

#	Title (episodes)	Description
<u><i>season 1 (1963-64)</i></u>		
1	<b>An Unearthly Child</b> (4eps)	Introduces the Doctor, and shows us where he starts from, before evolving into the hero he becomes. Includes his granddaughter, and 2 other companions, including the only mature female companion of the series. Also an interesting window into the time period [the day after Kennedy's assassination], for both good and ill.
2	<b>The Daleks</b> (7eps)	Introduces the Daleks. Probably the most alien aliens to appear in TV/movie scifi up to that point, or for decades after. Arguably the genesis of the Doctor's heroism. Also a very good intro to the feel of the series, and one of the less-hackneyed portrayals of the daleks. On the downside, a little bit drawn out, and the special effects mean that the final confrontation is particularly cheesy.
6	<b>The Aztecs</b> (4eps)	The series originally alternated between historical and scifi stories, and this is one of the best of the historical stories--really good characterizations, as well as addressing the issue of changing history (not that the series has always been consistent on that point).
<u><i>season 2 (1964-65)</i></u>		
17	<b>The Time Meddler</b> (4eps)	Noteworthy landmark story in a number of ways: the first time we meet another Time Lord (though they weren't called that yet), the first story with none of the original companions, the first story that didn't lead directly into the next, and the first pseudo-historical story. This was the beginning of a distinct change in the style of the show, due to all of these factors. We begin to build the world beyond the TARDIS, giving the Doctor context and a history -- and eventually leading up to the very detailed world of today, where the Doctor is a major mover and shaker in the universe, not just some wanderer. The loss of Ian means that the show begins to shift to make the Doctor the hero -- previously, Ian is arguably the central heroic figure of the stories. Even with the continuing presence of a young, dashing man of action for several more years, it was becoming steadily clearer that the Doctor was the true hero of the story. For the first two years, culminating in this story, the series had been in a true serial format -- every story led directly into the next, and, in fact, the story titles have only been provided retroactively. Starting with the story after this one, there were occasional unaccounted-for gaps, eventually shifting almost entirely into an episodic format. And, prior to this story, all of the stories had been either science fiction or history, never both. This is the first time that a period story has something ahistorical going on (outside of the presence of the Doctor and companions) -- and the first time that the series acknowledges that history can be changed. Previously, the Doctor had repeatedly assured his companions that history was immutable.
<u><i>season 4 (1966-67)</i></u>		
29	<b>The Tenth Planet</b> (4eps, 1 reconstructed)	Introduces the cybermen -- the second-biggest monsters of the series. This is also possibly their best presentation, even if the special effects are somewhat lacking. Cybermen are an early -- and scary, for the time -- exploration of the same sorts of fears that the borg would initially address a few decades later (before the Star Trek writers forgot what the borg were supposed to be about). Also, the first regeneration in Doctor Who, which sets the groundwork for the unique longevity of the series, as well as broadening the scope of stories the show can tell even more [than the ability to go anywhere and anywhen already provided], by making it possible to tell stories that wouldn't work with William Hartnell as the lead.
30	<b>The Power of the Daleks</b> (4eps, reconstructed)	The most threatening portrayal of the daleks prior to the new series. As in their original appearance, they are ruthless intelligent schemers. Unfortunately, most later stories treat them as simple killing machines -- which has the added problem of emphasizing the poor special effects of the day. Also a reasonably skeptical portrayal of the responses of others to the Doctor's regeneration -- most subsequent regenerations leave the other characters remarkably unfazed.
34	<b>The Macra Terror</b> (4eps, reconstructed)	The 2nd Doctor is the first incarnation who seems to see himself as a hero, and thus deliberately gets himself involved, rather than just being swept up in events. This is one of the best, and earliest, examples of this behavior, where he seems to know right from the start that something is wrong, and goes looking for it. Eventually, the series would almost completely transform from the uncontrolled random wanderings of the 1st Doctor, to the conscious interventionist heroism of the 10th Doctor.
