

# Wednesday

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Go Native | Online English School

The new Netflix series Wednesday has been making waves recently, breaking various streaming records to become one of the most watched English language TV shows in history. But what lies behind its raging popularity? Join English Matters to find out.

to make waves | *tu*: powodować poruszenie

various | różny

raging | rozszalały



## Creepy and Kooky

Wednesday is a supernatural coming-of-age story, focusing on the well-known character Wednesday Addams from The Addams Family, which itself has been a beloved and enduring part of popular culture for over eight decades.

Originally created by cartoonist Charles Addams in the 1930s, the Addams Family went on to become a mainstay of television and film, with a number of adaptations bringing the quirky and macabre family to life over

the years, as it portrays a twisted version of the idealised American nuclear family, focusing on themes of difference and outsiderism.

One of the earliest adaptations was a TV show that aired from 1964 to 1966. The show, which starred John Astin as the loveable and kooky Gomez Addams, the family patriarch, was a massive hit and helped to introduce the franchise to a wider audience. The show's catchy theme song became a pop culture phenomenon, and the show's characters became household names.

Wednesday is the latest addition to the franchise, and focuses on the eponymous character of Wednesday Addams, played by Jenna Ortega, as she attends a high school for outcasts, including vampires, werewolves and sirens. Fans have been drawn to Wednesday's characteristic apathetic nature, dry humour, and obsession with death and darkness.

## Gothic Credentials

As a name that has become synonymous with the macabre and bizarre, famed filmmaker Tim Burton was perhaps the perfect choice to direct this new series. Indeed, Burton has Addams Family form, having been very close to being made director of the franchise's 1991 Hollywood feature film, only pulling out due to scheduling conflicts. In 2013, he was also somewhat down the line in working towards an animated version, before creative differences put paid to those plans.

- 1 **creepy** | upiorny, przyprowadzający o gęsią skórę  
**kooky** | stuknięty  
**coming-of-age** | dojrzewanie  
2 **to focus on sth** | skupiać się na czymś  
**enduring** | nieprzemijający  
**originally** | początkowo  
**cartoonist** | rysownik kreskówek  
**mainstay** | podstawa  
**quirky** | osobliwy, dziwaczny  
**to focus on sth** | skupić się na czymś  
**loveable** | uroczy, przesympatyczny  
**catchy** | chwytliwy  
**phenomenon** | zjawisko  
**household name** | powszechnie znane nazwisko  
3 **eponymous** | tytułowy  
**to attend** | uczęszczać  
**outcast** | wyrzutek  
**including sth** | włącznie z czymś  
**werewolf** | wilkołak  
**credentials** | referencje  
**bizarre** | dziwny, osobliwy  
**famed** | sławny  
**to direct sth** | wy/reżysować coś  
**indeed** | w rzeczy samej  
**feature film** | film pełnometrażowy  
**to pull out** | *tu*: wycofać się  
**due to sth** | z powodu czegoś  
**scheduling** | związany z terminarzem  
**down the line** | ?  
**to put paid to sth** | przekreślać coś, zniweczyć coś



With a career spanning over four decades, Burton has cemented his place as a master of the surreal and grotesque, with a signature gothic style that is immediately recognisable to even the most casual of filmgoers. For years, Wednesday Addams herself has also been embraced by adherents to the gothic subculture, and Jenna Ortega, under Burton's direction, continues to portray the Addams daughter as a prominently moody and broody figure of this community.

Throughout the first season of Wednesday, the show pays tribute to gothic culture in various ways, including through the setting of Nevermore Academy, Wednesday's school, inspired by the darkly romantic writing of Edgar Allan Poe. It also features a wardrobe full to the brim with dark attire of purples and blacks, as well as a memorable dance sequence inspired by the kind of moves you'd expect to see in gothic nightclubs.

## Outsiders

One thing that resonates strongly with this sense of gothic identity is the idea of being a social outcast, an outsider, a person on the fringes of mainstream society. And whilst this outsider quality has always been a central component of any adaptation of the Addams Family, both Tim Burton and Jenna Ortega, have particularly emphasised Wednesday's outsider status in this latest series.

