Name: _____ Date: _____

How Ryan's World Grew: From Toy Videos to a Movie

Reading level 10 (6th grade) · 1052 words

How did Ryan Kaji get famous? The short answer is that he made clips for YouTube and many people watched them. The long answer has steps, and each step has a date. The first step was a channel in 2015 called Ryan ToysReview. The newest step is a movie that came out in August 2024. By November of that year, you could stream it at home. This book follows those steps. It also explains how the numbers for a channel are counted.

The channel began with toys. A toy unboxing clip shows someone opening a new toy. It may also show the toy being played with, put together or reviewed. The first name of the channel told viewers what to expect: Ryan ToysReview. Today the official Ryan's World site lists a wider mix. It says he likes pretend play, science tests, music clips, skits, challenges, and arts and crafts. The site also names characters such as Red Titan, Combo Panda and Gus the Gummy Gator.

A channel stays alive by posting often. In March 2024, the company that runs his channels said it put out about 25 clips a week across all of them. A team of about 30 people did the work. Time magazine gave the same weekly number in 2021. He told YouTube's blog in 2024 that his usual clips are filmed in a casual way on a phone, and that a scene is often shot only once.

A subscriber is a viewer who follows a channel. YouTube's help page says closed accounts and spam accounts do not count in the total. It also says the public sees a shortened version of the number. In February 2018, Good Morning America said his channel had over 12 million subscribers. In October 2020, Macy's said 40.2 million, but another report that week said 27 million. Counts differ by who is counting and which channels they include, so a number only makes sense with a date and a speaker.

A big channel can grow into a brand. In February 2018, a company named pocket.watch and a toy maker named Bonkers Toys showed a toy line made with him at the Toy Fair in New York. The line had toy cars, figures and a fire truck. Time reported in 2021 that the Ryan's World name was on 1,600 licensed products in 30 countries. Licensed means that other firms make the goods with the owner's permission.

Television came next. A series is a set of shows that go together. In February 2019, Nickelodeon, or Nick, said it would air Ryan's Mystery Playdate. The first order was for 20 episodes. In each one, he and the cartoon pals Gus the Gummy Gator and Combo Panda take on tasks and puzzles. The puzzles show who his mystery playdate is. In September

2021, Nick ordered 20 more episodes for season four. That made the season 30 half-hour episodes long.

Then came a balloon. On October 29, 2020, Macy's said that Red Titan would fly in its 94th Thanksgiving Day Parade. Red Titan is based on his alter ego, which means a second self that he plays. The balloon was 51 feet long, 28 feet wide and 42 feet tall. Macy's called it a giant balloon. Artists at the Macy's parade studio designed it. Macy's said he was the first YouTube star to be in the parade in its 94 years.

The parade was on Thursday, November 26, 2020. It aired on NBC from nine until noon. The next day, a 30-minute special named Super Spy Ryan began on Amazon Kids+. That is a streaming site for kids. A company release called the special a hybrid of live action and animation. A Japanese firm, Shin-Ei Animation, made the cartoon parts. The same firm made the shows Doraemon and Crayon Shinchan. So in one week in 2020, he had both a balloon and a new special.

The firm behind the channels grew too. In November 2020, it said it ran nine YouTube channels. In November 2022, it said ten. The official site now lists Ryan's World in Spanish and in Japanese, plus channels for characters like Gus the Gummy Gator. In 2022, pocket.watch said its library held tens of thousands of clips on more than 40 platforms. A platform is a place to watch, such as a streaming site.

He told YouTube's blog in August 2024 that a movie for theaters had always been his dream. A release on March 27, 2024 said the movie would open on more than 2,100 screens in the United States on August 16. A screen here means one movie room. It was called Ryan's World the Movie: Titan Universe Adventure. In the story, he is pulled into a magic comic book and has to become a hero named Red Titan to rescue people trapped inside it. Shin-Ei Animation made the cartoon parts.

A movie is made in a different way from a usual clip. He told YouTube's blog that the movie had a script and a huge crew, and that the movie's hero is based on him. A crew is the team of workers who make a film. His regular clips are often one take on a phone. He said the big lesson was patience. The script, the lights and all the helpers took more time than he thought they would.

After the theaters came the screens at home. On November 27, 2024, a news site named Animation World Network said the movie was streaming on Hulu, Peacock, Ryan and Friends Plus and The Roku Channel. To stream is to watch over the internet instead of on a disc. Shin-Ei Animation made its cartoon parts, as it did for Super Spy Ryan. The March 2024 release said he had 61 million subscribers and 83 billion lifetime views across his YouTube channels.

So how did he get famous? Not with one jump. The steps were a channel in 2015, a toy line in 2018, a TV show in 2019, a balloon and a special in 2020, and a movie in 2024. Each step

reached a new kind of crowd. Through all of it, the channels kept posting, at about 25 clips a week by 2024. He told YouTube's blog that a movie for theaters had "always been my dream". On August 16, 2024, it opened.

Questions

1. What does YouTube's help page say about spam accounts and a channel's subscriber count?

A. They are counted twice
B. They do not count toward the total
C. They are shown in a separate list

2. In this book, what does licensed mean for products with the Ryan's World name?

A. Made by the channel alone
B. Sold only in one country
C. Made by other companies with permission

3. What was new about Red Titan in the 2020 parade, according to Macy's?

A. Ryan was the first YouTube creator in the parade
B. It was the tallest balloon ever
C. It was the first on NBC

4. Why did the movie take Ryan longer than a usual video?

A. It was filmed in one take
B. It had a script, lights and a big crew to coordinate
C. It was filmed without any lights

5. Which animation studio made the cartoon parts of both Super Spy Ryan and the movie?

A. Pixar
B. Shin-Ei Animation
C. Toei Animation

Words to know

subscriber: channel follower
licensed: officially permitted
hybrid: a mix
crew: film workers
platforms: places to watch

Answer key: How Ryan's World Grew: From Toy Videos to a Movie

1. B. They do not count toward the total
2. C. Made by other companies with permission
3. A. Ryan was the first YouTube creator in the parade
4. B. It had a script, lights and a big crew to coordinate
5. B. Shin-Ei Animation