<u><i>season 5 (1967-68)</i></u>		
37	<b>The Tomb of the Cybermen</b> (4eps)	The Doctor being clever and outwitting everybody else, A good portrayal of how he can go from carefree to protective as soon as things get out of control -- and how he may be more in control than he seems, much of the time. Perhaps the best portrayal of the "clown" aspect of this Doctor: disarming his opponents with seeming idiocy and/or incompetence. This trait would resurface in several subsequent incarnations, and become a core aspect of the character.
<u><i>season 6 (1968-69)</i></u>		
45	<b>The Mind Robber</b> (5eps)	Perhaps the most imaginative story in the history of Doctor Who, where they find themselves transported to the Land of Fiction, and interact with all sorts of characters from other fictions (mostly books and radio shows). In the process, it at least winks at the 4th wall, if not outright breaking it, and definitely has a great deal of metafictional content.

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Second Doctor	46 <b>The Invasion</b> (8eps, 2 reconstructed)	Contains probably one of the two most-recognizable scenes in all of Doctor Who, and might be the best use of cybermen in the series. Really delves into the horror of dehumanization due to artificial life and body replacement, as well as the assimilation metaphor for communism.	
	50 <b>The War Games</b> (10eps)	The series' second magnum opus, this is an excellent send-off for the 2nd Doctor. It introduces the Doctor's homeworld and people, and explains where he came from and why for the first time – a huge revelation at the time (after 6 years of the show), and something that set the course for the series for the next several years, and shaped the nature of the Doctor for the rest of the series. It is also after this story that he becomes an occasional – and usually reluctant – agent of the Time Lords.	
<u>season 7 (1970)</u>			
Third Doctor	51 <b>Spearhead from Space</b> (4eps)	The dawn of a new Doctor, and a massive change for the series: in color, Earth-bound with minimal time/space travel, and much more action-adventure focused. For the next 5 years, Doctor Who would be mostly on Earth, in the modern day, working with the now-iconic UNIT (United Nations Intelligence Taskforce) as their "science advisor". The new series format also meant the virtual end of male companions for the doctor, as the Doctor himself took on a much more action-hero role. This story also introduces what would go on to be one of the most-iconic monsters of the series – so much so that they were chosen for the first episode of the new series.	
	<u>season 8 (1971)</u>		
	55 <b>Terror of the Autons</b> (4eps)	Return of the autons, and, much more importantly, the introduction of the Master, who would go on to be the Doctor's foil and greatest adversary.	
	56 <b>The Mind of Evil</b> (6eps)	The best, or possibly second-best, portrayal of the Master. Really illustrates the complex relationship between him and the Doctor in a way that doesn't reoccur in the classic series. And shows just how ruthless he is, without turning him into a cartoon villain as some later stories do.	
<u>season 10 (1972-73)</u>			
65 <b>The Three Doctors</b> (4eps)	Brings the first three Doctors together, and tells us more about the history of Time Lord society. Unfortunately, the plot is a bit thin, and the Brigadier gets the short end of the characterization stick.		
<u>season 11 (1973-74)</u>			
70 <b>The Time Warrior</b> (4eps)	Introduces both Sarah Jane – the most iconic companion, as well as perhaps the best-loved and one of the best-acted – and sontarans. Also the first mention of the name of the Doctor's home planet (Gallifrey).		
74 <b>Planet of the Spiders</b> (6eps)	This might be one of the best episodes of the 3rd Doctor's era, if it weren't so horribly padded: almost an entire episode is one long chase scene – and a fairly pointless one, at that. Nonetheless, we're first introduced to "in-between" states of regeneration, meet for the first time a Time Lord (and an old friend of the Doctor's) who left Gallifrey without causing trouble, see an alien civilization where the humans are a victim of their own behavior, and see the Doctor's actions from a previous story come back to haunt him.		
<u>season 12 (1974-75)</u>			
76 <b>The Ark in Space</b> (4eps)	A masterpiece of horror writing, and a good story where the female companion (Sarah Jane) gets to hold her own. Also, this episode is the beginning of an entire season of serial-connected stories, which hadn't been a regular part of the series since the 1st Doctor, and was rare during the the rest of the series. Oh, and in its defense, bubble-wrap was a brand new invention at the time, so audiences probably wouldn't've seen it, and certainly wouldn't have recognized it.		
