

I'm not a robot



By DOMINIQUE HINES FOR THE DAILY MAIL Published: 00:57 BST, 14 July 2025 | Updated: 01:20 BST, 14 July 2025 At 32, he is hardly over the hill. Yet Doctor Who actor Ncuti Gatwa yesterday said he stepped away from the role because he is 'old, tired... and doing ballet instead'. Ncuti became the first black actor to lead the BBC show and was hailed for bringing fresh energy to the Time Lord – but after two series he has called time on the role. It comes amid reports of behind-the-scenes tension and a Eurovision controversy that saw the actor withdraw from presenting the British votes. Speaking to Laura Kuennsberg about leaving Doctor Who, the actor said: 'I'm getting old, and my body was tired... and I've now just started doing some ballet, so I'm making really great decisions.' Ncuti admitted the demands of Doctor Who left him drained 'physically, emotionally, mentally'. However, he described the role as 'the most amazing job in the world' and said 'never say never' when asked if he could return in the future. At 32, he is hardly over the hill. Yet Doctor Who actor Ncuti Gatwa yesterday said he stepped away from the role because he is 'old, tired... and doing ballet instead' Ncuti became the first black actor to lead the BBC show and was hailed for bringing fresh energy to the Time Lord – but after two series he has called time on the roleNcuti is one of the youngest actors to have played the Doctor, with Matt Smith taking on the role at 26, Peter Davison at 29 and David Tennant at 34. Jodie Whittaker was 35 when she joined the show, while William Hartnell and Peter Capaldi were both 55 when they became the Time Lord. Ncuti's exit follows speculation over his decision to pull out of presenting the UK's Eurovision Song Contest results in May, with suggestions it was linked to Israel's participation in the contest during the conflict in Gaza. Addressing the rumours, he said: 'It all panned out very interestingly. I pulled out of it a long time before it was announced. 'And I don't know why] it was announced when it was announced but I was just very busy.' Ncuti's final Doctor Who appearance aired in May and he will now star in the West End show Born With Teeth. This comes after the BBC issued a statement after livd Doctor Who fans complained about an episode being 'spoiled'. Doctor Who's 15th season wrapped up last month and saw Ncuti depart as the Time Lord in the series' finale. It comes amid reports of behind-the-scenes tension and a Eurovision controversy that saw the actor withdraw from presenting the British votes The actor said: 'I'm getting old, and my body was tired... and I've now just started doing some ballet, so I'm making really great decisions'Ncuti's character regenerated into Rose Tyler (Billie Piper) in scenes that sent viewers into a meltdown.However, some fans voiced concerns that the episode was ruined because the BBC News site published an article with the headline: 'Ncuti Gatwa regenerates into Billie Piper as he leaves Doctor Who.'Read More& spoiler warning was then written underneath, but many felt the headline spoiled the ending.Since then, the broadcaster has acknowledged the complaints and explained the reasoning behind the story. The statement read: 'Some people contacted us to complain that the headline gave away the ending, spoiling this Doctor Who episode for them. 'Others requested that the BBC be more conscious of spoilers going forward, particularly in the use of headlines.'Ncuti Gatwa's departure from the series had been widely speculated and many fans will have been aware that this was a possibility.'The headline on the news homepage that evening referred to Ncuti Gatwa's departure because this was a legitimate entertainment news story in its own right, and it is not unusual that we would carry this type of story once a programme has been broadcast and the details in the public domain.' This comes after the BBC issued a statement after livd Doctor Who fans complained about an episode being 'spoiled' Doctor Who's 15th season wrapped up last month and saw Ncuti Gatwa depart as the Time Lord in the series' finale Ncuti's character regenerated into Rose Tyler (Billie Piper, pictured) in scenes that sent viewers into a meltdown!It went on to reveal details of the regeneration was added in later on in the evening. The statement continued: 'While we cannot account for everyone's viewing habits, we initially held back from headlining the announcement of Ncuti Gatwa's regeneration into Billie Piper. 