do the

"knowledge"

a standards based hip-hop learning guide

developed by Art Sanctuary with support from the Samuel Fels Foundation
About Art Sanctuary:

Art Sanctuary, located in North Philadelphia, uses the power of black art to transform individuals, unite groups of people, and enrich, and draw inspiration from the inner city. Art Sanctuary was founded in June 1998 by author and educator Lorene Cary with a vision to bring the creators of contemporary black arts into the community. Housed in the Church of the Advocate, a National Historic Landmark in the heart of North Philadelphia, Art Sanctuary programming exists to create a community curriculum that enables groups, both large and small, to explore fine art by enjoying it, studying it, and creating it. For more information, visit www.artsanctuary.org.

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INTRODUCTION

About Art Sanctuary

Art Sanctuary, located in North Philadelphia, uses the power of black art to transform individuals, unite groups of people, and enrich, and draw inspiration from the inner city. Art Sanctuary was founded in June 1998 by author and educator Lorene Cary with a vision to bring the creators of contemporary black arts into the community. Housed in the Church of the Advocate, a National Historic Landmark in the heart of North Philadelphia, Art Sanctuary programming exists to create a community curriculum that enables groups, both large and small, to explore fine art by enjoying it, studying it, and creating it. Our aim is to connect individuals and communities to artistic excellence – in hip-hop, literature, dance, visual art, and music. We believe that a thriving arts series and arts education – to old and young, at basic and advanced levels, across class lines – puts the power of the artists presentations at the centers of people’s intellects and emotions.

Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this hip-hop curriculum guide is to validate the experiences and knowledge of urban youth in more traditional academic contexts, especially the secondary school context. In keeping with this purpose, the goals of the Hip Hop 101 Curriculum Guide are two-fold. The first goal is to develop students’ ability to effectively read, write, speak, listen, and think. The second goal is to promote critical thinking about music, art, and culture broadly and hip-hop music, art, and culture specifically. When combined, these two goals encourage students to think about and organize their generational specific knowledge and articulate it in ways that are aligned with more traditionally accepted forms of knowledge. In short, this curriculum encourages students to make use of the knowledge that they bring with them into the classroom while encouraging teachers to recognize youth’s experiences and ideas as legitimate.

Using hip-hop as a cultural centerpiece, students explore various styles, genres, and techniques of thinking, reading, and writing as a means to develop and enhance literacy skills. This portfolio based curriculum and learning activity guide takes 8th – 12th grade students and teachers through 12 fun-filled, academically rigorous lessons that discuss the artistic merits of one of contemporary America’s most popular forms of expression – hip-hop. Students that successfully complete all lessons will have a writing portfolio that illustrates the artistic and literary merits of
hip-hop culture.

**Hip-Hop in the Classroom**

This curriculum and activity guide furthers the mission of Art Sanctuary by providing teachers and students with an organized means of exploring and learning about hip-hop culture. While it is certainly helpful for teachers to be familiar with hip hop music and culture when teaching it, it is not necessarily a prerequisite. Instead, for those unfamiliar with hip hop, we encourage you to learn with students. The guide is designed under the premise the students and teachers should learn together. Much of the curriculum guide requires that teachers share in the learning experience through dialogue with students and allowing students to discuss, debate, research, and arrive at their own conclusions. Teachers serve as guides in the process.

We recommend that you become familiar with this guide before introducing the lessons to your students. Contained within is a wealth of information to help you understand how to facilitate each lesson. Inside you will find general explanations, a glossary of important terms, and references to additional resources that may proved helpful in using hip-hop in the classroom. Lastly, we encourage you to add you own flavor to this guide. Remember, this is a guide and you should be creative in making this curriculum guide work for your class. So whether you are an avid hip hop listener, a hip-hop artist, or have very little knowledge of hip-hop, it is our hope that you will understand it more as you move through this guide and participate in learning with your students.

**Curriculum and Learning Activity Guide Organization**

This curriculum guide is organized into three interrelated sections. Section one consists of lesson plans for teachers. Lessons are clustered according to complimentary subject matter to create learning units. Each lesson is accompanied by a brief introduction and background information about the topic discussed, three or more learning activities (introductory activity, in-depth activity, and concluding activity), and suggestions for assessment. The second section of the guide contains supplementary materials that are useful for lesson implementation. This section includes student worksheets, citations for additional sources, song lyrics, essays, etc. that can easily be printed and/or photocopied. The final section of the curriculum guide contains information about academic standards that are addressed throughout
the curriculum guide, key vocabulary terms.

