



Superheroes Timeline

There are plenty of "superhumans" in *GWR 2018* – including many ordinary people who have done extraordinary things. Below, however, we present a chronology of classic superheroes, ordered in terms of their first appearance – whether that be in a comic book, a movie or elsewhere – and shown in their original costumes.

1936-40

1936
The Phantom

Created by Lee Falk (USA), the **first superhero** was in his own newspaper comic strip on 17 Feb 1936. It recounted the adventures of Kit Walker, who donned a mask and purple outfit to become **The Phantom** – aka "the ghost who walks". The character's white-tipped eyes, with no visible pupils, became a feature of many later superheroes, including Batman, Green Lantern and Green Arrow.

1938
Superman

The "Man of Steel" first appeared in *Action Comics* #1, now the **most valuable comic**. Superman was the **first superhero with superpowers**: out-of-this-world abilities that enabled him to run faster than an express train and leap tall buildings in a single bound. In later issues, he demonstrated X-ray vision, super strength and the ability to fly.

1939
Batman

The creation of artist Bob Kane and writer Bill Finger (both USA), the "Caped Crusader" debuted in *Detective Comics* #27. Kane's early drafts for Batman's costume involved a bright red tunic, wings and a black eye mask; Finger made some key suggestions to transform the outfit into something altogether more threatening.

1939
Captain Marvel

There are a number of Captain Marvels in the Marvel Universe, but the one seen here debuted in *Whiz Comics* #2 (cover-dated Feb 1940) and is now owned by DC. He proved so popular in the 1940s that sales of the comic books outsold those featuring Superman. He also known as "Shazam", after the cry that changes the boy Billy Batson into the mighty Captain Marvel.

1940
The Comet

Jan 1940 saw the debut of The Comet in *Pep Comics* #1. In issue #17, he became the **first superhero to die**, although the character would go on to be revived several times from the 1960s onwards.

1940-41

1940
The Flash

Created by artist Harry Lambert and writer Gardner Fox, the Scarlet Speedster appeared in *Flash Comics* #1 (cover-dated Jan 1940). Initially, his alter ego was Jay Garrick, although the character has been through several incarnations.

1940
Fantomah/Woman in Red

Two comic-book characters have a claim to being the **first female superhero**. Fantomah was the first female superhero with superhuman powers to appear in print, in *Jungle Comics* #2 (Feb 1940). The first masked and costumed superheroine (and of "natural" birth), however, was the Woman in Red, created by Richard Hughes and George Mandel for *Thrilling Comics* #2 (Mar 1940).

1940
Justice Society of America

The **first superhero team**, the JSA were initially seen on the cover of *All Star Comics* #3 (winter issue 1940-41). The founding members, shown left to right above, were: The Atom, Doctor Fate, Green Lantern, Hawkman, The Flash, The Sandman, Hourman (then known as Hour-Man) and The Spectre.

1941
Captain America

Created by artists Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, this star-spangled Captain debuted in *Captain America Comics* #1 (Mar 1941). Cap's signature round shield (see) replaced the triangular version in issue #2.

1941
Aquaman

DC's waterborne wonder was created by Paul Norris and Mort Weisinger and debuted in *More Fun Comics* #75 (from Nov 1941). He went on to become one of the founders of the Justice League of America.

1941-62

1941
Wonder Woman

DC Comics' Amazonian heroine burst on to the scene in *All Star Comics* #8 (cover-dated Dec 1941), although she didn't get her own comic book until summer 1942.

1959
Supergirl

Superman's success inspired DC to devise a female counterpart – namely his cousin, Kara Zor-El. Created by Otto Binder (writer) and Al Plastino (art), she first appeared in *Action Comics* #252 in May 1959.

1960
The Justice League

Also known as the Justice League of America (JLA), this supergroup of DC stars debuted in Oct-Nov 1960. Batman and Superman, although part of the original line-up, seldom appeared in the group's adventures, while Martian Manhunter (below, far right) ended his initial stint with the JLA in 1968. The quintet below appeared on the cover of their first issue.

1961
Fantastic Four

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's first co-production, *The Fantastic Four* #1 hit the shelves in Nov 1961. They were Marvel's first super-team and contributed to the company's meteoric rise in the 1960s.

1962
The Hulk

Gamma radiation turned Doctor Robert Bruce Banner into a rampaging Green Goliath, and one of Marvel's most enduring characters. *The Incredible Hulk* debuted in May 1962.

1962-74

1962
Spider-Man

Marvel's iconic web-slinger made his debut in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (Aug 1962), while *The Amazing Spider-Man* appeared in Mar 1963. The character was devised by Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko.

1963
Ironman

Tales of Suspense #39 (Mar 1963) saw the appearance of Tony Stark's super-powered alter ego. The six films to date starring Robert Downey Jr (USA) as the man in the iron suit have made him the **most successful superhero actor**.

1963
The X-Men

The X-Men #1 was published on 10 Sep 1963, but the denizens of Professor X's School for Gifted Youngsters were originally to be known as "The Mutants". Marvel's publisher, Martin Goodman, thought the name might puzzle readers, so Stan Lee changed it.

1971
Swamp Thing

Created by Len Wein (writer) and Bernie Wrightson (art), DC's unsettling character was first seen in *House of Secrets* #92 (Jul 1971) before getting his own comic the following year.

1974
Wolverine

First glimpsed in the last panel of *The Incredible Hulk* #180 (Oct 1974), the clawed Canadian was recruited as another of Professor X's gifted youngsters in 1975's *Giant-Size X-Men* #1.

1974-2004

1984
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

In May 1984, "heroes in a half shell" Michelangelo, Leonardo, Donatello and Raphael got their own comic, published by Mirage Studios. An animated TV series followed in 1987. The quartet was initially created (by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird) as a satire of four hit comics of the time: *Ronin*, *Cerebus*, *Daredevil* and *New Mutants*.

1991
Deadpool

On the subject of *New Mutants* #98 (Feb 1991) saw the appearance of the "Merc with a mouth". Initially a villain, Deadpool morphed into an ambiguous anti-hero, and in 1993 got his own miniseries, *The Circle Chase*. The 2016 movie *Deadpool* (USA) is the **highest-grossing R-rated movie**.

1993
Hellboy

Mike Mignola's demonic superhero debuted – in the cover of Italian fanzine *Linea Press* #4 (Mar 1993) – before emerging as a fully formed character in San Diego Comic-Con Comics #2 (Aug 1993).

1993
Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

The hit 1993 TV series gave rise to a number of Power Rangers comics published by Hamilton from Nov 1994. Marvel Comics subsequently published two series of their own. Mar 2016 saw a comic-book reboot by Boom! Studios, which referenced the original series.

2004
The Incredibles

Produced by Pixar, the *Incredibles* (USA) movie premiered on 27 Oct 2004 and gave the company what was then its highest opening-weekend gross. Five years later, Boom! Studios began publishing a comic-book miniseries based on the film. A sequel to the original movie is due to appear in Jun 2018.

