



BIOGRAPHY



JANELLE JAMES

Ava Coleman on ABC's "Abbott Elementary"

Janelle James stars in the scene-stealing role of Ava Coleman in the Emmy® Award-nominated ABC comedy series "Abbott Elementary" that will return for a fifth season on Oct. 1, 2025. James continues to receive accolades for her performance, including four consecutive Emmy nominations for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, as well as nominations for Golden Globe®, Independent Spirit, Critics' Choice and Gotham Awards. She also earned the 2023 NAACP Image Award for Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, nominations for the 2024 and 2025 NAACP Image Awards for Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, and three nominations for the Television Critics' Association Award for Individual Achievement in Comedy. Up next, James will be featured in the adult animation series "Strip Law" that is set to premiere on Netflix on Feb. 20, 2026.

Previously, James served as both a writer and actor for Showtime's "Black Monday" and Apple's animated series, "Central Park." Her stand-up career has seen her tour with Chris Rock, Amy Schumer and David Cross, among others. James' latest stand-up special is featured in Season 3 of Netflix's "The Stand Ups." Her comedic chops have seen her featured as one of Variety's Top Ten Comedians to Watch in 2020 and a "New Face" at the Just For Laughs Festival Montreal in 2016 while also being named one of The 50 Most Funny People in Brooklyn in the same year. Her debut comedy album, "Black and Mild," was released on all major streaming networks in 2017 to rave reviews.

James' hosting duties have included the 2023 Writers Guild of America Awards and the 2022 ABC game show, "The Final Straw." She also took over the Eugene Mirman Comedy Festival, now known as the Janelle James Comedy Festival, in Brooklyn.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

BIRTHDATE: September 23

HOMETOWN: New York, New York

-- 2025-2026 --