

Michael jackson research essay

Profession, Singers



An Icon Never Forgotten The world of popculture would never be the same. His voice was harmonious, his moves earth shattering and his actions unequivocally eccentric. The whole world could only watch in astonishment as the " King of Pop" altered lives and established himself as the juggernaut of the music industry. Having been born in 1958, did not give me the opportunity to anxiously stay up until midnight, December 2, 1983 and witness the world premiere of Michael Jackson's pinnacle, the hit, Thriller.

Though my life began as the height of his career began to taper off, his music, actions and appeal is as much a part of my generation as it was then. Michael Jackson is the world's greatest entertainer. His body of work, likeness and story has had a profound influence on popular music today, and will continue to have a resounding impact for generations to come. It was the early morning of August 29, 1958, in the blue-collar town, Gary, Indiana, when Katherine and Joseph Jackson welcomed their eighth child, Michael Joseph Jackson into the world he would forever change.

Joseph Jackson was quick to realize his children had an unnatural talent, a divine gift of song and dance. He became eager, if not obsessive to profit from these talents. Michael was pushed towards stardom at a very early age. In 1962, his father formed the group The Jackson Five, consisting of Michael and his brothers. Every aspect of their domestic and now professional lives were micromanaged by Joe. He parented and managed them with a strong, often cruel unyielding hand. The wrong dance step could easily result in a beating one day and a barrage of verbal battery the next, " There is a lot of sadness in my past life.

My father beat me. It was difficult to take being beaten and then going on stage. He was strict; very hard and stern" (Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). Their childhoods were pretty much taken away due to the rigorous work schedule, " I remember going to the record studio and there was a park across the street and I'd see all the children playing and I would cry because it would make me sad that I would have to work instead" (Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). When this was discovered, he was one of the first to be shown as a product of abuse by parents to further their own selfish ventures.

His story would be related to various young entertainers of today. Questions will be asked such as, " Are parents pushing their children too hard? " In terms of his musicality, Michael was the lead singer and his immense talent was already evident at this young age. His voice is like an angel, a sound so seducing and his myriad of effortless gravity defying dance moves, he was a natural. By 1969 The Jackson Five were the first group to appeal to black and white audiences. The crossover success was evident by the record breaking, four number one singles in 1970.

The Jackson Five had become worldwide superstars, constantly performing to sell out concerts in global venues. The Jackson five was universally popular on all broadcasting networking appealing to all audiences black and white. Hits such as " ABC", and " I'll Be There" are instantly recognized even today. In 1971, they were named one of the most influential groups and were given an animated series based on the lives of the JacksonFamily. It was a drastically fictional portrayal of their true reality. Even through the young Jackson's success, the torment from their father was constant.

Joseph would continue his physical abuse of Michael throughout his adolescence and the mental cruelty would last throughout his life. Yet somehow, Michael kept singing and the hits kept coming. Michael Jackson had become a star, one that could not be contained by the Jackson 5. It was the first time the world had seen young black child reach that level of success. The world would become in tune with his life. They would share his pain upon news of his abuse. They too would revel in all his success as his talents consumed the world over.

Michael's early life helped pave the way for his influential career. The Jackson Five were a big influence on future boy bands including New Edition, New Kids on the Block, and The Jonas Brothers. When the group New Edition met with their manager and creator, Travis Gresham, he suggested to name the group New Edition to signify that they were the 'new edition' of the Jackson Five. When producer Maurice Starr created the group, New Kids on the Block, he was in search for a new version of Michael Jackson to take on the lead vocals.

Starr came across the high note hitter and dancing machine, Joey McIntyre. The more current version of an all brother group, The Jonas Brothers, were also significantly influenced by the Jackson Five, "The first time we heard Michael's voice was when our dad played the Jackson Five's hit, I'll Be There. We were amazed by the way that he and his brothers came together to entertain the world has been an obvious influence on us. Michael Jackson influenced every listener and every future performer with a talent the world had never seen before" (Joe Jonas. MTV Awards).

