Ken Kramer as Bruce Banner
• 2009: Hulk Vs. Thor; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Bryce Johnson as Bruce Banner
• 2009: Hulk Vs. Wolverine; Fred Tatasciore as Hulk, Bryce Johnson as Bruce Banner
• 2010: Planet Hulk; Rick D. Wasserman as Hulk
• 2013: Iron Man & Hulk: Heroes United
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<td>Jack Kirby</td>
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<td>Steve Ditko, Jack Kirby, Bill Everett, Gil Kane, Bob Powell, John Romita Sr. and others</td>
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Earlier characters called "The Hulk"

Prior to the debut of the Hulk in May 1962, Marvel had earlier monster characters that used the name "Hulk", but had no direct relation.

- **Debuting in June 1960**, in *Strange Tales* #75, was a huge robot built by Albert Poole called The Hulk, which was actually armor that Poole would wear (in modern day reprints the character's name was changed to Gruatan)[88]
- **First appearing**, in November 1960, in *Journey Into Mystery* #62 was Xemnu the Living Hulk, a huge furry alien monster.[89] The character reappeared in March 1961 in issue #66. Since then the character has been a mainstay in the Marvel Universe, and was renamed Xemnu the Titan.[90]
- **From a monster movie called The Hulk**, was a huge orange slimy monster, which debuted in July 1961 in *Tales to Astonish* #21 (in modern-day reprints, the character's name was changed to the Glop)[91]

References

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Hulk (comics)


External links

• Hulk (http://marvel.com/universe/Hulk) at the Marvel Universe wiki
• Hulk (http://comicbookdb.com/character.php?ID=397) at the Comic Book DB
• Hulk (http://www.comics.org/search.lasso/?sort=chrono&query=Hulk&type=character) at the Grand Comics Database
• Hulk (http://www.comics-db.com/comics/search.cgi?query=&amp;Characters=Hulk) at the Big Comic Book Database
• Hulk (http://www.maelmill-insi.de/UHBMCC/selhn.htm#G76) at the Unofficial Handbook of Marvel Comics Creators
• Hulk (http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Comics/Titles/H/Hulk/) at the Open Directory Project
• Hulk (http://www.imdb.com/character/ch0007099/) at the Internet Movie Database