

SWIFT–KELCE BREAKS INSTAGRAM

Super Bowl diss, monster dolls, Louvre heist, ‘6 7’ and ‘Cowboy Carter’ capture imagination

Edgy fun, catchy music and lots of silliness characterized 2025 in U.S. pop culture.

A MODERN DAY ‘LOVE STORY’

“Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married.”

That’s how pop icon **Taylor Swift** announced her engagement on Instagram to Kansas City Chiefs tight end **Travis Kelce** — and the world ate it up.

The mega-power couple revealed the news in August, leading to an explosion of reactions from around the globe. Their **Instagram** post quickly became one of the most-liked ever on the platform and even briefly crashed its servers as 14 million hit “like” in the first hour. The two haven’t announced a wedding date. When they do, it’s sure to once again crash the internet.



‘SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE’ HITS 50

More cowbell, anyone?

“**Saturday Night Live**” marked its 50-year milestone with a three-hour, on-air anniversary celebration recalling its influential legacy and indelible cultural impact.

The late-night comedy institution, which premiered in 1975, featured returning cast alumni, celebrity hosts and musical performances that showcased five decades of sketches and stars. The movie, “**Saturday Night**,” released in 2024, showcased the unlikely start of the show and kicked up excitement about its anniversary season. (Pictured is the show’s creator, **Lorne Michaels**.)



LAMAR’S HALFTIME SHOW DISS

This year’s **Super Bowl LIX** halftime show was a musical showdown with hip-hop superstar **Kendrick Lamar** bringing a high-energy performance to the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans.

SZA and **Samuel L. Jackson** made surprise appearances, but the standout moment came when Lamar took a jab at fellow-rapper **Drake** in his song “**Not Like Us**.”

The two have a longstanding feud, and the public diss helped make the performance the most-watched halftime show in history.



LABUBUS ARE THE TOY KING

This year’s toy trend crowned an unlikely champion: fuzzy, toothy, and ever-so creepy **Labubu monster dolls**.

What started as collectible blind-box figures from **Pop Mart** quickly spiraled into a global obsession, thanks to viral unboxing videos on TikTok and Instagram and celebrities including **Lady Gaga** and **Dua Lipa** proudly sharing their fixation with the dolls.

Some of the furry creatures even ended up fetching thousands of dollars online after stores sold out and inventory evaporated, including knock-off lookalikes.



LOUVRE ROBBERY INSPIRES CONSPIRACIES. SLEUTHING

A high-profile heist at the **Louvre** in October provided the perfect investigation for the world’s amateur sleuths.

Masked thieves pulled off a daylight robbery at the iconic Paris museum, stealing historic French crown jewels in under eight minutes. People reacted with a mix of disbelief, outrage and conspiracy theories.

The mystery escalated when The Associated Press ran a photo of a debonair man wearing a fedora and trench coat standing by police. Many presumed he was Paris’ ace detective there to crack the case. It was later revealed the man was just a 15-year-old French teenager visiting the museum with his family.



‘COWBOY CARTER’ A WINNER FOR BEYONCE

Beyoncé finally snagged the Album of the Year Grammy trophy for “**Cowboy Carter**” — her first win in the category after years of near-misses.

The genre-bending LP fusing country, soul, R&B and pop beat out a stacked field including albums by **André 3000**, **Billie Eilish** and **Taylor Swift**. The internet responded with viral videos of fans dancing in cowboy boots to the album’s songs. “I cried, I cheered, I put on a cowboy hat. Legendary,” one fan wrote on X.

The win cinched Beyoncé’s legacy as a music-industry trailblazer and songwriting mastermind.



CAUGHT ON CAMERA

What was meant to be a fun jumbotron moment at **Coldplay’s** Music of the Spheres tour turned into one of 2025’s most meme-able concert clips.

During a July show at Massachusetts’ Gillette Stadium, the massive arena screen landed on two fans romantically swaying together in the crowd — only for them to bolt from view the second they saw themselves live. “Either they’re having an affair or they’re just very shy,” frontman **Chris Martin** quipped from the stage.

His first guess was right. Within hours, the clip exploded across the internet to become one of the most viral moments of the year.

TIKTOK’S VANISHING ACT

On Jan. 18, **TikTok** briefly went dark in the U.S., leaving users staring at blank screens and creating a pop-culture emergency for the platform’s millions of devoted fans.

The hiccup was triggered by a national security law requiring TikTok’s Chinese-owned parent company to divest or shut down operations in the U.S. — and for a short moment, it looked like TikTok might disappear from app stores. But a last-minute order by President **Donald Trump** brought the site back from extinction.

Users celebrated its return like a long-lost friend, while others posted they used the timeout to rediscover hobbies like “staring at the wall.”



WHAT’S UP WITH ‘6 7’?

The kids are all saying it ... all the time. What does it mean? No one really knows.

The two simple numbers allegedly started as a snippet from rapper **Skrilla’s** track “**Doot Doot (6 7)**” used behind a TikTok montage about NBA star **LaMelo Ball’s** 6-foot-7 height. Inexplicably, it turned into a global inside joke. Kids began shouting it in classrooms, playgrounds and on social-media videos, complete with goofy hand gestures, for no reason other than it was ... fun? Some schools tried banning it; student-resource officers in Indiana issued fake tickets for saying it. It inspired **Dictionary.com** to crown “6 7” the **2025 Word of the Year** — despite its total lack of meaning.



KIMMEL ALMOST CANNED



Late-night TV got a dose of real-world drama when **Jimmy Kimmel** found himself at the center of a controversy that nearly cost him his show.

After a September monologue that included references to the assassination of right-wing activist **Charlie Kirk**,

ABC pulled the show indefinitely. The controversy intensified when **Donald Trump** celebrated the suspension and the FCC director hinted at government intervention and fines against ABC/Disney.

The company’s market value reportedly plummeted due to public backlash, leading **Disney** to reinstate Kimmel about a week later. The incident sparked debate about free speech, media control and presidential power.

2025's POP CULTURE LEADERS

MOVIES

Top grossing domestic box office movies:

- “**A Minecraft Movie**,” \$424 million
- “**Lilo & Stitch**,” \$424 million
- “**Superman**,” \$354 million
- “**Jurassic World: Rebirth**,” \$334 million
- “**Wicked: For Good**,” \$312 million

Source: Box Office Mojo



TV SERIES

Most popular streaming TV series:

- “**Stranger Things**,” Netflix
- “**The Abandons**” (Season 1), Netflix
- “**Pluribus**” (Season 1), AppleTV+
- “**It: Welcome to Derry**” (Season 1), HBO Max
- “**Spartacus: House of Ashur**” (Season 1), STARZ

Source: Rotten Tomatoes

MUSIC

Most listened-to musical artists in the U.S.:

- **Bad Bunny**
- **Taylor Swift**
- **The Weeknd**
- **Drake**
- **Billie Eilish**

Source: Spotify



PODCASTS

Most listened-to podcasts in the U.S.:

- “**The Joe Rogan Experience**”
- “**This Past Weekend with Theo Von**”
- “**The Mel Robbins Podcast**”
- “**Call Her Daddy**”
- “**Crime Junkie**”

Source: Spotify