'This extra detail was added later in the evening and our approach was consistent across the BBC site.'BBC journalists are of course entitled to use their judgement to decide which stories to cover and the manner in which they are reported. We also want our headlines to be as informative as possible.'Although every story is different, we have discussed your concerns on this occasion with senior editors and we will be mindful of your views for future coverage.'When the episode aired, devout Whovians were not expecting the huge twist at the end when Ncuti's character regenerated into Rose amid his departure after just two series as woke storylines saw ratings for the much-loved show plunge. However, some fans voiced concerns that the episode was ruined because the BBC News site published an article with the headline: 'Ncuti Gatwa regenerates into Billie Piper as he leaves Doctor Who.' Since then, the broadcaster has acknowledged the complaints and explained the reasoning behind the story Billie first starred as the companion to the ninth Doctor in 2005, playing Rose Tyler alongside Christopher Eccleston's Time Lord. She went onto star alongside David Tennant as the Tenth Doctor in the second series. Talking to X, formerly known as Twitter, fans were quick to share their reaction to Billie's shock comeback, with one even asking, 'Did my eyes actually deceive me?!'They penned: 'THE WAY I SCREEEEEEEEEEEMED... 'Did not see that coming. Wow!'Doctor Who is available to stream on BBC Player. Cast & crewUser reviewsTriviaFAQTV Series1963-1989TV-PG25mThe adventures in time and space of the Doctor, a Time Lord who changes appearance and personality by regenerating when near death, and is joined by companions in battles against aliens and ... Read allThe adventures in time and space of the Doctor, a Time Lord who changes appearance and personality by regenerating when near death, and is joined by companions in battles against aliens and other megalomaniacs.TopTop-rated26 seasonsSee all262524232221201918171615141312111098765432127 yearsSee all198919881987198619851984198319821981198019791978197719761975197419731972197119701969196819671966196519641963Sign in to rate and Watchlist for personalized recommendationsSign inSuggest an edit or add missing contentYou have no recently viewed pages Follow Us On Social Media The BBC's long-running science fiction program "Doctor Who" is as fascinating as it is daunting to the average outsider. Perhaps one of the most alienating aspects about the show – aside from the 60 years of lore – is the constant recasting of its lead actor through reincarnation/regeneration. Just when you've gotten attached to one version of the Doctor, the character changes. However, this tradition not only adds to the mythos of one of the most popular characters in fiction, but allows for new fans to find 15 unique, essentially seamless entry points into the series. All you have to do is find the right Doctor for you and enjoy the ride through space and time. To help you on your journey, we've run through each and every major version of the character in chronological order. Main Series: 12-13 (Classic) Notable Companion: Lee Clayton Best Story: Series 12, Episode 5, "Fugitive of the Judoon" As has been explored more thoroughly in the Modern Era of "Doctor Who," the Doctor did indeed have lives before they were regenerated into the "First" Doctor, whom we see in the program's inaugural 1963 series. Since this was established, there have been whispers of various original incarnations of the Doctor, as well as the appearances of multiple Timeless Children who are essentially the Doctor's forgotten juvenile incarnations. At present, the most prominent pre-First Doctor incarnation is the Fugitive Doctor – notable for being the first Black Doctor – played by Jo Martin. "She can be a bit grumpy, a bit moody, this Doctor," Martin said of her character in an interview with the official Doctor Who magazine. "A little like [12th Doctor Peter] Capaldi, maybe. She's got an edge and a dark side to her as well as being cheeky and charming." She is one of the more morally complicated Doctors, having worked for the Gallifreyan organization The Division – the same organization responsible for erasing the Doctor's earliest memories. Main Series: 1-4 (Classic) Notable Companions: Susan Foreman, Barbara Wright, Ian Chesterton Best Story: Series 3, "The Destruction of Time" Going back to the "Doctor Who's" origins in 1963, we find the first numbered Doctor, as well as the first Doctor overall, played by 55-year-old Shakespearean actor