

- All in the Family (1971-1979)** Producer Norman Lear created this sitcom, which was based on the successful British series *Till Death Us Do Part*. It starred Carroll O'Connor and Jean Stapleton as the central couple, Archie and Edith Bunker; Archie was notable for his prejudicial attitudes, while Edith—whom Archie would refer to as his "dingbat"—was his long-suffering wife. The show also featured Sherman Hemsley as George Jefferson, who would later be given his own eponymous spinoff, *The Jeffersons*, in which he and his wife moved on up to a "deluxe apartment in the sky" on the East Side of Manhattan.
- The Andy Griffith Show (1960-1968)** One of the most popular TV series of its decade, *The Andy Griffith Show* starred its title actor as Andy Taylor, who was sheriff in the sleepy small town of Mayberry, North Carolina. The show is almost as well known for its distinctive supporting characters, including a gas station attendant named Gomer Pyle and Andy's awkward deputy sheriff, Barney Fife. Ron Howard rose to fame as a child actor on the show, playing Andy's son Opie, before going on to an adult career as a prolific actor and director.
- The Ed Sullivan Show (1948-1971)** This long-running CBS variety show occupied the same time slot—Sunday night at 8 pm—for over two decades. For most of that time, it broadcast live from what is now called the Ed Sullivan Theater on Broadway, which is currently the home of the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Among the characters it bequeathed to American popular culture were a Spanish ventriloquist known as "Señor Wences" and an Italian mouse puppet named Topo Gigio. In 1964, the Beatles appeared on the show for three straight weeks, appearances which are credited with launching the "British Invasion" in popular music.
- Gunsmoke (1955-1975)** With 635 episodes that aired over 20 seasons, *Gunsmoke* was the longest-running prime-time series in American television history until *The Simpsons* overtook it. Set in Dodge City, Kansas in the late 19th century, it centered on U.S. marshal Matt Dillon. For several seasons in the early 1960s, it featured a young Burt Reynolds as blacksmith Quint Asper.
- The Honeymooners (1955-1956)** *The Honeymooners* is considered the first TV spinoff, as it centered on a character—Brooklyn bus driver Ralph Kramden—who had previously been introduced on *The Jackie Gleason Show*. Ralph's wife Alice was frequently the recipient of his bombastic threats, such as "Bang zoom, straight to the moon!". Like *I Love Lucy*, the show also centrally featured a neighbor couple—in this case, Ed and Trixie Norton. Although *The Honeymooners* is now considered a classic sitcom, it was not very popular at the time, and only 39 episodes aired in its original one-season run.
- I Love Lucy (1951-1957)** During its six-season run, *I Love Lucy* was one of America's most watched shows. It centered on Lucy Ricardo, played by comedian Lucille Ball, and her husband Ricky Ricardo, who was played by Ball's real-life husband Desi Arnaz. The show's other major characters were the Ricardos' neighbors, Fred and Ethel Mertz. In one of the show's most famous episodes, Lucy was hired to do a TV commercial for a health tonic called "Vitameatavegamin"; after drinking too much of it, Lucy becomes inebriated and is unable to pronounce the word correctly.
- The Mary Tyler Moore Show (1970-1977)** This sitcom centered on Mary Richards, a young woman who moves to Minneapolis, where she goes to work in the newsroom at WJM-TV. No fewer than three supporting characters eventually got their own spinoffs: *Phyllis*, which starred Cloris Leachman; *Rhoda*, which starred Valerie Harper; and *Lou Grant*, which—unlike both the other two spinoffs and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* itself—was a drama rather than a sitcom. The show is considered groundbreaking for its portrayal of Mary as an independent single woman.

8. **MAS*H (1972-1983)** Like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *All in the Family*, *MAS*H* was a highly successful CBS sitcom that dealt with controversial social issues—in this case, war. Centering on the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in South Korea, it was adapted from the 1970 feature film of the same name directed by Robert Altman. Major characters included Hawkeye Pierce, a wisecracking surgeon played by Alan Alda; Sherman Potter, who was added to the show in season 4 after the previous commanding officer, Henry Blake, was killed off; and Corporal Klinger, who would dress in women's clothing in an attempt to be discharged from the army.

 9. **Mr. Ed (1958-1966)** This classic sitcom centered on the title talking horse—a palomino whose voice was provided by Allan Lane—and his owner, architect Wilbur Post. Much of the show's humor derived from the fact that Mr. Ed would solely speak to Wilbur, which naturally led to hijinks. Mr. Ed should not be confused with Francis the Talking Mule, who would solely speak to his owner Peter Stirling; he appeared in a number of film comedies during the 1950s.

 10. **The Twilight Zone (1959-1964)** Rod Serling created this anthology series, whose iconic opening credits featured a theme composed by Bernard Herrmann and a narration warning that the viewer was "about to enter another dimension." One of its most famous episodes, "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," starred a young William Shatner as a salesman who becomes convinced that a gremlin nobody else can see is trying to crash the airplane on which he is flying.
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