#### The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
**Designer:** Peter Blake  
**Total reader votes:** 1,202

The cover was originally going to show the Beatles playing in a park. This slowly evolved into the final concept where the band are inside cardboard cutouts of their famous. The band originally planned an including an image of Gandhi, Jesus Christ and Adolf Hitler. Cutouts were even taken off the cover and Giacometti went for the look over concerns that Hitler wouldn't print the album. Giacometti got Ditko to fix a few issues - a decision he probably lived to regret.

#### Pink Floyd - Dark Side Of The Moon
**Designer:** Hipgnosis  
**Total reader votes:** 933

Hipgnosis had designed several of Pink Floyd's previous albums, with controversial results; the band's record company had been impressed with the simple design that featured words. Their initial inspiration for Dark Side was a photo of a prism on a plane on plane. It was black and white, with a corner that was going through it. Hipgnosis presented the prism idea along with some other ideas to the band (including a design that featured the Marvel Comics hero the Silver Surfer).

#### The Beatles, 'Abbey Road'
**Designer:** John Kosh  
**Total reader votes:** 729

Beatles nuts who believed that Paul McCartney died around 1967 and was replaced by a double were found a lot to examine on this cover. They saw the picture as a funeral procession: John as the preacher, Ringo as the mourner, George as the gravedigger and Paul as the corpse. Iain Macmillan shot the cover on August 8th, 1969, outside of Abbey Road studios. The shoot involved just six frames and 10 minutes of work. Tourists flock to the spot, and it's been parodied countless times – sometimes by members of the Beatles themselves.

#### The Clash, 'London Calling'
**Designer:** Ray Lowry  
**Total reader votes:** 695

Pennie Smith was snapping photos of the Clash at New York's Palladium when she captured one of the most iconic images in rock history. Paul Simonon was annoyed by the relatively quiet audience, so he began smashing his bass guitar against the floor. Clash singer Joe Strummer loved the photo, but Smith tried to convince him it was too out of focus for the cover. The pink and green lettering of the design was an intentional echo of Elvis Presley's 1956 debut album.

#### Nirvana, ‘Nevermind’
**Designer:** Robert Fisher  
**Total reader votes:** 755

Spencer Elden, the naked baby on the cover, said he feels weird about his bizarre role in history. “It’s kind of creepy that many people have seen me naked,” he said. But what does this cover mean? “Kurt was intellectual and deep-thinking about his work,” says Fisher. “I must assume that the naked baby symbolised his own innocence, the water represented an alien environment, and the hook and dollar bill his creative life entering into the corporate world of rock music.”

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**Reader’s poll:**

**The 5 best album covers... ever.**

1. **The Beatles - Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band**
2. **Pink Floyd - Dark Side Of The Moon**
3. **The Beatles, 'Abbey Road'**
4. **The Clash, 'London Calling'**
5. **Nirvana, ‘Nevermind’**

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**Four Six Three**

November 2018
The tube map almost never made it out of its creator’s notebook. The designer was Harry Beck, a young draughtsman who drew electrical circuits for the Underground. Beck’s biographer, Ken Garland, befriended him in the 1950s, and before the designer’s death in 1974 he uncovered the story behind the creation of what Beck called “the diagram”.

“As a native of a small village in Devon and moving to London to study art, I found the metropolis impossible to navigate,” Garland recalls. “I would get on the tube and see Harry’s diagram. London suddenly made sense, and so I asked people at the college if they knew who the designer was.”
Looking at the old map of the railways, it occurred to me that it might be possible to tidy it up by straightening the lines, experimenting with diagonals and evening out the distances between stations.

Harry laid out London’s Underground routes as he would a circuit board, and took it to the publicity department. He told Garland: “Looking at the old map of the railways, it occurred to me that it might be possible to tidy it up by straightening the lines, experimenting with diagonals and evening out the distances between stations.”

“He was modest,” recalls Garland. “He’d quietly taken the diagram to them and said: ‘You may be interested in this.’ The publicity chiefs replied: ‘You can’t do it like this – the public will be really confused by the idea, no one will understand it.’”

His idea was dismissed as ridiculous – people couldn’t understand why it wasn’t geographically accurate – and later he was laid off. Beck’s dismissal made him suspicious of London Underground. He chose to sell the idea to them as a freelance (for just ten guineas), giving him control over the future integrity of his design. But as work in his old office began to pick up, his former colleagues remembered him; they had appreciated his help in the tube workers’ orchestra and, in 1933, he was back on board and pitching his idea again.

Garland continues: “Beck would not take no for an answer. He went back with a revised copy, and finally they agreed to produce a small print run of 1,000 fold-out versions, put them in central London train stations and ask passengers for comments. One of the publicity team went to Piccadilly Circus and asked staff if anyone had been interested in the diagram. The maps had gone within an hour. Beck had been proved correct, and the publicity department arranged for a print run of 750,000.”

Harry Beck was good news for the tube. He was constantly seeking to improve its clarity, and when the publicity department realized they had a hit on their hands, he had to fend off “helpful” suggestions from tube bosses.

“For the best part of 30 years, his home was turned over to the map,” recalls Garland. “There were sketches all over the place. The front room would often have a massive copy spread out on the floor for Harry to pore over. His wife Nora would find, when making their bed, a pile of scribbled notes under the pillow that Harry had been working on in the middle of the night.”

But in 1959, after nearly three decades of working on the diagram, he was unceremoniously dumped from the project. Garland explains: “Harry went one morning to his local station and there on the wall was a diagram that was not done by him. It was devastating. To add to the insult, he thought it was a crude and ineffective version of his own diagram. It was signed by Harold F Hutchison, not a designer but head of the publicity department.” According to Garland, Beck had become known in the publicity department for being “difficult” when it came to the diagram, and there were moves to remove his stewardship. Beck embarked on a letter-writing campaign to take back control of his life’s work. It was fruitless. London Underground accepted no argument that the current map was influenced by his work, or that it was an inferior design.

When Beck fell ill, his piles of sketches were destined for the dustbin, but Garland stepped in and saved them – recognizing that they were crucial to understanding its development. Among the papers Garland saved were the original diagrams. Beck’s map was the catalyst, says Garland. “He was not influenced by contemporary art,” says Garland. “He knew little or nothing about it.”

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Garland decided to keep the Beck documents. “Beck embarked on a letter-writing campaign to take back control of his life’s work. It was fruitless. London Underground accepted no argument that the current map was influenced by his work, or that it was an inferior design.

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Harry Beck’s London Underground map has been reproduced as a consumer item many times more than can be counted — and often in some unpredictable ways.