and radio star William Hartnell. After spending the majority of his career playing stern old men, Hartnell was attracted to the role of the Doctor sight-unseen due to the room it gave him to play a softer, more curious and eccentric sort of character he'd seldom been offered. The show used both Hartnell's established persona and potential range to create the First Doctor's arc from cynical time traveler to the open-hearted, deeply compassionate intellectual that more closely resembles the variations of the Doctor we see in later series. Countless fights with interdimensional monsters such as Daleks and Cybermen ultimately proved too much for him, however, the physical toll eventually forced what was long believed to be his first regeneary into Series 4. Main Series: 4-6 (Classic) Notable Companions: Jamie Mator, Crimmon, Zoe Heriot Best Story: Series 6, "The War Games" Following William Hartnell's exit from the series, the actor pointed producers toward Patrick Troughton for his successor. Though Troughton – who to that point had largely been a recognizable guest star on British dramas – initially pitched a wildly upsetting "Doctor Who" portrayal that could have easily tanked the show, he eventually took over the role and is remembered as one of the best Doctors. As the Doctor's first reincarnation (from the audience's perspective), Troughton established that each incarnation had their own identity and personality without alienating audiences. He intentionally avoided the Sherlock-esque persona producers were pushing, and leaned into a looser take on the character who listened more than he spoke. Troughton's time with the show ended when the Second Doctor was apprehended by the Time Lords and finally punished for his crimes against their order. His sentence was exile and immediate regeneration. Main Series: 7-11 (Classic) Notable Companions: Jo Grant, Sarah Jane Smith Best Story: Series 10, "Carnival of Monsters" Incidentally, the Time Lords chose to send the Doctor to 20th Century Earth for his exile, where he – newly regenerated as the Third Doctor, played by actor and comedian Jon Pertwee – was forced to combat threats initially without the aid of his TARDIS. He eventually repaired his vessel and continued his travels, coming face to face with arch nemesis the Master (Roger Delgado) for the first time. Pertwee left the program in 1974, during the show's 11th series. In interviews given after the fact, he said he was concerned about being trapped in the role after so many years in the TARDIS, and felt that the departures of producer Barry Letts and script editor Terrance Dicks made the climate natural for his own final bow. After failing to renegotiate a larger salary for Series 12, Pertwee bid the show adieu. His cause of death on the show was a fatal encounter with a terrifying radioactive spider queen. Main Series: 12-18 (Classic) Notable Companions: Sarah Jane Smith, Harry Sullivan, K9 Best Story: Series 12, "Genesis of the Daleks" At 40 years old when he took the role, Tom Baker was the youngest Doctor to grace the screen by about 10 years. He and the show leaned into this more youthful energy to great effect, creating a version of the character that was full of whimsy and endearing mania. Another part of what makes his run on the show so memorable is how much they expanded the lore of the character with both the addition of characters and concepts and the extrapolation of those previously established. One of the top "Doctor Who" stonies of the Baker-era is "Genesis of the Daleks," a dark, psychological exploration of the program's most prominent baddies that helped push its bounds beyond a show strictly made for children. After seven series, the Fourth Doctor met his end during a battle with the Master (Anthony Ainley), and was regenerated anew. Main Series: 19-21 (Classic) Notable Companions: Adric, Vislor Turlough, Peri Brown Best Story: Series 19, "Earthshock" After Tom Baker's exit, the show did not return the older, wizened Doctors of the past and went even younger for his replacement, casting 31-year-old sitcom star Peter Davison as the Fifth Doctor. This incarnation of the character is initially introduced alongside the Fourth Doctor as a mysterious figure called the Watcher, who then absorbs the Fourth Doctor as part of an unorthodox and uniquely dangerous regeneration. While Baker's series widened the world of "Doctor Who," Davison's pared it back significantly, telling leaner stories that all but abandoned previous flirtations the program had with the fantasy