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Creative Codes
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Weekly Project #1 (AI)

Prompt an LLM to write an essay covering any topic that you're interested in and know a lot about. Grade the essay as if you were a college professor grading a paper submitted by a student.

Prompt: Write an essay of 500–700 words analyzing the global rise of K-Pop. Your essay should explain the factors that contributed to its surge in worldwide popularity and discuss why this rise occurred. Use specific examples where relevant.

Essay (ChatGPT-Generated)

The Global Rise and Peak of K-Pop Popularity

Over the past two decades, Korean pop music (K-Pop) has evolved from a domestic entertainment product into a global cultural phenomenon. Its surge in popularity can be explained by a confluence of industry strategy, technological innovation, fan community organization, and cultural shifts in global media consumption. At its peak, K-Pop not only influenced global charts but reshaped the way the music industry thinks about distribution, marketing, and fan engagement.

A major factor in K-Pop's global spread was the Korean entertainment industry's early adoption of digital platforms. At a time when Western record labels were slow to embrace YouTube and streaming, K-Pop companies aggressively distributed high-budget music videos online, optimized for global consumption. Groups like Girls' Generation, BIGBANG, and EXO laid the groundwork, while BTS became the most striking example of global dominance. Their use of YouTube premieres, Twitter engagement, and fan-driven subtitling projects allowed international audiences to access Korean content without gatekeeping.

Equally important was the deliberate cultivation of fandom as an active, participatory culture. K-Pop fans do not merely consume music; they organize streaming parties, translate content, and fund social projects in the name of their idols. This highly engaged global network created an amplification loop that propelled K-Pop songs into worldwide visibility, from Billboard charts to Grammy stages. The intensity of fandom culture distinguished K-Pop from Western pop, where fan communities are often looser and less coordinated.

Musically, K-Pop succeeded by blending familiar global genres (hip hop, R&B, EDM, ballads) with a distinctly polished Korean performance aesthetic. The multilingual lyrics, synchronized choreography, and tightly managed "idol training systems" resulted in products that felt both

exotic and accessible. For international audiences seeking novelty without strangeness, K-Pop struck the right balance.

The peak of K-Pop's global hype coincided with BTS's unprecedented achievements between 2017 and 2021: selling out stadiums worldwide, addressing the UN, and topping the Billboard Hot 100 multiple times. This period also saw Blackpink headline Coachella and K-Pop collaborations with artists such as Halsey, Dua Lipa, and Lady Gaga, cementing its mainstream presence.

However, the saturation of the market and the inevitable limitations of global attention suggest that K-Pop's cultural "peak" may already have passed. While groups remain successful, the explosive novelty has diminished, and Western markets have partially reabsorbed attention toward regional artists. Nonetheless, the infrastructure, fandoms, and precedent set by K-Pop ensure that its influence will remain embedded in the global music industry for years to come.

In conclusion, the global peak of K-Pop's popularity was the result of digital innovation, fandom activism, hybrid musical styles, and the charisma of superstar groups. Its legacy lies not only in hit songs but in the transformation of music as a transnational, participatory culture.

My grading: This is a fairly strong and factual essay overall. It's well written and covers the major reasons behind K-Pop's global rise. That said, there are a few areas that hold it back. First, it lacks sources at the college level, I would expect citations to back up claims, whether from industry reports, news coverage, or academic writing. Second, the essay leans a bit more descriptive than analytical. For example, it talks about what K-Pop did well, but doesn't compare it much to why other regional pop forms, like J-Pop, didn't see the same kind of global breakout. Finally, the section on K-Pop's "decline" feels underdeveloped. It's mentioned briefly, but without enough exploration of whether this is a temporary dip, market saturation, or a shift in how global audiences consume music. **B-**

For extra credit: Skip ahead in the syllabus and pick a homework assignment for the topic you know least about. Try to complete that assignment now with the help of an LLM. Document your process and results.

I chose week 9 because working with interfaces, especially designing for mobile or WebVR, is unfamiliar to me. I don't usually think about the sketch or app changes depending on the device. So this felt like the least comfortable option.

1. I asked ChatGPT: "Take a simple p5.js sketch and redesign it for mobile display. It should respond to touch input instead of mouse input, and text/controls should be readable on a phone screen."

2. The LLM gave me code for a bouncing ball sketch that used touches[] instead of mouseX/mouseY. It also added responsive canvas sizing (windowWidth, windowHeight) and explained how to adjust font sizes dynamically.

   Here is the code:

```
<!doctype html>
<html>
  <head>
    <meta charset="utf-8" />
    <script src="https://cdnjs.cloudflare.com/ajax/libs/p5.js/1.9.2/p5.min.js"></script>
  </head>
  <body>
    <script>
      function setup() {
        createCanvas(windowWidth, windowHeight);
      }

      function draw() {
        background(240);
        fill(50, 100, 200);
        noStroke();

        // If you're on a phone, touches[] is used.
        // On desktop, mouseX/mouseY works.
        if (touches.length > 0) {
          circle(touches[0].x, touches[0].y, 80);
        } else {
          circle(mouseX, mouseY, 80);
        }
      }

      // Make canvas resize when the window changes size
      function windowResized() {
        resizeCanvas(windowWidth, windowHeight);
      }
    </script>
  </body>
</html>
```

3. On my laptop, the sketch worked fine. When I tried on my phone, the ball responded to touch but the controls were too small, and the ball was laggy.

4. I asked: “How can I make the controls finger-friendly and reduce lag on mobile?”. The LLM suggested larger buttons styled with CSS, and lowering the frame rate or particle count to save performance.

5. I ended up with a version that:
    - Resizes the canvas to fit the phone screen.
    - Uses touches[] so I can drag the ball with my finger.
    - Has big buttons at the bottom to reset or change colors.
    - Keeps the framerate stable by limiting visual effects.

6. Results: The final sketch is simple but demonstrates a clear “interface redesign”:
    - It’s mobile-first (touch interactions instead of mouse).
    - It uses large, easy-to-tap buttons.
    - It adapts to different screen sizes.
    - This shows how the same project can feel very different depending on the device you target.

This shows how the same project can feel very different depending on the device you target. The LLM was useful in quickly converting desktop interactions into mobile-friendly ones, but its first draft ignored usability. I had to push it to think about finger size, screen density, and performance trade-offs. Even then, I didn’t fully understand why the framerate dipped, so I just trusted the model’s advice to reduce complexity. This showed me both the strength and the limitation of working with an AI helper.