

Clone Trooper vs Stormtrooper: 5 Key Distinctions

Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers are among the most iconic henchmen in film history. Their design, their intimidating numbers, and yes, their inability to hit their target, made them incredibly memorable during the original *Star Wars* trilogy. The more content the franchise has released, however, the more attention has been paid to the differences between Stormtroopers vs. Clone Troopers, and the bleak circumstances in which many of them are recruited.

While they may appear similar on the surface, and one serves as a precursor to another, the Stormtrooper vs. Clone Trooper discussion has a lot to do with how both groups came into existence, and the slight tweaks in design with regard to their uniforms. It may seem like a small distinction to a casual fan, but a basic understanding of what makes them different will allow for a better understanding of *Star Wars* overall.

1. Stormtroopers have plain black-and-white uniforms

Let's start with the most obvious distinction between Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers, which is their respective uniform design. To many, Stormtroopers are instantly recognizable due to their uniquely shaped, black-and-white uniforms. There are variants of the uniform that were introduced in *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes* (1980) and *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi* (1983), which were tailored to specific weather conditions, but these still maintain black-and-white color schemes and helmet designs that easily set them aside from Clone Trooper attire.

[In a 2019 interview with WIRED](#), Lucasfilm Vice President Doug Chiang talked about the color scheme, and why *Star Wars* creator George Lucas was adamant about maintaining the black-and-white. "George wanted to create this iconic imagery that looked like living skeletons, and that's why you have the stark black and white," Chiang explained. "And so when you see

the white armor coming out of a black room, you just see the armor and it's a very terrifying sort of moment for you."

There have been some exceptions to this rule over the years, with the most notable being Captain Phasma (Gwendolyn Christie), but her distinct, metallic-colored uniform was meant to stand out to mark her as a highly ranked, unique character. Even when Stormtroopers get revived by the First Order in the Disney trilogy, they maintain their classic, minimal look.

2. Clone Troopers can have colorful uniforms to establish rank

The first time we see Clone Troopers in action is during *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* (2002), which is fitting given that they are named in the title. While their different, sharper designs make them distinct from Stormtroopers from the moment they appear, Clone Troopers also have another defining factor that is especially prominent during *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005): uniform colors.

The basic Clone Trooper shares the Stormtrooper's purely black-and-white color scheme, but higher-ranking soldiers are set apart from the rest thanks to the colorful padding and painted designs on their armor.

The basic color rank codes for Clone Troopers are:

- Green = Sergeant
- Blue = Lieutenant
- Red = Captain
- Yellow = Commanders

Clone Troopers also use color to signify different groups. For example, the Clone Troopers that serve under Green Company are easily recognizable due to the green markings on their chest piece and helmet. Then there are the Clone ordnance specialists, which are more commonly

referred to as bomb squad troopers and can be spotted a mile away thanks to their primarily orange uniform.

There is also a Jedi component to Clone Trooper colors. During the Clone Wars, Jedi Knights were appointed to General status, which meant each of them commanded a squadron of Clone Troopers in battle. The colors on the uniforms of these Clone Troopers are meant to advertise who their General is, whether it be a blue stripe for Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) or an orange one for Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor).

3. Stormtroopers were created to maintain control

Tactically speaking, Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers are flip sides of the same coin. Stormtroopers came into being after the Galactic Empire was established, and Palpatine had overthrown the Senate. In other words, they were meant to ensure that the Galactic Empire maintained power over the rest of the galaxy.

Stormtroopers were seen by many civilians as the "face" of the Galactic Empire, because they were the ones who would do the bidding of the Emperor and carry out heinous acts of violence. They are, by definition, oppressors, which is something that was made abundantly clear in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977), when they murder a group of Jawas, as well as [the aunt and uncle of Luke Skywalker](#) (Mark Hamill).

Despite their feared reputation throughout the galaxy, Stormtroopers live in miserable conditions. The *Star Wars* novels *Phasma* and *Lost Stars* detail the struggles that they face when they are not on the battlefield, which includes sleeping in cramped, barely livable conditions and eating subpar rations.

4. Clone Troopers were created to take control

In contrast to Stormtroopers, Clone Troopers were created under more noble circumstances. At least, it seemed that way. They were mass-produced (more on that later) and sent into battle to defend the Republic from the Separatists droid army, and they would eventually serve as the inspiration for the struggle being labeled the "Clone Wars." They worked under the Jedi Knights and were on the 'right' side of the conflict, so far as the viewer is concerned.

The truth behind the Clone Troopers came to light in *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* (2006). It turns out that the Clone Troopers were engineered by Palpatine, with the intention of turning them against the Jedi Knights. They were initially posed as defenders, but when Palpatine placed Order 66, it became clear that the true intention of Clone Troopers was to seize power in the name of the Galactic Empire.

How and when the transition from the Clone Troopers in the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy to the Stormtroopers in the original trilogy took place was unclear, but recent shows like *The Mandalorian* and *Andor* have provided some answers. Basically, the Clone Troopers got older, and it was determined that they were too expensive to produce and raise. A different process led to a rebrand, and the Galactic Empire redesignated their soldiers as Stormtroopers.

5. Clones vs. kidnapped human beings

It's not discernible from looking at them, but the ways in which Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers were raised is so radically different that it's worth noting. Clone Troopers are, unsurprisingly, clones of the bounty hunter Jango Fett, produced in mass quantities to "defend" the Republic. Their sole reason for existing is to follow orders, so they are put through extensive psychological and physical training exercises when they are children. They're also required to follow the Command Code without hesitation or doubt.

When the Galactic Empire determined that it was too expensive to keep making clones, they decided to kidnap civilian children and put them through the same rigorous training programs against their will. The aforementioned *Star Wars* novel, *Phasma*, details this harrowing

process, and Finn (John Boyega) alludes to it several times during the Disney trilogy. In short, children are brainwashed into pledging their allegiance to the Galactic Empire.

The biggest difference between Stormtroopers and Clone Troopers, on an ethical level, is that the former are made up of human beings who are brainwashed into conscription, while the latter is made up of clones specifically designed for combat. Neither are ideal, but Stormtroopers definitely have a more dubious process.

Regardless of whether you prefer the Stormtroopers over the Clone Troopers, you can now tell the difference between them whenever you watch their respective outfits, the Galactic Empire and the First Order, get defeated. If only they had been taught how to aim their blasters better.