genre – less George Lucas, more Isaac Asimov. He ultimately sacrificed himself to save his companion Peri Brown (Nicola Bryant) from a deadly poison. Main Series: 21-23 (Classic) Notable Companions: Peri Brown, Mel Bush Best Story: Series 22, "Vengeance on Varos" Despite sacrificing his previous life to save Peri Brown, the Doctor's first act upon regeneating into his sixth incarnation (played by the more serious, dramatic actor Colin Baker) is nearly killing her in a fit of confused rage. This bizarre start to his characterization was a herald of things to come, as the Sixth Doctor is widely remembered by fans as one of the worst incarnations to date. A large reason for this was his personality, which essentially went back to the borderline antisocial tendencies of the First Doctor, but without the benefit of a solid arc, the show's novelty, and William Hartnell's endearing performance. The Sixth Doctor was unceremoniously killed off-screen, his cause of death not yet canonized. Main Series: 24-26 (Classic) Notable Companions: Mel Bush, Ace Best Story: Series 25, "Remembrance of the Daleks" Like it did with the Fifth Doctor, "Doctor Who" sought a return to form when it introduced Scottish comedic actor Sylvester McCoy as the Seventh Doctor. Primarily, it seemed as though they wanted to refocus the character as a loveable and often hapless genius whose major flaws are silly rather than downright unlikable. However, after this redirect was met with a harsh critical response from fans and critics alike, the writers began imbuing the character with more complexity, often hinting toward a checked past. Sadly, neither he nor the program got much time to explore this side of him, as "Doctor Who" brushed up against its first cancellation. He was shot by an errant bullet in a TV movie that brought the show to a seemingly definitive close. Main Series: TV Movie Notable Companion: Grace Holloway Best Story: "The Night of the Doctor" The 1996 "Doctor Who" TV movie was supposed to be the beginning of a new era for the series, led by Paul McGann. McGann was arguably the most conventional of the actors chosen to play the Doctor at the time, and portrayed the character as a dashingly heroic swashbuckler. It feels as though "Doctor Who" wanted a more solid and plausible protagonist as the 21st century loomed around the corner. Unfortunately, the Eighth Doctor's future was cut short, and no series were spun out of the film. He was, however, brought back in 2013 for the 50th Anniversary Special, in which it is revealed that he voluntarily initiated his own regeneration in order to remake himself as a warrior capable of ending the Time War. Main Series: None Notable Companions: Rose Tyler (The Moment) Best Story: "The Day of the Doctor" Having chosen to fight in the Time War, the Eighth Doctor is reincarnated not into a "Doctor" at all, but a warrior who denounces the title as a means of reconciling the violent path he must take. Originally, this storyline would have fit naturally within the lore of the Ninth Doctor (Christopher Eccleston). Given Eccleston's refusal to return to the role, however, showrunner Steven Moffat instead chose to create a new version of the Doctor that could be a blockbuster antagonist, complete with the performance of a well-known British actor – John Hurt. Much of the War Doctor's arc surrounds his decision to destroy Gallifrey to end the Time War, which previously had been a shameful aspect of the Doctor's lore. It is revealed that – by working with his future incarnations, including the Tenth and Eleventh Doctors – he actually avoids destroying the planet, and merely loses the memory of this heroic act as he regenerates into his formally Ninth incarnation. Main Series: 1 (Modern) Notable Companions: Rose Tyler, Captain Jack Harkness Best Episode: Series 1, Episode 6, "Dalek" After a hiatus of several years following the 1996 TV movie, "Doctor Who" returned in 2005, this time more successfully revived to capture a new generation of fans. The inaugural Doctor of the modern era was Christopher Eccleston's Ninth Doctor, who canonically is retconned to have been regenerated from the War Doctor, but upon first appearance basically served as a blank slate for new audiences. This isn't to say that the new team was afraid of the series' lore, but when older characters and concepts were introduced they were done so with the understanding that the majority of the audience would need enough context to appreciate them. Eccleston's Doctor, meanwhile, is a fairly straightforward