Fourth Doctor	77 <b>The Sontaran Experiment</b> (2eps)	A tight little bridge between stories, well done, but mostly remarkable as the link that provides the continuity between two of the best stories in the history of Doctor Who.	
	78 <b>Genesis of the Daleks</b> (6eps)	A pivotal story in the history of Doctor Who. Just as the original daleks story saved the show, Genesis of the Daleks re-invigorated it. It features a riveting performance by the main villain, and serious exploration of moral issues. It also marks one of the biggest history changes in a series about time travel and thus changing history. After this story, the daleks are never the same, and it is clear that their history has been radically altered, negating most, if not all, of the earlier dalek stories. But neither is the Doctor ever the same again – the responsibility of what he does and doesn't do in this story weighs on him for the rest of his life.	
<u>season 13 (1975-76)</u>			
80 <b>Terror of the Zygons</b> (4eps)	The last real UNIT story, and almost-universally lauded for both the plot and the very well-realized aliens.		

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81	<b>The Planet of Evil</b> (4eps)	One of the few stories to actually use the Tardis within the story, rather than just as the means to get to and from it. The jungle sets are quite good, for Doctor Who, and the characterizations of not only the leads but the main guest stars are good. It also explores some relatively out-there concepts. Nonetheless, it is overall merely a good story, not a great one – which is perhaps a more honest to the series as a whole.
82	<b>Pyramids of Mars</b> (4eps)	One of the all-time classics of the series. Hammer horror gets the Doctor Who twist: walking mummies, ancient Egyptian gods that are near-omnipotent aliens, and a tight plot with excellent acting.
84	<b>The Brain of Morbius</b> (4eps)	What could be a simple retelling of Frankenstein in Doctor Who guise is given further depth and interest on two levels. First, it tells us more about both the Doctor and the history of the Time Lords. Second, it layers further themes (of gender, and intuition vs. rationalism) onto those of reaching too far and consequences of cheating nature/God/death that are traditional to the Frankenstein story.
85	<b>The Seeds of Doom</b> (6eps)	Another example of Doctor Who bending to tell a different sort of story. While it still has aliens and danger, The Seeds of Doom plays more like a pastiche of The Avengers and/or The Thing. Of course, The Thing is a classic example of people trapped in isolation and dealing with an invading alien – which was such a common plot structure during the 2nd Doctor’s era that the term “base under siege” was coined to short-hand it. Nonetheless, only the first third of this story is in that mold, and it still makes it its own, while the rest of the story really does have more of the action and gritty realism of The Avengers (or, for American audiences, The Man From UNCLE).
<u><i>season 14 (1976-77)</i></u>		
87	<b>The Hand of Fear</b> (4eps)	The last story for Sarah Jane, and one of the most memorable exits for any companion – far too often, they simply decide to go home, or stay somewhere. Here, she gets to be the focus of the plot, and play a dual role as herself and an alien would-be-conqueror.
88	<b>The Deadly Assassin</b> (4eps)	The momentousness of this story would be hard to overestimate. It is the only story in which the Doctor doesn’t have a companion, and singlehandedly reveals almost as much about the Time Lords as the rest of the classic series combined. It also marks the triumphant return of an old enemy, who would go on to be a significant part of the series for the rest of its run.
89	<b>The Face of Evil</b> (4eps)	After 7 years (and 44 stories) of companions who were all from modern Earth, the Doctor finally picks up someone with a different point of view. Leela is one of the most unusual of his companions, and has the most pronounced change due to her travels with the Doctor, going from a superstitious uneducated savage warrior, to a controlled clever open-minded leader. This is also one of the most prominent examples of the Doctor not only revisiting somewhere and thus having to deal with the consequences of his actions, but the consequences of actions that we never saw on screen in the first place.
90	<b>The Robots of Death</b> (4eps)	A well-done whodunit, reminiscent of Murder on the Orient Express, and other such isolated-on-a-vehicle mysteries.
