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America Ferrera

Actress, producer, director and activist America Ferrera (born April 18, 1984, in Los Angeles, California) is the youngest of six children born to Honduran immigrant parents. Her first acting role was at seven years old when she appeared in her elementary school's production of *Hamlet*. In high school, she landed her first onscreen role in Disney Channel's original movie *Gotta Kick It Up!* That same year, 2002, she was cast in the coming-of-age film *Real Women Have Curves*.

As a student at the University of Southern California studying international relations, Ferrera juggled coursework with her acting career — a guest spot on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and roles in movies, including *How the Garcia Girls Spent Their Summer* and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Her senior year of college, Ferrara was cast in the titular role of the television series *Ugly Betty*. The groundbreaking role would earn her an Emmy Award for best lead actress in a comedy series, making her the first Latina and the youngest person (at age 23) to win the honor. She also won Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, ALMA and Imagen awards. In 2023, Ferrara starred in *Barbie*. The movie went on to break several box office records that year, including the highest-grossing worldwide film.

An advocate for human and civil rights, immigration reform, racial justice and environmental conservation, in 2016, Ferrera cofounded HARNESS, an organization connecting storytellers and activists to amplify the cultural narrative around social justice.