Section One – The Lessons

Within each lesson in this curriculum guide, teachers can expect to find a “basic lesson information box;” clearly stated goals and objectives and background information; three or more standards based learning activities, and suggestions for assessing learning. In addition, selected lessons contain “enhanced learning activities” that suggest how technology, performance, presentations, and other learning supplements can be integrated into the lesson and/or learning activities for students that have access to additional resources.

Each lesson contains basic information, a description of the lesson, and necessary background information so to familiarize teachers with the lesson. The “basic information box” is an easy reference tool for teachers to see what each lesson entails. These colorful and easily identifiable boxes contain the title for each lesson, identify which subject areas the lesson is most appropriate for, identify academic standards met, and approximations of the amount of time each activity should take. Within each lesson, learning goals and objectives are also identified. Descriptions of lessons including stated goals and objectives and brief background information are also provided.

Learning activities are the centerpiece of the curriculum. Typically, the lesson begins with an introductory activity that utilizes hip-hop to engage students. The introductory activity essentially assesses where students current knowledge of the material that will be covered in the lesson. Once students have been “hooked,” and teachers understand what students already know, teachers and students move into learning activities that are based on identified academic standards. This in-depth “exploring the issue” learning activity is designed to build academic skills that are cross-cutting and that will help students perform well in activity three. Activity three, the “concluding activity,” asks students to integrate their previous knowledge (of hip-hop) and apply it to writing, speaking, and thinking about new ideas and concepts they have encountered in the lesson. Each lesson also has important vocabulary terms that students should know as well as suggestions for assessing students.

This guide promotes cultural literacy, language literacy, and media literacy. We encourage teachers to use the guide in its entirety. While each unit can stand alone, this guide is conceptualized as a curriculum guide to teach students to think, read, speak, and write about hip-hop in several ways. Therefore, the units and
lessons are organized in a fashion that allow students to build on skills and concepts learned in previous lessons so to reinforce the academic content of each lesson and acquire multiple literacies. The accumulation of knowledge and multiple literacies is useful in helping students reach the stated goals of the curriculum guide and perform well academically. When completing all lessons is not possible, teachers can refer to the “basic information box” to find which lessons are most useful for their subject area, learning goals, available resources and time.

**Section Two – Supplemental Materials**

The second section of the curriculum and activity guide provides teachers with student worksheets and handouts to accompany each lesson. These accompanying documents make implementing lessons easy for teachers by providing worksheets and directions that are student friendly. Teachers can simply photo-copy the accompanying documents that guide student learning. This section also includes recommendations of web-based and printed resources that are useful to teachers who may be unfamiliar with particular lessons or who desire more detailed background information,

**Section Three – Academic Standards**

This third and very important section of the curriculum guide is a teacher’s dream come true. While many hip-hop curriculum guides do not make clear connections between academic standards and lessons, this section of the guide makes these connections very clear. This section also includes an alphabetized glossary of academic terms to accompany the “vocabs” found in the lessons of section one. The curriculum and activity guide lessons are developed based on the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education’s standards for “Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening” and “Arts and Humanities,” but also closely aligned with other national standards.
The Elements and Eras of Hip Hop Culture
by Dr. James Peterson

In the last 30 years Hip Hop culture has developed from a relatively unknown and largely ignored inner city culture into a global phenomenon. The foundational elements of Hip Hop Culture (DJ-ing, MC-ing, Breakdance, and Graffiti/Graf) are manifest in youth culture across the globe, including Japan, France, Germany, South Africa, Cuba, and the UK. Considering its humble beginnings in the South and West Bronx, the global development of Hip Hop is an amazing cultural feat. Yet its global popularity suggests and reflects its culturally diverse origins. Moreover, the presence of rap music and other elements of the culture in marketing and advertising signal American mainstream acceptance. In fact, it’s dominance in popular culture almost hides the negative and at times malicious treatment of Hip Hop in the public sphere. With all of its attendant complexities and apparent contradictions, Hip Hop is one of the most difficult cultural phenomena to define.

In 1967, Clive Campbell also known as the legendary DJ Kool Herc, immigrated to NYC and settled in the West Bronx. Kool Herc was born in Kingston Jamaica, the birthplace of another great musical forefather, the legend, Bob Marley. Herc, borrowed elements of yard culture in Jamaica: especially the penchant for throwing spontaneous parties outside (i.e. public spaces). For the most part, scholars and historians agree that DJ Kool Herc is one of the most notable founding figures of Hip Hop culture. He DJ-ed some of the earliest hip hop jams, occasionally in basements, but usually outside in the streets or in the park. Kool Herc was famous for his 6 feet tall speakers, nicknamed the Herculoids. He himself stands about 6 foot 5 inches tall—literally and figuratively a giant in Hip Hop.