91	<b>The Talons of Weng-Chiang</b> (6eps)	Victorian London, Leela trying to fit into polite society, Chinese assassins, Jack the Ripper, a killer dummy, a clever foil for the Doctor, excellent supporting cast, and a memorable villain. This is justifiably one of the greatest Doctor Who stories of the entire series, marred only by the [period-appropriate] casual racism – which either helps set the mood, or is completely unnecessary to the mood and would’ve been better left out, depending on who you ask.
<u><i>season 15 (1977-78)</i></u>		
92	<b>The Horror of Fang Rock</b> (4eps)	One of the deadliest stories, melding classic horror and classic scifi into a very tightly-told story. This is perhaps Leela’s finest performance, and manages to show both who she was, and how she is growing due to her travels with the Doctor.
<u><i>season 16 (1978-79)</i></u>		
98	<b>The Ribos Operation</b> (4eps)	The entirety of season 16 is one large story, as the Doctor is given a new companion – a fellow Time Lady – and tasked to collect the six parts of the Key to Time, in order to avert cosmic disaster. The Doctor hasn’t had a companion that even approached being his intellectual equal since Zoe, with the 2nd Doctor, and the interplay between the two Time Lords is delightful. An overarching plot for an entire season is not only new for Doctor Who, but relatively unheard of at the time this aired (outside of soaps). It would of course go on to be the norm in genre dramas on TV, but not even the arc-driven contemporary Blake’s 7 had such a strong seasonal arc.
<u><i>season 17 (1979-80)</i></u>		
105	<b>City of Death</b> (4eps)	The Doctor and his Time Lady companion – now regenerated – deal with an alien threat across multiple time periods. In addition to a really well-written and well-acted story, it is one of the few to deal with time travel within the plot, rather than just to get the Doctor in and out of the plot. And it has da Vinci. Oh, and it was written by Douglas Adams, and it shows – in a good way.

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107	<b>Nightmare of Eden</b> (4eps)	To quote a review: "The plot...is quite complex for a Doctor Who story: a luxury cruise liner is sidelined when it collides with a cargo vessel. While the Doctor and Romana help to separate the ships, the Doctor uncovers a sinister link between a possible drug smuggling ring and a brilliant professor's newest project: the Continuous Event Transmuter, a device that studies and catalogues alien life by storing hologrammatic images on crystal recordings." More importantly, it's uniformly excellent.
<i>season 18 (1980-81)</i>		
112	<b>Full Circle</b> (4eps)	This and the next two stories form the "E-Space Trilogy", as the Doctor and Romana fall through a Charged Vacuum Emboitment into exo-space – a special sort of alternate universe. The CVEs also foreshadow the end of this Doctor at the end of the season (story 116) – but I'm getting ahead of myself. This story is an excellent little tale about the shortness of memory, and the intersection of history and mythology. It brings in the first [and, most agree, most annoying] male companion since the first few 4th Doctor stories – and the first enduring male companion since the 2nd Doctor. Though now he is recast as an adolescent to be mentored, rather than an adult to do much of the fighting and other physical tasks. Other than Adric, however, it is excellent – and he's actually quite good in this story, it's during his ongoing travels with the Doctor that he grates.
113	<b>State of Decay</b> (4eps)	We learn a bit more about the formation of Time Lord society, and the origins of vampire myths across the universe.
114	<b>Warriors' Gate</b> (4eps)	One of the most "high concept" Doctor Who stories, loaded with thought-provoking ideas, and one of the few that almost necessitates multiple viewings to catch everything. But it is worth the effort, as it is "...magnificent. Visually stunning, superbly acted, and blessed with a sparkling and intelligent script, it stands out amongst even Season Eighteen's finest stories as an almost flawless example of Doctor Who at its best."
<i>season 19 (1982)</i>		
118	<b>Four to Doomsday</b> (4eps)	The first "proper" 5th Doctor story, and a model of how good they could be, this is, on the surface, a story of impending alien invasion. But underneath the veneer, there is much more, looking at the contrast between "difference" and "alienness", and exploring some interesting scifi concepts. It also gives an excellent baseline for the 5th Doctor and all 3 companions, from which they grow and change over the years. Oh, and just don't think too hard about the spacewalk scene.
