

From heartwarming to hysterical—as the host of *Jeopardy!* for nearly four decades, Alex Trebek saw it all.

# Top 10 Moments

A RAPPING HOST, CLUELESS CONTESTANTS, THE FIRST THREE-WAY TIE IN THE SHOW'S HISTORY—IT'S HARD TO FORGET THESE FAN FAVORITES.



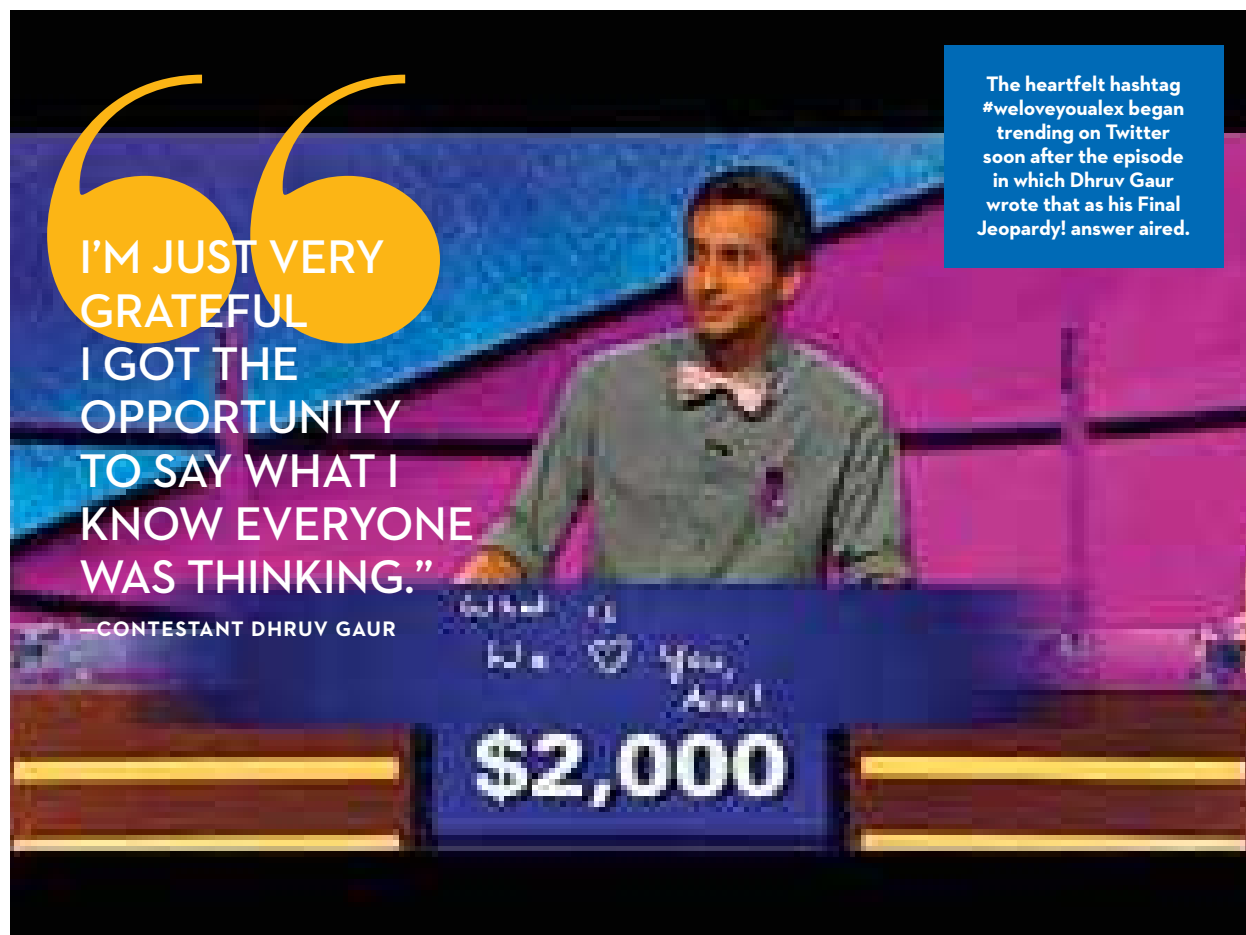
**ALEX TREBEK IS A SIGNIFICANT REASON WHY I AM THE WAY I AM.**  
—CONTESTANT BURT THAKUR

● **WHAT IS, WHERE ARE THE TISSUES?**  
With 37 seasons under his belt, Alex Trebek was bound to see some young fans grow up to become contestants. On the Nov. 5, 2020, episode, which aired just three days before the beloved host's death, winner Burt Thakur, who's from India, shared the enormous impact Trebek had on his life—with the host himself. "Any family members back home cheering you on?" asked Trebek. Thakur's response served as a touching reminder of how moving it can be to meet our heroes in real life. "You know, here's a true story," he said. "I learned English because of you. My grandfather who raised me, I'm gonna get tears right now. I used to sit on his lap and watch you every day. So it's a pretty special moment for me. Thank you very much."

Although Trebek was visibly ill during the taping, Thakur says his quick wit was still strong. "Without skipping a beat he said, 'I too sat on my grandfather's leg, but he taught me swear words!'"

● **I'LL TAKE, WE'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU, ALEX, FOR INFINITY**  
A few days after the *Jeopardy!* host announced he would be undergoing another round of chemotherapy as he battled cancer, Trebek shared an emotional moment with returning contestant Dhruv Gaur on the Nov. 11, 2019, episode of *Tournament of Champions*. There wasn't a dry eye in the house during the Final Jeopardy! round when Gaur, aware he wasn't





going to win even with a correct answer, chose the moment to be sentimental. The clue was: “In the title of a groundbreaking 1890 exposé of poverty in New York City slums, these 3 words follow ‘how the.’” Gaur wrote down: “What is, We [heart] you Alex!” Though technically incorrect, everyone watching was a winner, as Trebek was visibly moved by the gesture. “That’s very kind of you,” he said tenderly, tears in his eyes. “Thank you.”

