

The Beginner's Guide to

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By Jess M. Smith

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

# K-POP

THE ULTIMATE STAN LEXICON

JESS M. SMITH



## I love K-pop

and I want you to love it too. With a huge variety of concepts, designs, music, choreography, media and fans K-pop is becoming influential all over the world.

K-pop started in the 1990s and has grown exponentially. BTS is estimated to make 1 billion dollars annually for South Korea. K-pop entertains and gives joy while also being big money. There are pluses and minuses to the industry which are too complex to add to the book, so for now, this book will focus on the basics of stanning K-pop.



**Aegyo** Korean word for “cutesy” (similar to “kawaii” in Japanese)

**Agency** The agency a group is produced by is extraordinarily important. Agencies sign with kids when they are 11 or 12 and train them. If the child is good enough they will be able to debut with a group. The group then performs under the agency until their contract is over, usually around 7 years. Then the members of the group can decide to sign again with the agency or move to a different agency. The biggest agencies currently are: SM Entertainment, YG, JYP and BigHit/HYBE. SM, YG and JYP used to be called “the big three” but BigHit is now outperforming them due to the influence of BTS. Agencies coordinate everything– from production of music, promotion and style to living conditions of the members.

**AOA (Ace of Angels)** 3rd generation female K–pop group. Fandom: ELVIS

**Anti** The opposite of a stan and tends to send hate towards specific individuals or groups via social media. The bigger the group the more antis they will have.

**ATEEZ** 4th generation male K–pop group. Fandom: ATINY

# B

**Bias** A stan's favorite member of a K-pop group. A fan can have biases from different groups. For example, my bias from SHINee is Taemin and my bias from BTS is RM. An Ultimate Bias is the bias to end all others.

**Bias wrecker** The second favorite member of a K-pop. Can have multiple groups.

**Big Three** The term used to describe the agencies JYP, SM and YG. Since BigHit has gotten big, some people say "big four" now.

**Blackpink** 4th generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: Blink



**BIGBANG** 2nd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: VIP

**Block B** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: BBC

**Brave Girls** 3rd generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: FEARLESS

**BTOB** 2nd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: Melody

**BTS** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: ARMY

# C

**Cherry Bullet** 4th generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom:LULLET

**Concerts** In K-pop concerts aren't just shows, they are events. As a K-pop fan it's important to research fandoms of the group you are going to see and join social media groups dedicated to the group's concert. There is often much more information available through these channels rather than the official venue or group channels. There are often fans making and giving out pictures and goody bags at the concerts and the Facebook group tells where and when things are happening. I get to the venue several hours early to get in line if I plan on buying merchandise. If the concert starts at 7pm, I will get there at noon and there will already be people there. Then fans sit, chat, snack, get goodies and trade pictures of the group members.

Once the doors open, people head straight for the merch lines. After the merch has been bought, people find their seats. The concert will start precisely at the time listed, give or take 10 minutes and there is no pre-show. If you have one or bought a light stick before the show make sure you downloaded the app to link/Bluetooth your light stick to the concert network. The light sticks are usually connected

and are a part of the performance by glowing different colors and patterns for various songs.

**Comeback** In K-pop, a group has a comeback every time they release music, be it single, EP or full-length album. They might have a comeback every three months, it just depends on the agency. They will promote for 4-8 weeks.

# D

"**Daebak**" Korean slang for "awesome," "cool," "unbelievable"– can be meant for something positive or negative

**Day6:** 3rd generation male K-pop band. Fandom: My Day

**Debut** When trainees have been chosen and a group formed, the group will train until they are ready to debut. Debating is the dream of every trainee and unfortunately, not all trainees or groups debut.

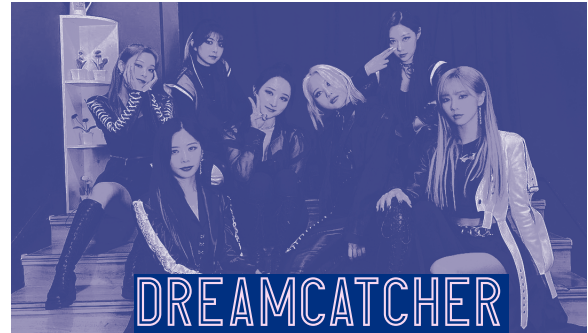
**Disbandment** K-pop groups will disband officially for a couple of reasons.

