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## How Kardashian Family Has Made Themselves Prominent Figures In Pop-Culture

Staying updated on the daily occurrences of celebrities has never been so easy with the presence of technology combined with America's growing obsession with pop-culture. One famous family that dominates the headlines: the Kardashians. For every time a Kardashian decides to go out to dinner, take a trip to the beach, post a selfie, or essentially do anything in the public eye, there will be a news outlet producing a story about it. The Kardashians have accumulated so much wealth, fame, and omnipresence in the media it's almost hard to think back to a pre-Kardashian era. Over the past decade, the Kardashian family has made themselves prominent figures in pop-culture with their reality television show, their exceptional ability to navigate the media to promote their brand, and have attracted a large amount of Kardashian-lovers and Kardashian-haters in the process.

The start of the Kardashian legacy can be dated back to 1978, when Robert Kardashian Sr. married Kris Houghton. They had four children together: daughters Kourtney, Kim, Khloe, and son Rob. Houghton and Kardashian divorced in 1991, and within the same year Houghton remarried to the Olympic decathlon champion Caitlyn Jenner (formerly known as Bruce Jenner). The couple, who divorced in 2015, had two daughters together: Kendall and Kylie.

The Kardashians have risen to stardom by receiving media attention through their scandals, enticing the public to keep up with their personal lives with their exciting yet authentic reality television show, and cultivating the use of social media to constantly promote their brand. But what led to the Kardashian empire dominating pop-culture and raking in millions of dollars for over a decade? The Kardashian family name first received some recognition when Robert Kardashian Sr. was a defense lawyer for one of the most high-profile court cases in American history: the O.J. Simpson trial. Kim worked her way up the ranks of Hollywood as she doubled as a personal stylist and best friend for some A-list celebrities, like Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton. But, the turning point for the Kardashian family was the release of Kim's sex tape with her former boyfriend, Ray-J. The tape, which leaked in February 2007, is notably what kickstarted the Kardashian rise to fame and subsequently the creation of their reality television series *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (KUWTK). Since its premiere, KUWTK has been wildly successful. The show is currently on its 15th season and has resulted in nine spinoff shows. According to *People*, the family has signed a \$150 million joint media deal, which includes an extension of their KUWTK contract to produce five more seasons.

The power and influence the Kardashian-Jenner clan holds on social media cannot be overstated. Kim Kardashian has over 115 million Instagram followers, Kendall Jenner has 93.4 million, and Khloe Kardashian has 25.7 million Twitter followers, to name some statistics. According to CNN, Snapchat stocks plummeted after Kylie, who has 25.2 million twitter followers, tweeted she lost interest in the app. The Snapchat stock closed down 6%, wiping about \$1.3 billion off the company's market value after she tweeted, "sooo does anyone else not open Snapchat anymore? Or is it just me...ugh this is so sad." The Kardashian-Jenner family has the world at their fingertips with their formidable social following across social media platforms.

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The Kardashian-Jenner sisters are multi-million dollar personal brands with powerful cultural influence, and their exceptional ability to brand themselves through the media largely contributes to their success. By navigating the media with expert precision, their constant presence across both mainstream and social media only reinforces their power and popularity. The Kardashians live to sell themselves and their lives as pop culture and know better than to just give it away for free. With Kris Jenner as an executive producer of KUWTK, the Kardashians have control over their own narrative. The sisters are defined by their storylines and the various roles the producers package them as, which creates an interesting family dynamic the audience can relate to. Despite how the media may portray the family, KUWTK gives the sisters a platform to tell their own side of the story.

The lifestyle the Kardashians portray, whether through social media or KUWTK, is carefully curated to appear as desirable as possible, which creates a hot demand for anything labeled Kardashian. If you simply go to a Kardashian or Jenner Instagram account, you are bombarded with pictures of expensive cars, lavish vacations, their perfect physique, and most importantly, the perfect selfie. These materialistic posts feed into the vanity of a society that greatly values beauty and wealth, and further strengthens fans' desires to become rich and famous, just like the Kardashians. But as we desire to keep up with the Kardashians, we don't just want their wealth or beauty. KUWTK provides a very personal insight into the sisters' lives, giving us a look into their family feuds, dating lives, pregnancies, marriages, and divorces. Viewers begin to identify with the family and feel as though they are actually friends with the Kardashians, and social media takes this a step further. Snapchat, for example, provides the fans with candid, current glimpses into their lives. These intimate peeks into the Kardashian-Jenner lives give them authenticity and relatability, which are both key to selling their brand. Expert marketers make living like a Kardashian feel like an achievable goal. For the right price, anyone can obtain Kylie's iconic lips (Kylie Cosmetics lip kits) or Kim's chiseled cheekbones (KKW Beauty contour and highlight palette).

Whether you keep up with the Kardashians or not, most people seem to have one of two drastically different opinions of them. Of course there are people stuck in the middle, but you're most likely either a mega-fan, impressed by their savvy entrepreneurial skills and enjoy their aesthetic, or you think they embody the worst of America's obsession with celebrities and refuse to praise such a "talentless", "dumb" family. In fact, many celebrities have outwardly spoken about their distaste for the Kardashians. According to The Daily Mail, Mad Men actor John Hamm took a sharp stab at Kim and the culture that allowed her to become so famous. "Whether it's Paris Hilton or Kim Kardashian or whoever, stupidity is certainly celebrated. Being a fucking idiot is a valuable commodity in this culture because you're rewarded significantly," Hamm said during an interview with Elle UK. But to dedicated fans, the Kardashians are much more than just "famous for being famous" celebrities, they're role models. Instagram user @kkwestnews, which has over 22,000 followers, is a fan page dedicated to the Kardashians that consistently posts photos, videos, and their own photo edits of the family. The 18-year-old account owner told me she has been a fan for about six years and has run her fan page since 2016.

I love them because they are unbothered, which has taught me to be a stronger person and ignore people that disrespect you. Each sister has their own quality and we can learn something from each one and take it into our own lives. Like Khloe's determination to get a healthy body and Kim's willingness to work endless hours, it shows me they are devoted and I should be too." While the Kardashians may not possess traditional "talents" many celebrities have, their

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strong determination, drive, and confidence is a source of inspiration for young girls.

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