The O.C. (O.C. stands for Orange County) is an American television drama/soap opera program broadcast on the Fox Network. It debuted on August 5, 2003, with the tagline, "The best new show of the fall is coming this summer." It airs on Thursdays at 8/9c on FOX. Season 2 began on November 4, 2004. The series has been noted for its music selections, which has helped some previously little-known bands gain a certain level of fame.

**Spoiler warning: Plot or ending details follow.**

**Plot**

The show revolves around two upper-class families in the southern California enclave of Newport Beach. The story follows Ryan Atwood, a troubled teenage boy from a dysfunctional family in Chino, California, who is transplanted to a high-class society focused on wealth and reputations. He is taken in under the care of Sandy Cohen, a successful lawyer who himself rose from humble roots; and his wife Kirsten, daughter of enormously-wealthy Orange County real estate mogul, Caleb Nichol. Ryan becomes good friends with the Cohens' geeky misfit son Seth, and falls in love with beautiful girl next door, Marissa Cooper.

Unlike other family-friendly teen shows, The O.C. takes on the gritty issues of the rich and wealthy in soap opera style. As Seth remarks to Ryan as they enter an extravagant Newport party, "Welcome to the dark side."

The show also often makes fun of its soap opera elements and often includes self-referential jokes. Notable examples include comments about Benjamin McKenzie's likeness to Russell Crowe, Peter Gallagher's eyebrows, and Mischa Barton's weight - things often cited by fans - and the show features its own soap opera called The Valley, which is similar to The O.C. An episode of the first season entitled "The L.A." introduced us to some of the actors from that show. Additionally, many of the characters make fun of their stereotypes, such as when Ryan escapes a conversation by saying, "I'm going to go brood silently."

**Season 1**

- Contains spoilers for viewers in countries where the first season hat not completely aired yet!

The first season ran from 2003 to 2004 and was comprised of 27 episodes. Notable plots included:

- Ryan's integration into Orange County society, and his growing relationship with Marissa.
- The destruction of Marissa's relationship with her boyfriend Luke, and his subsequent change in personality.
- Seth's love for Marissa's best friend Summer becoming a strange relationship.
- The marriage breakdown of Marissa's parents, Jimmy and Julie, as his fraud was made public.
- Sandy's jealousy over Kirsten and Jimmy's old relationship.
- Sandy's changing of jobs from public defender to private attorney, which soon saw him disillusioned with the industry.
- Sandy and Jimmy eventually going into business with a restaurant.
- Ryan dealing with manipulative Oliver, who tried to take Marissa away.
- The manipulations of Kirsten's father Caleb.
- Marissa dealing with a substance abuse problem.
- Seth having to choose between Summer and his good friend Anna.
- Julie's short-lived relationship with Luke, and subsequent engagement to Caleb - which many suspected was simply for money.
- Ryan's ex-girlfriend and good friend Theresa, from Chino, who came to stay for a while and whose abusive fiancé Eddie forced her to flee.
- Sandy's mother coming to stay and announcing that she was dying of cancer.
- Luke's discovery of his father's homosexuality and eventual moving away from Orange County.
- Kirsten's sister Hailey, notorious for not doing anything with her life, coming to stay and developing a relationship with Jimmy.

In the season finale, many events came to a head: Caleb and Julie married in a surprisingly uneventful ceremony, however Caleb later revealed to Sandy that he was on the verge of bankruptcy; Marissa moved in with Julie and Caleb but had redeveloped her drinking problem; Jimmy and
Season 2

- Contains spoilers for viewers in countries where the season has not aired yet!

The season is still ongoing, but so far, some of the major plots have included:

- Theresa lying to Ryan, telling him that she had a miscarriage.
- Seth's refusal to leave Portland, where he was staying with Luke and his father after running away in the season one finale.
- Seth and Ryan's eventual return to Newport Beach.
- Summer's new boyfriend, Zach, a "WASP version of Seth."
- Marissa's new boyfriend, DJ, the Cooper-Nichol family's (now ex) Hispanic yard worker, who breaks up with Marissa after realizing that they were going out just to anger Julie.
- Ryan's guidance counselor's attempt to prepare him for a career as an architect.
- Ryan's relationship with Lindsay, fellow physics student at Harbor High School on an academic scholarship, which complicates under the realization that Lindsay is actually Ryan's aunt.
- Seth's attempts to impress his women (showing Summer that he is not self centered and later proving to Alex that he could be a "bad boy")
- Caleb's arrest on bribery and related charges, ending with his acquittal after Renee testifies about their affair.
- Caleb's resignation as CEO of the Newport Group, and corresponding appointment of Julie as CEO and Kirsten as CFO.
- The introduction of Alex, a 17 year old who works at The Bait Shop with Seth, and their ensuing relationship.
- The discovery of Caleb's affair with Renee Wheeler, with whom he has a child, Lindsay, and attempts to develop a relationship with.
- Lindsay and the rest of the Cooper/Nichol/Cohen families finding out about Caleb's affair.
- Jimmy Cooper's decision to end his affair with Julie, and leaving for Maui.
- A memorable 20th Anniversary for Sandy and Kirsten.
- Alex's ex coming into town, and Seth finding out that Alex is bisexual.
- Caleb's failed attempt to get to know Lindsay.
- The development of a relationship between Alex and Marissa.
- Caleb suffering a minor heart attack.
- The arrival of Rebecca Bloom, the previous love of Sandy's life, and her father's deaths.