- The group is a project group. (It was created through a survival show with a beginning and end date.)
  - The agency goes bankrupt. This has been happening more often than usual due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, often agencies sell off their groups to bigger agencies so the group doesn't disband.
  - The members fail to renew their contracts.
- If disbandment occurs, the group no longer produces music or promotes together.

Generally, disbandment is regarded as extreme due to the dissolution of the fandoms as well. Some groups might

stop promoting or producing music, but not disband. Those groups still have active fandoms and a spark of hope they will have a comeback. Some bitter disbanding situations have been: 2NE1, GFriend, Beast (Almost disbanded but moved to a new agency instead and are now HIGHLIGHT), X1, BAP, IZ\*ONE

**Dreamcatcher** 3rd generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: InSomnia



**E** **Everglow** A 4th generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: For Ever

**EXID** A 3rd generation female group currently on hiatus. Fandom: LEGGO

**EXO** A 3rd generation male group. Fandom: EXO-L



**F** **Fandom** The fanbase of a group or idol. A fandom name is both a descriptor and a noun. For instance, I'm a fan in the BTS ARMY. I'm ARMY or I'm an ARMY.

Fans are incredibly important in K-pop and they are catered to by agencies and the groups themselves (this is called Fan Service). It's never a good thing to be on the bad side of a group's fandom, due to social media backlash which can and does destroy careers. However, they do a lot of good too. Often fandoms will donate to the charities their group or member is donating to.

**Fan Chant** The audience in a K-pop concert chants certain things for certain songs. Often fan chants are created by the groups themselves. K-pop concerts can be very interactive.

**Fandom Wars** On social media, fandoms have a tendency to bicker amongst themselves. I generally stay away from it because it's silly.

**"Fighting!"** It means good luck or "you can do it!" Also pronounced as "Hwiating!" by Koreans.



# G

**G-Dragon** Member of BigBang and a popular solo artist.

**(G)i-dle** 4th generation female K-pop group.

Fandom: Neverland

**Generations of K-pop** K-pop groups are split into generations by the Korean media.

**1st** 1996–2001 The original idol groups. Examples are: HOT, Sech Kies, Shinhwa, Chakra, BOA, ROO'RA

**2nd** 2002–2010 The current K-pop economic model was created. Examples are: Big Bang, Girl's Generation, Wonder Girls, Super Junior, TVXQ, SHINee, 2NE1, INFINITE and SISTAR.

**3rd** 2011–2017 are considered to have contributed most to the global rise of K-pop. Examples: EXO, BTS, GOT7, Red Velvet, Twice, BLACKPINK, GFriend, NCT, SEVENTEEN, WANNA ONE, MONSTA X, Oh My Girl, Lovelyz, SF9

**4th** 2018–current TXT, ITZY, Stray Kids, ATEEZ, Everglow, LOONA, THE BOYZ

**Goo Hara** A female K-pop idol who took her own life at age 28 in 2019, one month after her best friend Sulli committed suicide.

# H

**Hearts** Idols make finger, hand or arm gestures to fans that indicate a heart or love

**Heechul** A popular 2nd generation male idol.

**"Hyung"** Used by a male to call a close older male



**Idol** A musician/dancer in the Korean music industry, can be solo or in a group.

**iKON** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: iKONICS

**Infinite** 2nd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: Inspirit

**International Age vs. Korean Age:** Koreans add 1-2 years to someone's actual birth date to determine age whereas International age is determined by the birth date.

