

## Compare & Contrast

"D'oh! Nuts! Mmm... donuts," a wise Homer once said. Undoubtedly, *The Simpsons* is a popular show breaking gender, age, and social backgrounds to reach the populace and shaping itself into the popular culture. Children connect with the more adolescent humor whilst young and old adults understand the more sexual and political obscenity. After many seasons, the creator of *The Simpsons*, Matt Groening, released another animation based comedy; *Futurama*. It may not have become as popular as *The Simpsons*, but held its own ground as a comedic relief.

*The Simpsons* covers the "average" lives of Homer, Bart, Lisa, Marge, and Maggie in a modern day town called Springfield. These events range from saving Springfield from a nuclear bomb to the troubles of love. While that may seem far-fetched, *Futurama* follows a New York pizza delivery boy, Fry, as he is cryogenically frozen and thawed in the far future to be nothing other than a delivery boy. Both shows do have different characters, plots, settings, but *Futurama* seems to be a cookie cut of *The Simpsons*. There is one thing that *Futurama* will not be getting anytime soon however; those spectacular Halloween specials.

The supporting characters each shine in their own comedic relief, but also contribute heavily to the leading characters. Some characters can be related to each other. For instance, Bart is considered to be the troublemaker and so is Bender the robot. There are at time though, where a sense of righteousness governs them. Bart saves Springfield from Sideshow Bob and his nuke. When the planet fears greenhouse gases caused by robots, Bender moves the Earth to cancel the effects of global warming to save robot-kind.

Both shows contain cameos of celebrities, singers, and politicians usually portraying themselves. Those starring in *The Simpsons* are any other character. In *Futurama*, they are preserved in jars. The *Simpsons* however has a set cast of characters parodying icons. "My teenage son returns from a fancy East Coast college, and I'm horrified to discover he's a nerd." German-accented muscular tough guy McBain parodies none other than Arnold Schwarzenegger. Mayor Quinbi parodies the Kennedys, Mr. Burns portrays corrupt corporate America, and the list continues.

"Whoa! Letters like 'u' and 'r' can mean words like 'you' and 'are'!" And of course who can forget the leading characters, Homer and Fry. Though these two may not be the brightest of all folk, but by having them perform idiotic and/or mind-numbing acts that we would deem stupid is the basis for much of the humor behind each series. Yet they might forget certain things and engulf themselves in their own world providing more comedic relief.