Furthermore, various R&B groups like Boyz 2 Men and All 4 One have sampled their songs countless times. Even today's big stars like Chris Brown copied a track from Michael in his song "She Aint You". The fact of the matter is the Jackson 5, a product of Michael's talent, was bigger than most groups could ever hope to be and is universally recognized as one of the biggest groups of all time. In Michael's young adulthood, he made the decision to break away from his brothers, as his talent could not be limited to his family. A decision fueled by his desire to further explore his talent and be in charge of his own career.

Michael influenced many other artists, including Beyonce and Justin Timberlake, to take the chance and break away from the group that they were engaged in. When most artists leave an extremely prosperous and established band to start their own solo career, the odds of success are dismal. Michael Jackson defied that statistic, far surpassing anything the Jackson Five had previously accomplished. Michael's major breakthrough as a solo artist came when he released his first album, "Off The Wall", which was co-produced by the legendary Quincy Jones. The album was released in 1979, and its success was exceptional.

The album produced four United States top hits on the charts, a first for any US album, and won Michael Jackson three Billboard Music Awards: Top Black Artist, Top Black Album, and Best Male R&B Vocal Performance. Imagine that dance from his song "I Want to Rock with You" is known by anyone who has sat in front of a TV. These awards and self-advertisement practically made the name Michael Jackson a household name and helped his career flourish in the 1980s. Even with the great success of his first single, Michael was still

not satisfied, " I'm never pleased with anything, I'm a perfectionist, it's part of who I am" (Jackson).

Oprah Winfrey). Again, Michael and Quincy collaborated and created three-hundred songs for his new album, *Thriller*. Hard to decide, they cut it down to their nine favorite songs and the album was released in 1982. *Thriller* had an astonishing seven hit singles and it was selling one million albums per week. There was no one in the United States who did not hear the song. The music video is so popular that there are events around the world to re-enact the dance. It spent 80 consecutive weeks in the top ten albums, and 37 weeks of those in the number one spot. Don't think for a moment that it was a one hit album though.

His hit *Billie Jean* features an even more memorable dance featuring a move at a concert that shook the world in which he effortlessly glided across the dance floor. That dance is often imitated and that " Moonwalk" is a term that permeates pop culture. At the Grammy Awards, *Thriller* won Michael Jackson a record-breaking seven Grammy awards and, what he wanted the most, Album of the Year. Blending pop, R&B, soul, dance, and disco, Michael brought a new sound to the population. All Grammy hopefuls compare their success to Michael Jackson's sweeping of the awards

The *Thriller* album not only created history, it also became a milestone for racial equality in music. Music Television, MTV, was against playing African American R&B music video; however, eventually, they agreed to air Michael Jackson's hit video, *Billie Jean*. MTV had been previously dominated by rock music videos and denied videos from black artists like Rick James, but once they recognized the popularity of Michael Jackson's songs, they evolved

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more towards pop and R; B, which helped future black artists like Prince. Before Michael Jackson's video aired, MTV was struggling to become a top television channel.

When they aired Michael's videos, MTV became the hottest channel to watch. When the video for Thriller debuted, the demand to play it was so high that MTV had to play it twice an hour to meet demand for it. Thriller was said to be the best and most prominent music video ever created. MTV owes its over one hundred million viewers to Michael Jackson. In fact a video that insulted him was removed at his requests. His songs are still asked for to this day. Michael Jackson's videos were not popular just because of the catchy, upbeat rhythms, but, because they were different. He was all substance.

He is the definition of a true performer. As mentioned before, the video Billie Jean was first debuted on MTV, viewers watched something they have never seen before. Dressed in a glittering black jacket and wearing one white glove, Michael jumped, spun, and slid all over the video's surrealistic city street set. Viewers could not take their eyes off of him. Michael Jackson made music videos an art form instead of having the singer stand there in front of a band lip synching the song. He incorporated special effects, storylines, dance routines, and cameo appearances into them.

This started the epidemic of music videos. Every music dance video played today, has Michael Jackson to thank for that. Recording artist Ne-Yo remembers that when when Michael Jackson, " dropped a video, it was an event. " (Ne-Yo. MTV). He was one of the first to spend a million on a music video. A model that is copied today by the biggest stars. Michael Jackson is not only a brilliant singer/songwriter, but also a skilled dancer. In 1983, on <https://assignbuster.com/michael-jackson-research-essay/>

the TV special, *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever*, Michael Jackson debuted his iconic dance move, the moonwalk.