By the mid-70s DJ Kool Herc’s parties were becoming well known in New York City. In fact Hip Hop ‘jams’ were an affordable alternative to pricey disco clubs. As early Hip Hop DJs began to develop the various techniques of early DJ-ing, the potential of the culture emerged in excitement amongst young B-boys and B-girls. The early Hip Hop DJs invented the concept of scratching, skillfully manipulating vinyl records to sonically rupture recorded music and play fragments of it back at will. Even before scratching was developed, DJs isolated and looped break beats from popular records. Break beats, the portion of a song where the music and vocals take a back seat to the beat, became the signature sound of Hip Hop, hence the evolution of Break Boys or B-Boys who relished the extension of the most danceable moments of popular soul and disco music. Early B-Boys would battle and
through battling the various technical aspects of Breakdancing were honed and developed. There were several crews of young folk who participated in the development of Break Dancing. One of the earliest and now most legendary Breaking crews is the Rock Steady Crew. Bronx b-boys (b-boys/girls are currently known as imbibers of Hip Hop culture that creatively participate in 2 or more primary elements of the culture), Jimmy D. and Jojo established the legendary Rock Steady Crew; joined by Crazy Legs and Lenny Len in 1979).

In addition to DJs and break dancers, there were also MCs of/at these early Hip Hop jams. As a point of clarification, all MCs rap, but not all rappers are MCs. A rapper is an entertainer. An MC is an artist who is committed to perfecting the crafts of lyrical mastery and call-response audience interaction. MCs were not initially (as they are now) the front men and women of Hip Hop culture. Noted MC, KRS ONE once remarked that as an MC he was happy to just carry his DJs crates. These days Hip Hop culture, especially rap music, tends to marginalize most of the foundational elements of the culture and over emphasizes the role of the MC which stands for Master of Ceremonies in standard parlance. However, according to Rakim, an MC who is widely referred to simply as “the god,” ‘MC means move the crowd’ or ‘Mic Control.’ MCs hone their skills through freestyling and battling as well. Free style rhyming is when an MC raps without aid of previous rhymes committed to paper or memory. Much like their Jazz improvising counterparts, a free-styling MC pulls lyrical rifts and cadences from an ever-evolving repertoire in order to perform spontaneous rhymes that reflect their immediate environment and/or address the present opponent. Battling is when MCs engage in lyrical combat in a series of discursive turns. In fact battles between MCs have become legendary and at times notoriously violent on and off record.

The final foundational element of Hip Hop culture is represented by the graffiti artist. To many people, graffiti artist is an oxymoron. Graffiti is vandalism. It is against the law to spray paint names and images on public property. Somewhat unlike the other elements of Hip Hop culture, graffiti completely predates the development of the other three elements. Graffiti actually dates back to Old World, pre-modern times. But there are some distinct qualities to how and why graffiti has developed in Hip Hop culture. The earliest documented Graf moniker belongs to Greece born, Demetrius from 183 Street in the Bronx. He made himself famous by tagging Taki 183 throughout the five boroughs of NYC via subway trains. This moment is distinct for several reasons. 1) Considering Hip Hop’s global prominence
in the early part of the new millennium, the multi-cultural origins of Hip Hop certainly explain some of its universal appeal. A Greek Graf writer fits in perfectly with a diverse array of cultural constituents, including African Americans, Jamaicans, West Indians, Puerto Ricans, Asians, Dominicans, Cubans, etc. 2) Several scholars have referred too much of the activity of early adopters of Hip Hop culture as a process of reclaiming public spaces. Sometimes this reclamation is done through sound; consider the boom boxes of yesteryear or the current boom-box-like sound systems in cars. But sometimes this is done through the writing of names and images on/in public spaces. 3) The use of the subway, as a means to circulate the tag, Taki 183, throughout the five boroughs was a masterstroke. It underscored the urge to manipulate public property and services for the benefit of youth culture and in particular here, the processes of self identification amongst inner city youth.