**ITZY** 4th generation girl K-pop group. Fandom: MIDZY

**I.U.** A popular female solo artist



**Jay Park** Solo American rapper/K-hip hop artist. Came under fire in Korea for having tattoos and a bad boy image but now owns agencies H1gherMusic and AOMG

**"Jeongmal"** Korean for "seriously? Or "really?"

**JYP** One of the "big three" K-pop agencies in Korea



**K**

**K-indie** Music that isn't produced and promoted through big agencies. Indie bands examples are: GIFT, Hoppipolla, Lucy, The Rose

**Kingdom** Survival shows for male K-pop groups. The first winner was The Boyz and the second was Stray Kids

**Kingdom** A 4th generation K-pop group.  
Fandom: KingMakers

**K-pop bands** Easily confused with K-indie bands, these are bands who may or may not have started out indie but now promote like K-pop idols. They perform live singing and playing instruments. There is usually no dance performance. Examples of K-pop bands are: DAY6, N.Flying, The Rose, Onewe

**K-pop Group** South Korean Pop music. These groups are performance based with full dance choreographies for most songs produced. Therefore, live performances are a mix of live and recorded vocals, with full choreographies. Korea has many types of music, such as Indie bands Hip-Hop, etc but, unfortunately, it's all shelved under "K-pop" in the United States.

**L**

**Lightstick** Every K-pop group has their own light stick for concerts. These are basically flashlights that light up manually or are connected to a network during a concert and change colors according to the song. Each group or group's agency designs their own light stick and they are quite fun to use during concerts.



# M

**"Maknae"** Korean word for the youngest person in any kind of a group. Koreans find age to be extremely important as a guide to how to interact with each other. Respect is expected based on

age. The youngest of the group is simultaneously cherished and shown the least deference. Both male and female maknaes are described as cute. A golden maknae is the youngest but is good at everything they do, often better than the older members.

**Mandatory Enlistment:** All males in Korea need to enlist in the military for 1 1/2 years before they turn 30 (International age).

**Mamamoo** 3rd generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: Moo Moo

**Member** An individual from a K-pop group or band.

**Merch** Merchandise of specific groups that can be bought online or at a concert. Typical merch includes: clothes, lightsticks, stickers and pictures.

**Monsta X** 3rd generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: Monbebe

**Monster Rookie:** A new group that is extremely popular and wins at music shows soon after debut Examples are ITZY, Everglow, TXT

**Music Shows** K-pop groups and individuals visit and perform their current song or songs. They might win a prize for streaming and downloading numbers. They are often MC'd by idols introducing other idols. The performances are usually a mix of live and recorded vocal tracks and intense dance performances. Some lucky groups have Comeback Shows all to themselves where they perform all of the tracks they released.



**N**

**NCT** 3rd generation male K-pop group. NCT has multiple sub-units- NCT Dream, NCT 127, Wave. Rumor has it that there will be a survival show to create NCT Hollywood. Fandom: NCTzen

**N.Flying** 4th generation male K-pop band. Fandom: N.Fia

**NU'EST** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: L.O.A.E (read as Love)

"**Noona**" Used by a male to address a close older female.



**NCT**

**O**

**Oh My Girl** 3rd generation female K-pop group. Fandom: Miracle

**Oneus** 4th generation male K-pop group. Fandom: To Moon

**Onewe** 4th generation male K-pop band. Fandom: WEVE

**ONF** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: Fuse

"**Oppa**" Used by a female to address a close older male, such as boyfriend or older brother.

P

**Pentagon** 3rd generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: Universe

**Promotion Cycle** When a group or individual has a comeback in K-pop, they promote the song for 6–8 weeks. During this time they are everywhere, on music shows and variety shows. Due to this, new songs come out from groups very quickly and the music is swapped out very quickly. Unlike music in the US when an artist releases one album and promotes that album through touring and promotions for a year, K-pop groups release small bits of albums every couple of months. The result is a lot of singles and EPs but not many full-length albums

Q

**Queendom** A survival show that featured female K-pop groups in 2020. The winners were Mamamoo.



R

**Ravi** Solo artist and member of Vixx. Owns his own agency and the most amount of song copyrights in Korea.

**Red Velvet** 3rd generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: Revelu

**Rocket Punch** 4th generation female K-pop group.  
Fandom: KETCHY

**Running Man** A popular and funny Korean variety show with guests (often idols) playing games with the regular cast.





**"Sasaeng"** Toxic fans of a group or individual. Tend to be stalkers and get blacklisted from events.

**"Sarangyeo or Sarangamida"** I love you

**Seventeen** 3rd generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: Carat

**SF9** 3rd gen male group. Fandom: Fantasy

**SHINee** 2nd generation K-pop group. Group member Jonghyun (28) took his own life in late 2017 which caused the K-pop community immense pain and brought the mental health of K-pop idols to the forefront. Fandom: SHAWOL