sci-fi-action protagonist with some subtle flair teased here and there – the perfect leading man not to scare aware potential new fans. The actor doesn't have much affection for the role and left after only one series, his Doctor regenerating in the finale after sacrificing himself to save his companion Rose Tyler (Billie Piper). Main Series: 2-4 (Modern) Notable Companions: Mickey Smith, Donna Noble Best Story: Series 3, Episode 10, "Blink" With Christopher Eccleston easing new audiences into the world of "Doctor Who," the baton was passed to a much more openly eccentric Doctor immediately following his departure. His successor was David Tennant, then the secondary breakout of "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (behind future "Twilight" and "The Batman" star Robert Pattinson). The range brought by Tennant to the character has made him one of the most beloved actors to take on the role, and he arguably deserves the lion's share of the credit alongside successor Matt Smith for making the modern iteration of the program one of the most popular shows in the world. The Tenth Doctor's tenure also marked the introduction of several popular characters – including Catherine Tate's all-timer companion Donna Noble – and concepts, most notably the terrifying alien statues known as the Weeping Angels. His end took place over the course of the two-part Christmas special "The End of Time," during which he reckons with own mortality and makes peace with his eventual regeneration, both establishing the concept in more vivid and emotional terms for new fans while giving this foundational character a goodbye worthy of Tennant's contributions to the series. Main Series: 5-7 (Modern) Notable Companions: Amy Pond, Rory Williams, River Song Best Story: Series 5, Episode 10, "Vincent and the Doctor" Following two relatively young choices to play the Doctor, both producers and viewers expected a return to the traditional, older sort of Doctor the show put forth throughout the majority of its classic run. Even Steven Moffat himself, taking over from Russell T. Davies as showrunner, told entertainment outlets that he was actively seeking a middle-aged man for the role. Instead, he wound up casting an all-but-unknown 26-year-old named Matt Smith, whose casting was criticized for his lack of professional experience and name recognition, as well as the fact that he was the youngest actor ever to play the role. But, as readers are well aware, the rest of the story is history. Smith's off-the-wall Eleventh Doctor defined the show's modern era as much as David Tennant's take on the character did, even despite some divisive writing choices from Moffat. Poetically, viewers ultimately watch the youngest Doctor age dramatically in his eternal defense of the colonial planet Trenzalore, until he is finally allowed to rest and regenerate anew. Main Series: 8-10 Notable Companions: Clara Oswald, Bill Potts Best Story: Series 8, Episode 4, "Listen" The one-two punch of David Tennant and Matt Smith – emphasized by the War Doctor story arc which united them – made anointing the Twelfth Doctor something of an unwinnable endeavor. Steven Moffat ultimately chose to go as far as possible in another direction casting-wise so as to avoid inevitable comparisons to the two predecessors, particularly Smith, whom he described as the "perfect" Doctor in an interview with Radio Times. This led them to Peter Capaldi, a 55-year-old Scottish actor who was at the time best known for starring in the black comedy series "The Thick of It" as the blustering and endlessly profane political communications director Malcolm Tucker. He brought a similar but more empathetic fire to his role as the Doctor, which allowed him to distinguish himself from previous actors but may have altered the tone of the show too much for fans who grew up with the modern era. His final adventure reunited him with the First Doctor, after which he surrendered to a truly historic regeneration. Main Series: 11-13 Notable Companions: Ryan Sinclair, Yasmin Khan, Dan Lewis Best Story: Series 11, Episode 6, "Demons of Punjab" The Doctor character had never been set in stone as being any one gender, race, or ethnicity, though they had been depicted as a series of white European men for the five decades of the franchise. Finally, in Series 11, with the exit of Steven Moffat (now replaced by Chris Chibnall), "Doctor Who" finally got to introduce the first female-presenting Doctor, played by Jodie Whittaker. Ignoring the predictable sexist tantrums that followed