Unlike anything that had ever been seen before, the moonwalk proved Michael Jackson's staying power and influence on popular culture. Everyone was trying to master the dance moves they had seen Michael do in his videos and on stage. Who didn't want to glide across the stage in a perfect floating moonwalk? Besides the moonwalk, his other famous dance was the choreographed routine in the video *Thriller*. Michael knew that he wanted the video to, "take [dance] to another level" (Michael Jackson. Barbra Walters).

The dance has been used in many Hollywood movies including the 2004 Blockbuster hit, *13 Going on 30*. If you ask people to do the *Thriller* dance, nine out of ten will be able to demonstrate it. Michael Jackson's dance moves has inspired many current artists today including Justin Timberlake and Usher. A former teen sensation himself, Usher is probably the closest current performer to Michael Jackson in terms of singing style and album anticipation. Usher is the primary reason for the return of the popularity of choreographed dancing with current R&B acts.

Usher states that, "[Michael Jackson] influenced me in so many ways, more than just music ... as a humanitarian, as a philanthropist, as an artist, as an individual who transcended culture. I wouldn't be who I am today without Michael Jackson" (Usher Raymond. MTV). With his outstanding talent as a dancer and a high-range vocals, Justin Timberlake has been honored in being compared to Michael Jackson ever since his former N*Sync days. 2006, at the Video Music Awards, the curtain rises as seven time Grammy winner, Justin Timberlake, stands, silhouetted with the stages lights.

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With his neck tilted down, hand on head, and spinning around, the crowd goes wild. Not because it is Justin Timberlake about to perform, but because he has just immortalized the one and only Michael Jackson. Timberlake expresses that, " No one presented a song onstage like Michael. To create the things that he created with his music, it's really untouchable" (Justin Timberlake. MTV). Being one of the most influential artists, if not the most, is not always as exhilarating as it seems. With fame and fortune comes pain and despair.

From skin bleaching to the dangling of his child off the balcony, there has always controversy surrounding his life. In 2002 Michael was in a hotel with his family and wanted to show off his new born baby to the paparazzi. He dangled the child over a fourth floor balcony. Michael stated that, " I love my children. I was holding my son tight. Why would I throw a baby off the balcony? That`s the dumbest, stupidest story I ever heard" (Michael Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). A lot of rumors got around that Michael Jackson was bleaching his skin because he wanted to become Caucasian.

Michael Jackson said that he had a skin pigmentation; however, a lot of people did not believe this. There were many hurtful comments about him bleaching his skin and he was very offended by them, " I have a skin disorder that destroys the pigmentation of my skin, it's something that I cannot help, OK? " (Michael Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). With all these controversies, Michael was given a nickname, " Yeah, Wacko Jacko, where did that come from? Some English tabloid. I have a heart and I have feelings. I feel that when you do that to me. It's not nice" (Michael Jackson.

Barbra Walters). With all of these controversies, Michael was still a charitable man with a big heart, " I've helped many, many, many children, thousands of children, cancer kids, leukemia kids" (Michael Jackson). In 1984, Jackson bought all new equipment for a unit at Mount Sinai New York Medical Center, which is part of the T. J. Martell-Foundation for leukemia and cancer research. Later that year, he visited the Brotman Memorial Hospital, and donated all the money he received from a Pepsi commercial that he was in, \$1.5 million, to the Michael Jackson Burn Center for Children.

Michael also created one of the largest charity events, the recording of " We are the World", to help raise money for kids in Africa in 1985. Artists like Diana Ross, Lionel Richie, Bruce Springsteen, Cyndi Lauper, Tina Turner and many more, helped with this recording. This charity was so influential that in 2010, over one hundred of today's biggest artists including Justin Bieber, Fergie, Lil Wayne, Adam Levine and Pink re-sang the song for Haiti, raising an immense amount of money. Even with the rumors going on, Michael was said to have donated over three-hundred million dollars to different charities throughout his life.