119	<b>Kinda</b> (4eps)	Kinda takes Buddhist philosophy, dresses it up with colonialist commentary, and sticks it in a scifi context. The result is one of the most engaging Doctor Who stories ever – despite some of the worst production values in the history of the show.
120	<b>The Visitation</b> (4eps)	Escaped alien prisoners intend to wipe out humanity and take Earth for their own, until the Doctor shows up. It's London, 1666 – what could possibly go wrong?
122	<b>Earthshock</b> (4eps)	Another major step in the Doctor's evolution. After Earthshock, his well-developed sense of justice becomes increasingly augmented by a powerful sense of responsibility. This is the beginning of his recognition that the good he does can also come with consequences – in essence, he is outgrowing the metaphorical adolescence of his last three regenerations (which followed the childishness of his first regeneration), into full adulthood. And that maturity subtly changes his relationships with his companions from then on.
<i>season 20 (1983)</i>		
125	<b>Snakedance</b> (4eps)	A direct sequel – which is a rarity in Doctor Who – to Kinda, this is less esoterically philosophical, but still thought-provoking and steeped in Buddhism. To a certain degree, it is a rehash of Kinda, but it stands on its own, and makes the revisit worthwhile, rather than just a repeat.
126	<b>Mawdryn Undead</b> (4eps)	This is the beginning of another trilogy, this time focusing on the Black Guardian's attempt at revenge on the Doctor for the Key to Time. We are introduced to Turlough, the first companion at odds with the Doctor since – well, since his very first pair of companions. This is a wonderful development, and lays the foundation for both characters to develop interestingly during their association. Mawdryn Undead also sees the return of the Brigadier, and a lovely little multiple-timeline plot. And, in a further development of the Doctor's sense of responsibility, he is willing to sacrifice himself in a circumstance that it is doubtful any of his earlier incarnations could have.
127	<b>Terminus</b> (4eps)	Continuing the Black Guardian Trilogy, Turlough's meddling causes the Tardis to collide with a plague ship, and gives Nyssa a chance to shine, finally demonstrating the intelligence that is supposed to be inherent to her character, but so often falls by the wayside.
128	<b>Enlightenment</b> (4eps)	The culmination of the Black Guardian Trilogy sees Turlough finally forced to choose a side. And this occurs during an interstellar yacht race, complete with period-appropriate ships sailing between the stars.

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Fifth Doctor			<u><i>season 21 (1984)</i></u>
	133	<b>Frontios</b> (4eps)	A bleak, depressing, morose depiction of humanity at its end, the entire story is thematically consistent and almost uniformly negative. Combine that with some excellent acting, especially from the regulars, sets that don't look like rubbish, and a threat that, for once, seems to have even the Doctor worried, and you get a beautiful story.
	136	<b>The Caves of Androzani</b> (4eps)	Here we see the expression of the Doctor's new-found responsibility, as he does everything he can to protect a companion he has only just met.
Sixth Doctor			<u><i>season 22 (1985)</i></u>
	139	<b>Vengeance on Varos</b> (4eps)	I can't sum it up better than this: "When I watch this story I feel I am watching the very best Doctor Who has to offer, a textured, well paced and intelligent piece, peppered with shockingly good dialogue, boosted by outstanding performances and some damn convincing production values. It's completely unique, unlike anything that has come before or will come after. I love it because it ignores every rule of Doctor Who and forges its own identity..." And did I mention the allegory for modern mass-media-controlled society?
	143	<b>Revelation of the Daleks</b> (4eps)	One of the few good dalek episodes, this is in fact a truly excellent story. We finally see the relationship between Peri and the 6th Doctor smoothed out, and see a foreshadowing of exactly what we would miss by his tenure being cut short in just another year.