Cast

- Peter Gallagher as Sandy Cohen
- Kelly Rowan as Kirsten Cohen
- Benjamin McKenzie as Ryan Atwood
- Mischa Barton as Marissa Cooper
- Adam Brody as Seth Cohen
- Tate Donovan as Jimmy Cooper
- Mindy Clarke as Julie Cooper Nichol (Credited as Melinda Clarke)
- Rachel Bilson as Summer Roberts
- Alan Dale as Caleb Nichol
- Chris Carmack as Luke Ward (Season 1)

Melinda Clarke and Rachel Bilson were originally only to be guest cast members, as evidenced by their minimal appearances in the pilot episode. Despite both initially being unlikeable characters, they soon won the support of the fans and - beginning with episode 14 - were added to the main credits.

Alan Dale initially only guest starred in a few episodes, but his character similarly became a fan favorite and his appearances became increasingly regular. In the second season he became a main character.

Notable Recurring Cast

- Samaire Armstrong played Anna Stern, a female version of Seth who initially appeared for one episode but was brought back at fan request for several episodes of the first season.
- Bonnie Somerville played Rachel, a colleague of Sandy's, for several episodes of the first season.
- Rosalind Chao plays Dr. Kim, the dean of the local high school.
- Navi Rawat plays Theresa, an old girlfriend of Ryan's.
- Taylor Handley played Oliver Trask, a teenager who became obsessed with Marissa.
- Amanda Righetti plays Hailey, Kirsten's sister and love interest for Jimmy.
- Shailene Woodley plays Kaitlyn, Marissa's rarely seen younger sister.
- Eric Balfour played Eddie, Theresa's abusive fiancé.
- Linda Lavin plays Sophie Cohen, Sandy's mother, often referred to as "The Nana".
- Michael Nouri plays Dr. Neil Roberts, Summer's father.

The following cast members have appeared so far in season 2:

- Michael Cassidy plays Zach, Summer's new boyfriend.
- Nicholas Gonzalez played D.J., a gardener, one of Marissa's love interest.
- Shannon Lucio plays Lindsay Gardner, a fellow student and Ryan's new love interest.
- Olivia Wilde plays Alex Kelly, who works at the Bait Shop, who is Seth's, and then Marissa's, new love interest.
- Kathleen York plays Renee Wheeler, Lindsay's mother, who had an affair with Caleb Nichol.

Show Trivia

- Due to labor union salary rules about filming outside of Los Angeles County, The O.C. is actually filmed in Hermosa Beach (40 miles away from the actual Newport Beach) to reduce costs.
Though the show isn't shot on location, characters frequently mention popular OC hangouts like South Coast Plaza and Fashion Island. Newport Harbor High School is also a real high school as are other schools mentioned on the show, such as Mater Dei High School and UCI, Sage Hill School, an elite private school in the hills of Newport Coast, is also rumored to be inspiration for the show. The TV show's Balboa Wetlands appear to be based upon real-life Orange County's Bolsa Chica Wetlands.

Before the show aired, Orange County residents referred to their county by its full name. At first, the name of the show was met with scorn, but since then, some people call it "The O.C." as a joke.

The show is called "The O.C.", and not "Orange County" as originally planned, because a movie of that name was released shortly before the show premiered.

Orange County Supervisor Chris Norby went as far as to propose changing the name of Orange County's John Wayne Airport to The O.C. Airport, John Wayne Field but backed down the next day after his office received negative phone calls and emails from angry county residents.

### Episode list

#### Season 1

1. Pilot
2. The Model Home
3. The Gamble
4. The Debut
5. The Outsider
6. The Girlfriend
7. The Escape
8. The Rescue
9. The Heights
10. The Perfect Couple
11. The Homecoming
12. The Secret
13. The Best Chrismukkah Ever
14. The Countdown
15. The Third Wheel
16. The Links
17. The Rivals
18. The Truth
19. The Heartbreak
20. The Telenovela
21. The Goodbye Girl
22. The L.A.
23. The Nana
24. The Proposal
25. The Shower
26. The Strip
27. The Ties That Bind

#### Season 2

Season 2 returned on November 4, after the MLB World Series, with a time slot of 8/7 central on Thursdays (FOX). The DVD (season 1) was released on October 26, 2004, shortly before the premiere of the second season*. Note: Several or all of the episodes have not aired yet.

1. The Distance
2. The Way We Were
3. The New Kids On The Block
4. The New Era
5. The SnO.C.
6. The Chrismukkah that Almost Wasn't
7. The Family Ties
8. The Power of Love
9. The Ex-Factor
10. The Accomplice
11. The Second Chance
12. The Lonely Hearts Club
13. The Test
14. The Rainy Day Women
15. The Mallpisode
16. The Blaze of Glory
17. The Brothers Grim

#### Specials

The O.C. has had several television specials, detailing behind-the-scenes information, interviews, and bloopers.

- The O.C. - Obsess Completely (First Aired 9-16-04)
- Welcome to The O.C. - A Day In The Life (First Aired 9-23-04)

#### Around The World

The O.C. is as of February 2005 aired in the following countries and channels:

- Canada.....CTV
- USA.....FOX
- Australia...Ten
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Netherlands.....NET 5
- UK