In addition to the four foundational elements of Hip Hop culture (DJ, MC, Graf, and Dance), there are several secondary elements of the culture as well. These elements include fashion/modes of dress, entrepreneurship, and complex systems of knowledge (particularly elaborate language and other linguistic phenomenon). Fashion has always been a component of Hip Hop culture. After all, the DJs, B-boys, B-girls, and MCs had serious dress codes. Some of the earliest brands of choice were Adidas, Puma, Lee Jeans, Cazal (eyeglasses) and Kangol (hats). Some of the early graf artists would spray paint names and designs onto sweatshirts, jackets, sneakers and hats. So a distinct sense of fashion was present early. As the culture grew in popularity, fashion became the outward sign of Hip Hop culture’s entrepreneurial sensibility. Hip Hop clothing brands such as Karl Kani, Cross Colours, and eventually Phat Farm, FUBU, and Rocawear all signified the fact that youth influenced by and living through Hip Hop culture were deeply invested in economic empowerment most readily manifest in owning one’s own business.

Entrepreneurship should not be confused with aspirations to ‘bling.’ Bling Bling came into vogue during the Platinum era of Hip Hop (which will be discussed below), and actually reflects earlier proclivities of African American culture; what Zora Neale Hurston referred to as ‘the will to adorn.’ Wearing platinum jewelry and sporting gold teeth can be viewed as a cultural strategy by young people to floss their financial means and to thereby overcome social invisibility in a materialist society. It is a means of self-identification and self-promotion that harkens back to early African American and American traditions.

The Bling Bling – Will to Adorn trajectory underscores the knowledge element
of Hip Hop culture. Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone – KRS ONE: a simple acronym functioning as the MC moniker of Kris Parker, formally of BDP (Boogie Down Productions), gestures toward the value of knowledge especially for the initiates of Hip Hop. Outsiders or even younger Hip Hoppers may not have heard of KRS ONE. They may not know who he is. They may not know that he started his recording career with the group BDP. They may not know what BDP stands for; they may not know that the Boogie Down is a nickname for the Bronx, the birthplace of Hip Hop. This is one example (albeit a very simple one) of thousands of linguistic cues, local references, acronyms, and code names that require constituents of Hip Hop culture to be “in the know.” ‘If you don’t know – you better ask somebody.’

All of this creative culturally diverse energy tends to mask some of the socioeconomic factors that set the stage for Hip Hop’s early developments. Note here, that one of the most promising scholars of Hip Hop culture, Imani Perry, warns against deficiency models for defining Hip Hop. That is to say, the following discussion about the socioeconomic contexts for Hip Hop culture is not an attempt to account for the developments of Hip Hop in total. The significance of various socioeconomic factors in the various developments of the culture will be readily apparent.

The outsourcing of high tech jobs has become an issue in the first decade of the new millennium, but outsourcing US jobs has been a challenge for working class and impoverished folks since the early 1970s. In the 1960s most US urban centers were economically sound based upon huge manufacturing industries. As these industries outsourced labor and developed advanced technological means to manufacture their products, unemployment increased. In New York City, this de-industrialization, was complemented by the erasure of public school support for the arts and musical training. In the Bronx, the construction of a beltway for commuters displaced thousands of residences. The combination of these economic factors created a stifling environment for young people in inner cities in the mid-1970s. With residential depression and few outlets for artistic expression, young people were relegated to an economically and artistically stagnant environment. For ready reference, view the 1982 film, Wild Style. Not only is the film a documentary journey through the early days of Hip Hop culture; but it is shot in the Bronx, and unless you visited the south Bronx circa 1979, these are some of the most authentic images of the setting for the early developments of Hip Hop culture.

There are several other dates and historical figures of note. In 1974, Afrika Bambaataa transformed one of New York City’s largest and most violent gangs into
Hip Hop culture’s first organization the ZULU nation. Even today the ZULU nation is one of the most publicly active, communally oriented organizations in Hip Hop. Bambaataa along with DJ Busy Bee Starski are credited with coining the term Hip Hop (in reference to those original parties/jams) in the same year. In 1975, Grand Wizard Theodore discovered the scratch, that monumental DJ-ing technique where DJs deliberately rupture a vinyl sound recording to produce the now legendary scratching sound so often associated with Hip Hop DJs and music producers. For more important dates, please refer to the Timepiece Timeline at the conclusion of this essay.

From these origins, Hip-hop’s development can appropriately be broken down into several eras:

*The Old School Era:* From 1979 to 1987 hip hop culture cultivated itself in and through all of its elements usually remaining authentic to its counter cultural roots in the post-industrial challenges manifested in the urban landscape of the late 20th Century. Artists associated with this era included Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, The Sugarhill Gang, Lady B, Big Daddy Kane, Run DMC, Kurtis Blow and others.