the casting announcement, Whittaker's series were defined by a generally acknowledged decline in quality, as well as an admirable commitment to optimism and positive vibes. The Thirteenth Doctor lacks the edge that made previous incarnations feel complex and dangerous, though it also gives her the power to distinguish herself from them all the same. Like many Doctors before her, however, she eventually falls at the hands of the Master (Sacha Dhawan), and is reincarnated into a familiar form. Main Series: None Notable Companions: Donna Noble Best Story: "The Giggle" Indeed, the Fourteenth Doctor is once again David Tennant, returning to "Doctor Who" just in time for a slate of specials commemorating the show's 60th Anniversary in 2023. All three specials are effectively playing the hits to delightful effect, reuniting Tennant's fan-favorite doctor with his old companion Donna and reviving a few concepts from "Doctor Who" Classic for the modern era. Unlike other Doctors on this list, the Fourteenth is ultimately preserved indefinitely through his novel bi-generation process, which sees him divided in two rather than replaced. He gets the happily ever after that has normally eluded his predecessors, while his successor prepares to take the spotlight for the foreseeable future. Main Series: 14-present Notable Companions: Ruby Sunday Best Story: Series 14, Episode 4, "73 Yards" "Sex Education" star Ncuti Gatwa made history as the first Black actor to be cast as the main Doctor in "Doctor Who." He brought a similar but more empathetic fire to his role as the Doctor, which allowed him to distinguish himself from previous actors but may have altered the tone of the show too much for fans who grew up with the modern era. His final adventure reunited him with the First Doctor, after which he surrendered to a truly historic regeneration. Main Series: 15-17 Notable Companions: Yasmin Khan, Dan Lewis Best Story: Series 15, Episode 10, "The Timeless Children" The Doctor, either as The Other or as other incarnations before his first, has numerous adventures and many lives. They are originally known as the Timeless Child. At some point, the Time Lords wipe the memory of this person and reverts them into a child, leading to their "first" life. First Doctor[] 8: TV: The Sound of Drums The Tenth Doctor recounts being taken to look into the Untempered Schism at the age of 8. 45: PROSE: Shroud of Sorrow The Doctor left primary school at the age of 45. The Tenth Doctor recounts going to the Medusa Cascade at the age of age 90, and claims he was "just a kid". 236: TV: The Pirate Planet, The Name of the Doctor Romana I informs the Fourth Doctor that he has been operating the TARDIS for 523 years, and she claims the Doctor is 759, not 756. The Doctor claimed to have been travelling in the TARDIS for 60 years, putting his age at (roughly) 296. +25: COMIC: Nostalgia Corner The Doctor has been trying to get John and Gillian home for 25 years. 700+: PROSE: The Mutation of Time "I'm not of your race! I'm already over seven hundred years old." 450: TV: The Tomb of the Cybermen, PROSE: Iceberg The First Doctor regenerated at 450 years old. 900: PROSE: The Phoenix in the Tardis The First Doctor regenerated at 900 years old. Second Doctor[] 986+: PROSE: The Power of the Daleks The Doctor claims that it has been over 750 years since his departure from Gallifrey. ~450: TV: The Tomb of the Cybermen The Second Doctor supposes he's about 450 years old in "Earth terms." ~500: COMIC: The Brotherhood The Doctor puts his age at a "tender" 500 years. Third Doctor[] 1000s?: TV: Doctor Who and the Silurians The Third Doctor claims his life covers several thousand years. (Later stories would not support this claim.) 1000s?: TV: The Mind of Evil The Doctor claims to have been a scientist for several thousand years. (Later stories would not support this claim.) Fourth Doctor[] ~750: TV: Pyramids of Mars The Fourth Doctor claims to have lived for "something like" 750 years. 748: PROSE: A Device of Death The Doctor claims that he is 748 years old. 749: TV: The Brain of Morbius The Doctor claims to be only 749 years old. 150+: COMIC: Hubert's Folly The Doctor notes that he is "much more" than even 150 years old. 749: TV: The Seeds of Doom The Doctor claims to be only 749 years old, and used to be even younger. 750: TV: The Robots of Death The Doctor claims to be 750 years old. 756 or 759: TV: The Ribos Operation The Doctor claims to be 756 years old. Romana I insists he is 759.

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