With Michael Jackson being big on charities and helping kids in need, he created an amusement park in his backyard for kids who are disadvantaged or have medical conditions. Michael named the park Neverland, same as the fantasy island in the story Peter Pan, which is about a boy that never grows older, " I'll always be Peter Pan in my heart" (Michael Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). The 3000 acre land is filled with rides, animals, a train and many more attractions, " We have elephants, and giraffes, and crocodiles, and every kind of tigers and lions.

And - and we have bus loads of kids, who don't get to see those things. They come up, sick children, and enjoy it" (Michael Jackson. Ed Bradley). Neverland was intended to bring happiness to everyone; however, it brought a horrific result to Michael. In 1993, Michael Jackson was accused of molesting a thirteen year old boy at his Neverland Ranch. Michael had met the boy in 1992 and they soon became friends. The child had become a regular guest and started staying the night at the residence, which was not uncommon.

Michael gave the boy gifts and paid for several family vacation trips around the world. The father of the boy, Evan Chandler, stated that, "[Michael Jackson] was part of our family" (Chandler. Vindicating Michael). According to the allegations, for four months, Michael had been kissing and fondling with the boy when they were alone. These allegations became the main topic on all news stations. While Michael said he was innocent, many believed the news articles that stated he was a child molester, " It's a complete lie, why do people buy these papers? It's not the truth I'm here to say.

You know, don't judge a person, do not pass judgment, unless you have talked to them one on one. I don't care what the story is, do not judge them because it is a lie" (Michael Jackson). In 1994, Michael Jackson settled the civil lawsuit paying an undisclosed amount to the boy's family. Many believe that he paid between 15 and 20 million dollars. After receiving the money, the boy refused to testify in any criminal matters. Therefore, the prosecution was not able to pursue a criminal case. Michael was accused again of child molestation in 2005, but was also found not guilty.

These accusations did not fully ruin Michael's career, but they did impact it. The media began to impair the career of Michael Jackson with ridiculous
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tabloid stories and false allegations, using wrong information to convince them. Society started to see him in a different light, giving him a poor reputation, " The press has made up so much... God... awful, horrifying stories... it has made me realize the more often you hear a lie, I mean, you begin to believe it" (Michael Jackson. Oprah Winfrey). Sadly, his fans began to separate Michael from his music.

The music was still prodigious; however, Michael, was seen as a predator. Artist Lil Wayne is going through the same thing with fans, but he went to jail for drugs. Lil Wayne's music is still heard on the radio; however, the media on him is not respectable. After the allegations, the majority of people did not consider Michael as the influential pop star he once was, nor gave him recognition for his notable charity work and contributions in society; however, Michael tried to better his career; however he was never at the same magnitude as his " Thriller" album.

From experiencing fame at such a young age, fighting lawsuits, paparazzi scandals, continuous plastic surgery, extreme tabloid stories, and false allegations, Michael Jackson never fully recovered. These struggles lead Michael into a deep depression, which subsequently resulted in an accidental overdose that cost him his life. People around the world were taken back by his sudden death in 2009. Through the comments all over the Internet, persistent updates on the television, the massive increase of albums sold on iTunes, and the misinterpretations of the way his death occurred, it was evident that the death of the King of Pop had a large impact on the nation. Rarely does any album get a 25th anniversary celebration, but Thriller did. Without a doubt, Thriller was a milestone for an entire generation. With

singles at the top of the charts, changing MTV, and credit for breaking the color barrier and making way for a new generation of black artists, Michael Jackson truly exceeded what anyone could have expected. His unprecedented success is still resounding in popular culture today.

Television shows such as X Factor, Glee, America's Next Top Model and American Idol have all had "Let's give thanks to Michael Jackson" episodes. There is even a dance game called "The Michael Jackson Experience" that lets people learn his dance moves and perform with him. Michael Jackson's iconic dances, vocals, and blending of genres continue to inspire new artists and captivate audiences worldwide. There is no doubt in my mind that twenty years from now, everyone will still know who the "King of Pop" was and how he has influenced almost every artist today. Works Cited

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