**3 ● WHAT IS, FREESTYLIN’ WITH MC TREBEK?**  
 Never assume someone as fly as Trebek can’t spit some dope hip-hop jams. In a January 2014 episode, It’s a Rap was a category, and *Jeopardy!*’s very own hype man was ready to represent. While reading clues featuring lyrics by the likes of the Beastie Boys, Biggie Smalls and Grandmaster Flash, the septuagenarian host stepped to the mic and put a little more swagger into the poetic words of one Dr. Dre. “In ‘Nuthin’ but a G Thang,’ this ‘doctor’ rapped, ‘Never let me slip, ‘cause if I slip, then I’m slippin.’” It was pure Trebek—and a video clip of the moment went viral all over social media.

**4 ● TREBEK LEARNS ABOUT ‘NERDCORE’ FOR \$2,000, PLEASE**  
 A big part of the game show host’s charm was that he could keep a straight face while deadpanning his repertoire of casual wit, snark and the occasional cringeworthy bite. During introductions on an October 2016 episode, contestant Susan Cole revealed her affinity for the music genre known as “nerdcore hip-hop”—the art of rapping about hobbies like “video games, science fiction, having a hard time meeting romantic partners.” The then 76-year-old Trebek (can we blame it on the older generation?) awkwardly quipped, “Losers, in other words?” Fortunately, Cole’s nerd-eriety is best “rapped” up with the fact that she beat the other two contestants and won more than \$20,600!



**5 ● I’LL TAKE ALEX’S PANTS FOR PRICELESS**  
 When you’ve had the same professional gig since 1984, it’s fun to mix things up a little. While many often

assumed Trebek to be buttoned up, a 2005 Tournament of Champions episode proved otherwise. He not only showed his sense of humor, but also a bit of skin. At the start of the episode, the host strutted onto the stage without his pants—revealing some pretty toned gams beneath his skivvies. “I was informed backstage a few minutes ago that our three contestants, Ken, Brad and Jerome, wanted to relieve some of the tension and they said, ‘We must do the program without trousers,’” he joked. “Can we get a camera behind to make sure that they have done the same as I?” Alas, the cheese stood alone. Only Trebek had braved the cameras half-dressed.

**6 ● WHAT IS, WHEN AN ENTIRE CATEGORY REALLY BOMBS?**  
 It didn’t take more than two clues from the Talkin’ Football category for Trebek to realize his three contestants in the 2018 Super Bowl episode didn’t know a touchdown from a tackle. “I can tell you guys are big football fans,” he quipped, when it was the only category left on the board. Even still, the contestants fumbled all five clues with Trebek dramatically joking: “Let’s look at the \$1,000 clue, just for the fun of it. If you guys ring in and get this one, I will die.” While nothing seemed to ever stop the *Jeopardy!* host, Trebek, directly to the camera, took one for the team and said: “We’re gonna take a break. I have to talk to them.”

**7 ● LET’S TRY, TV HOSTS WHO CAN DO THE ROBOT FOR \$400**  
 Until 2006, viewers hadn’t seen much in the way of choreography from the well-mannered host. But that all changed with the category Word Origins. “Take a whirl on the dance floor under these lights whose name comes from the Greek for the act of whirling,” hinted Trebek.  
 While the three contestants blinked in bewilderment, the smirking senior helped them out with his very own, never-before-seen, dance moves. “And you see them in a lot of bars and nightclubs. Strobe lights,” he offered and then spontaneously busted out a jerky arm move that would have made any Studio 54 icon proud.



**8 ● HOW ABOUT, JEOPARDY! PROPS FOR \$1,000**  
 When a contestant named Liza chose the category Bull for \$200, Trebek presented the clue with a bit of amplified performance art. The July 2012 episode is one of the few where the show’s art department needed to provide a prop, and this one came in the form of a bullhorn—something that clearly delighted Trebek. “Take a look at

me,” he bellowed into the horn. “Use this device to really get your point across.” The visual aide didn’t exactly help the contestants, however. “What is a megaphone?” one guessed incorrectly. “You are right. No, you’re not right,” Trebek clarified, reminding him that the category was literally called Bull. As for his new toy, Trebek added, “I’m just falling in love with it.”



**9 ● WHAT IS, THE FIRST TIME JEOPARDY! HAD A THREE-WAY TIE?**  
 Under Trebek’s tutelage, the hit show experienced its first three-way tie for first place on March 16, 2007. Contestants Scott Weiss, Jamey Kirby and Anders Martinson all ended the game with \$16,000 when they correctly answered the Final Jeopardy! clue: “1 of the men who shot her realized when he saw her body that she’d often waited on him at a café in Dallas.” The answer was “Who is Bonnie Parker?” and all three returned to compete again in the next episode. It was another 11 years until a game ended in a tiebreaker following the first two rounds of regular play.

**10 ● LET’S FINISH THE CATEGORY THINGS THAT GOT AWKWARD**  
 During ultimate champion Ken Jennings’ historic 74-show run, he chose Tool Time for \$200. Trebek presented him with the clue: “This term for a long-handled gardening tool can also mean an immoral pleasure seeker.” The one-time volunteer missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints responded, “What is a hoe?” He was incorrect. “No. Whoa,” demurred Trebek to the Brigham Young University graduate. “They teach you that in school in Utah, huh?” Indeed, the correct answer was, “What is a rake?”