Burton, who is himself known for his own counterculture status, described

Wednesday as “the ultimate outcast, an outcast among outcasts” in an interview with Netflix to promote the series, and someone he easily related to. Ortega has described her version of Wednesday as “socially awkward,” but also confident and determined, and both Burton and Ortega have emphasised the themes of acceptance and individuality that are central to the character and the Addams Family franchise.

## Keeping It in the Family

One charming aspect of the series is the fact that the show features a cameo from an actress already more than familiar with the role of Wednesday Addams. Christina Ricci played the character in the franchise's 1991 feature film, when she was just 11 years old, with critics singling out the young Ricci for praise, as her performance became her breakout role.

More than three decades after her own portrayal of Wednesday Addams, Christina Ricci has returned to the fold of The Addams Family... family, but this time in a very different role. Now, Ricci plays Mrs. Thornhill, a teacher at Nevermore Academy and one of the few “normie” figures in the series. As a representative of mainstream society, Mrs. Thornhill is a rare presence among the supernatural and eccentric characters that populate the show. But is all as it seems? You'll have to tune in to find out.

For what it's worth, Ricci has been full of praise for Ortega's depiction of

the character, but has also been keen to stress that the two Wednesday's are, and should be, very different. “Today's young people deserve to have their own version of Wednesday.”, Ricci said. This, then, is very much a Wednesday for Gen-Z.

## Breaking Records

Since launching on Netflix in November 2022, Wednesday has broken several records for the streaming platform. After beating out Stranger Things' to set the record for the most viewing time in a single week for an English-language series on Netflix. The show then went on to further break its own record in the week of November 28 to December 4, marking the first time any English-language series on Netflix had reached 400 million hours in a week.

What's more, “Wednesday” is currently ranked number three in the streamer's all-time ranking of English language shows, and has a good chance of becoming only the third show on Netflix (in any language) to pass a billion hours of watch time in its first four weeks, following in the footsteps of Squid Game and season four of Stranger Things.

So there you have it, the secret behind Wednesday's success: a celebration of the creepy and kooky outsider, replete with gothic vibes, all brought to life by the talented Jenna Ortega and the incomparable Tim Burton. But don't just take our word for it – join the millions of viewers already hooked on Wednesday and see for yourself. //

**4 to span** | rozciągać się, obejmować  
**to cement sth** | ugruntować coś  
**recognisable** | rozpoznawalny  
**filmgoer** | kinoman  
**embraced** | *tu:* mile powitany  
**adherent to sth** | zwolennik czegoś  
**prominently** | wybitnie  
**moody** | ponury  
**broody** | posępny  
**community** | społeczność  
**to pay tribute to sth** | oddawać czemuś hołd  
**setting** | sceneria  
**to the brim** | po brzegi  
**attire** | strój, ubiór  
**identity** | tożsamość

**on the fringes of sth** | na obrzeżach czegoś, na marginesie czegoś  
**to emphasise sth** | podkreślić coś  
**counterculture** | kontrkultura  
**5 ultimate** | *tu:* jeden w swoim rodzaju  
**interview** | wywiad  
**awkward** | dziwny  
**confident** | pewny siebie  
**for what it's worth** | jeśli ma to jakies znaczenie  
**cameo** | *tu:* epizodyczna rola odtwarzana przez wybitnego aktora lub znaną osobistość  
**familiar with sth** | zaznajomiony z czymś  
**to single sb out** | wyróżniać kogoś  
**fold** | *tu:* wspólnota

**to seem** | wydawać się  
**to tune in** | *tu:* włączać odbiornik na daną stację, dany program  
**depiction** | odmalowanie, przedstawienie  
**6 keen to do sth** | chętny do z/robienia czegoś  
**to deserve sth** | zasługiwać na coś  
**to launch sth** | *tu:* wy/emitować coś  
**to beat sth out** | pobić coś, prześcignąć coś  
**to set** | *tu:* ustanawiać  
**to break** | *tu:* pobić  
**to reach** | osiągnąć  
**to pass** | *tu:* przekroczyć  
**replete with sth** | pełny czegoś  
**vibe** | *tu:* aura, atmosfera  
**(to be) hooked on sth** | mieć bzika na punkcie czegoś