Name: _____ Date: _____

How Did Zendaya Go From Disney to Dune?

Reading level 10 (6th grade) · 956 words

How does a child actor on a Disney Channel sitcom end up in a desert epic and on an Emmy stage? On Sunday, November 7, 2010, at 8:30 p.m., Shake It Up began on Disney Channel. One of its two stars, Zendaya, was 14. Today she is 30. A film she acts in is set to open in December 2026. This book follows the steps in between. Each step shows how one part of the business works.

Zendaya played Rocky Blue. Rocky and her best friend dream of becoming professional dancers. That dream comes true when they get jobs as background dancers on a teen dance show in Chicago. Chris Thompson created Shake It Up, and he and Rob Lotterstein were its executive producers. A sitcom is a comedy series. It is told in short episodes. A season is one batch of them. Disney Channel made three seasons, and the show ended on November 10, 2013.

A child who acts in a series is also a student. The law keeps that in view. In California, a child needs an entertainment work permit. Both the child and the employer must apply for it. For ages 9 to under 16, a day at work may last nine hours at most. Only five of them may be work. On school days, at least three hours must be school, and the child gets an hour of rest.

The studio teacher helps keep that plan on track. California says a studio teacher must be a certified teacher with the right California credentials. The state's Labor Commissioner must certify the teacher too. A permit also needs proof of the child's school record and attendance. Other states set their own rules, so these numbers describe California only. They come from section 11760 of the state's regulations. A set is also a workplace with a clock, and the clock has limits for kids.

On May 8, 2014, Disney Channel ordered a new comedy, K.C. Undercover. Zendaya would be the lead, playing K.C. Cooper, a math whiz training to be an undercover spy. She would also be a co-producer. That title means she helped make the show, not just act in it. The show began on Sunday, January 18, 2015. Its executive producer said, "I've worked with her since she was 12 years old, and have witnessed her blossom."

K.C. Undercover was a multi-camera series. Work was planned to start in the summer of 2014 in Los Angeles. In a multi-camera show, several cameras record a scene at the same time. The outer ones take close-ups. The center ones take wide shots. A single-camera show works another way. It shoots in separate takes and set-ups, often out of order. An actor plays a whole scene at once in the first kind. In the second, the scene comes in pieces.

Her movie career took off in Spider-Man: Homecoming. It opened in the United States on July 7, 2017, and she played Michelle, called MJ. While a film is shot, it often goes by a code

name, called a working title. This one was Summer of George. Filming began June 20, 2016, near Atlanta. A film crew works from a call sheet. It is a daily plan that tells people when and where to turn up.

She came back as MJ in Spider-Man: Far From Home, which opened on July 2, 2019. It filmed in 2018 under the name Fall of George. The crew worked in England, Prague, Venice and New York, and it wrapped on October 16, 2018. All three were directed by Jon Watts. The third film, No Way Home, opened on December 17, 2021. It filmed from October 2020 to March 2021 in New York City and Atlanta. A fourth, Brand New Day, opened in July 2026.

In between, she played Chani in Dune, directed by Denis Villeneuve. It opened in theaters and on HBO Max on October 22, 2021. Filming is listed as starting March 18, 2019, in Budapest. It also took place in Jordan's Wadi Rum, a desert. Dune: Part Two, also directed by Villeneuve, opened on March 1, 2024. Its shoot is listed as running from July 18 to December 12, 2022, which by this book's count is 147 days apart, or 21 weeks. A second unit also shot desert footage in Namibia.

Challengers is a tennis film that opened on April 26, 2024. Zendaya was one of four credited producers, with Amy Pascal, the director Luca Guadagnino and Rachel O'Connor. Tennis.com reported in October 2022 that she trained for three months with coach Brad Gilbert. The film shot in the Boston area in the spring of 2022, around the Back Bay and East Boston neighborhoods. Boston.com reported in May 2022 that it shot from April to the end of June.

Zendaya has also won two Emmy Awards, in 2020 and 2022, for lead actress in a drama series, the Television Academy's page lists. The first came on September 20, 2020, when she was 24, at a ceremony with no audience because of the pandemic. The second came on September 12, 2022. Actors vote for acting awards. The Academy calls her the youngest to win that prize twice. That stands through November 2026. A younger actor who wins it twice would change it.

Here is the path in one line. It ran from a dancer's role at age 14 in 2010 to a producer's name on a film in 2024. In between came three Spider-Man films, with a fourth, Brand New Day, in July 2026. Two Dune films came out, in October 2021 and March 2024, and a tennis film was shot in the Boston area. Dune: Part Three, with Zendaya as Chani, is scheduled to open on December 18, 2026.

Questions

1. What does a call sheet tell the cast and crew?

A. The ending of the film
B. Which actor won an award
C. When and where to turn up

2. How is a multi-camera show different from a single-camera show?

A. It is shot in separate takes, often out of order

B. Several cameras record a scene at the same time

C. It is always filmed outdoors

3. Why does the book say a younger actor winning twice "would change it"?

A. Someone else could pass the mark later

B. The Academy never counts ages

C. She plans to stop acting

4. In "a second unit also shot desert footage," what does unit mean?

A. A measurement

B. A film team

C. A camera lens

5. Which rule applies to a child aged 9 to under 16 in California?

A. Work as long as the director asks

B. No school on a set

C. At most nine hours at the place of work in a day

Words to know

sitcom: comedy series

season: batch of episodes

credentials: teaching qualifications

unit: filming team

producers: show organizers

Answer key: How Did Zendaya Go From Disney to Dune?

1. C. When and where to turn up
2. B. Several cameras record a scene at the same time
3. A. Someone else could pass the mark later
4. B. A film team
5. C. At most nine hours at the place of work in a day