			<u><i>season 23 (1986)</i></u>
	144	<b>The Mysterious Planet</b> (4eps)	Season 23 was another whole-season story, this time both more- and less-tightly tied together than the Key to Time. More tightly in that there is an explicit framing story (the trial) that recurs, frequently, in every episode. Less tightly in that 3 of the 4 stories are otherwise unconnected, and have no common elements. The Trial of a Time Lord sees the Doctor summoned back to Gallifrey to stand trial for his meddling – again. We first see the prosecution's case, in the form of two stories, and then the Doctor gets to present his rebuttal, which is the third story of the season.
	146	<b>Terror of the Vervoids</b> (4eps)	The Doctor's defense in his trial takes the form of a story from his future – a neat trick made possible by the near-omniscient Matrix that the Time Lords use to gather and store information about the whole universe. The story takes Murder on the Orient Express, and mashes it together with sci-fi-illuminated questions of morality.
			<u><i>season 24 (1987)</i></u>
	150	<b>Delta and the Bannermen</b> (3eps)	"A group of rock-and-roll-loving aliens go on a [time-travel] trip to Disneyland in a spaceship that looks like a bus, crash into a satellite, and find themselves in a holiday camp in Wales in 1959." Stowed away aboard their ship is Delta, last of the Chimerons, and her baby, and chasing them are the ruthless Bannermen. This story is either delightfully campy, irreverent serious sci-fi, or utter rubbish, depending on who you ask.
			<u><i>season 25 (1988-89)</i></u>
Seventh Doctor	152	<b>Remembrance of the Daleks</b> (4eps)	This is a real mixed bag. On the upside, it revisits the site of the very first episode, finally shows on screen that stairs are no impediment to daleks, and gives us a much darker, more complicated Doctor. On the downside, the plot has all sorts of holes, there are several references that just don't hold up, and Ace attacks a dalek with a baseball bat. Oh, and the 15-yr-old Ace is played by a mid-20s actress who isn't particularly good at portraying a 15-yr-old. The 7th Doctor is the first Doctor who seems to be actively seeking out wrongs to right – the 2nd chose to be a hero, but still mostly fell into problems; the 3rd had problems brought to him, in a very police-like way; the 4th stumbled into things, and solved them because he was there; and while the 5th and 6th were more inclined to see themselves as bringers of justice, they still didn't seek out problems.
	153	<b>The Happiness Patrol</b> (3eps)	Here we have a prime example of the meddlesome 7th Doctor. He sets out to fix a corrupt society, specifically travelling to it to do so. It is also one of the most stylized, outrageous Doctor Who stories, reminiscent of many 80s depictions of future societies – that is to say, completely over the top. Nonetheless, the actual story is a lightweight echo of serious works such as 1984 and A Clockwork Orange: in a world where happiness is mandatory, the ruler's enforcer is a robot made of candy, who quite literally kills people with sweetness. It may be campy, but it is the camp of taking the premise to a [ridiculous] extreme, rather than of a ridiculous premise.
	155	<b>The Greatest Show in the Galaxy</b> (4eps)	This is an excellent illustration of the growing confidence and experience – and perhaps power – of the Doctor. While the Doctor has previously faced godlike beings (Sutehk and the Black Guardian), this is the first time he intentionally seeks them out. It would not be the last.

#	Title (episodes)	Description
		<i>season 26 (1989)</i>
157	<b>Ghostlight</b> (3eps)	The 7th Doctor is not merely meddling, but also manipulative. This is a prime example of his willingness to manipulate even his own companions, if only for their own good. Rather than let experience be the teacher – as with, say, Leela – he creates the situation. This season sees the most morally-ambiguous version of the Doctor, convinced that he knows best, and shades of this would go on to color the behavior of the Doctor ever after. It's as if his sense of responsibility for his companions requires not merely protection, but proactive intervention to "nurture". This story is also notable for one of the most convoluted and multi-layered plots ever aired, and it's not afraid to leave a lot unexplained, so that fans still argue to this day over exactly what it all means.
158	<b>The Curse of Fenric</b> (4eps)	An ancient evil that is out to get the Doctor, for once, rather than the other way 'round. This highlights the Doctor's own manipulative nature, and we see Ace growing up a bit.
159	<b>Survival</b> (3eps)	The final episode of Doctor Who, the best performance of this regeneration of the Master, and one of the best performances of any version of the Master.