**Stan** Both a verb and a noun. Think being a "fan" of something but x100. It is interchangeable with "fan," but with more attachment. Commonly associated with a K-pop group. For instance, I'm a BTS stan, or I stan BTS.

**Sub-Unit** A group within a group. Sometime 2-4 members creates a single or EP together which creates a sub-unit.

**Sulli** A female solo artist who took her own life in 2019 (25)

**Superband** Survival show creating K-indie bands.

**SuperM** Intergenerational male K-pop group (technically a sub-unit with members from EXO, NCT and SHINee from the agency SM) Fandom-Name to be determined

**Super Junior:** 2nd gen male group. Many members can be seen on Variety Shows. (Heechul and Shindong are popular)  
Fandom name: E.L.F.

**Survival Shows** These are immensely popular shows that either creates a K-pop group or battles group against group with music sets. The 101 series is the most notable, with controversy surrounding the voting most recently. The list of popular groups that started out this way is long and includes: BigBang, IKON, EnHyphen, Wanna One (disbanded), Stray Kids, IZ'ONE (disbanded), Oneus, Onewe

**Stray Kids**- 4th generation male group. Fandom: Stay



**T**

**THE BOYZ** 4th generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: The B

**TEEN TOP** 2nd generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: Angels

**Trainee** Children and teens that are contracted to learn singing and dancing through an agency. They may or may not debut.

**Tomorrow X Together (TXT)** 4th gen male K-pop group.  
Fandom: MOA

**TVXQ** 2nd generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: Cassiopeia

**Twice** 3rd gen female K-pop group, Fandom: Once

**U**

**"Unnie"** Used by a female to address an older close female, for example, sister, older classmate.

**UP10TION** 3rd gen male K-pop group. Fandom: Honey10

V

**VeriVery** 4th generation male K-pop group.  
Fandom: VERRER

**VICTON** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: ALICE

**VIXX** 3rd generation K-pop group. Fandom: Starlight

W

**Wanna One** The project male K-pop group from the first Produce 101 Survival Show in 2017. Was limited term and spawned multiple groups, actors and solo artists after it disbanded (Kang Daniel, Ha Sung Woon, CIX, ABSIX).

**Weeekly** 4th generation female K-pop group. Fandom: Daileee

**Weekly Idol** A variety show that showcases a K-pop group by talking with them and having them play games

**WINNER** 3rd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: Innercircle



WANNA ONE

X

**X1** Most recent male group created from the Produce 101 survival shows. Disbanded early due to voting manipulation and bribe controversy.

**"X-man"** It basically means a spy sent to sabotage the team. There used to be a variety show named "X-man" where a member would be the hidden X-man and would win if they weren't caught.

Y

**YG Entertainment** One of the biggest K-pop agencies in Korea

Z

**Zico** Popular solo K-pop/rapper/K-hip hop artist that started with group Block B and now owns his own agency.





**2NE1** 2nd generation female K-pop group that disbanded in 2016. All members are solo artists now. (CL, Dara, Minzy and Park Bom). Fandom: Blackjacks

**2AM** 2nd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: I AM

**2PM** 2nd generation male K-pop group. Fandom: Hottest



2NE1

## CONCLUSION

With any luck this ABC overview of K-pop terminology and concepts has helped you begin your K-pop fandom journey. K-pop has brought me a lot of happiness and fun through some tough times and I hope it can help you too!

## ADDITIONALLY...

If you are a stan, please do not be offended if I forgot your group. There are many groups and space was limited. This book is already nearly double what it was assigned to be.

This is a student project and no money is being made off of it. I do not claim the rights to any of the photos or media that appear.