*The Golden Age Era:* From 1987-1993 Rap and rappers begin to take center stage as the culture splashes onto the mainstream platform of American popular culture. The extraordinary musical production and lyrical content of rap songs artistically eclipse most of the other primary elements of the culture (breakdancing, graf art, and DJ-ing). Eventually the Recording Industry contemplates rap music as a potential billion dollar opportunity. Mass mediated rap music and Hip-hop videos displace the intimate, insulated urban development of the culture. Artists associated with this era include: Run DMC, Boogie Down Productions, Eric B and Rakim, Salt-N-Pepa, Queen Latifah, De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, Public Enemy, NWA, and many others.

*The Platinum Present:* From 1994- the present Hip Hop culture has enjoyed the best and worst of what mass mediated popularity and cultural commodification has had to offer. The meteoric rise to popular fame of gangsta rap in the early 90s set the stage for a marked content shift in the lyrical discourse of rap music toward more and more violent depictions of inner city realities. Millions of magazines and records were sold, but two of Hip-hop’s most promising artists, Biggie Smalls and Tupac Shakur were literally gunned down in the crossfire of a media fueled battle between the so-called East and West Coast constituents of Hip Hop culture. With the blueprint of popular success for rappers laid bare, several exceptional artists stepped
into the gaping space left in the wake of Biggie and Tupac. This influx of new talent included Nas, Jay-Z, Master P, DMX, Big Pun, Snoop Doggie Dogg, Eminem, and Outkast.

The current era of Hip Hop is still unfolding, but since the demise of Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G., an era of battling amongst MCs and crews of MCs has taken root even as the Platinum era seems to be waning. It is no longer simply good enough to be gangsta or to be rich and ‘bling-ed’ out. These days you need to be gangsta, rich and prepared to at least do lyrical battle in the name of your crew and/or your position in Hip Hop culture. One needs only to study the career of Curtis Jackson (aka 50 Cent) to witness how battling has become a centerpiece in the business of Hip Hop culture.

By the mid 1990s, Hip-hop culture also emerged as an area of serious study on the university level. Courses on hip-hop culture, history and aesthetics were formed in college classes across America. Due largely to student demand and interest, these courses analyzed the origins and significance of hip-hop culture. Originally housed at Harvard University’s W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, the Hip-hop Archive founded in 2002 by Marcyliena Morgan is an example of this important academic and pedagogical development. Dr. Morgan has since repositioned the archive at Stanford University.
The Timepiece Hip-Hop Timeline

by Dr. James Peterson

The Old School Era (a sundial timepiece)

1967  Clive Campbell aka DJ Kool Herc (Hip Hop’s first DJ) immigrates to the West Bronx in NYC from Jamaica.

1968  Rucker Park is a must stop for top college and pro basketball stars, eager to prove themselves. Julius Erving, Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul Jabar, establish the legacy maintained by the likes of Allen Iverson, Stephon Marbury, Ron Artest, and Elton Brand. The Rucker Tournament, the Rucker Pro League and the Entertainer’s Basketball Classic are legendary touchstones for Hip Hop’s love affair with athletics.

1968-9  James Brown records and releases “Funky Drummer” (one of the most sampled drum tracks in Hip Hop History) and “Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud).”

1969  Greece born, Demetrius from 183 Street in the Bronx makes himself famous by “tagging” Taki 183 throughout the five boroughs of NYC.

1973  DJ Kool Herc DJs his first party

1974  Afrika Bambaataa leaves the Black Spades (one of the largest and most violent gangs in New York) to form Hip Hop’s first organization, the ZULU Nation.

1974  Busy Bee Starski, DJ Hollywood, and/or Afrika Bambaataa coin the term, Hip Hop.

1975 - Grand Wizard Theodore discovers the scratch.

1976  The first pieces (i.e. graf-like murals) appear on NYC subway trains.


1979  Sugarhill Gang’s “Rapper’s Delight” spends 12 weeks on the Billboard Pop Chart, ushering in the era of the MC with all of its lyrical battles and authorial challenges.

1980  The Times Square Graffiti Show indicates the mainstream’s brief love affair with Hip Hop’s visual art.

1980  The High Times Crew is arrested for Break Dancing. The first photos of Break Dancing enter mainstream circulation.

1980  The first rap radio show debuts on WHBI, Mr. Magic’s Rap Attack.
The Golden Age (a stopwatch timepiece)

1983 Run DMC’s “Sucka MC’s” signals the end of the Old School Era and the dawn of Hip Hop’s first “pop” stars.
1984 “Roxanne Roxanne” released by UTFO spawning 100s of response “dis” records.

KDAY becomes LA’s and this country’s first rap-formatted radio station.
1984 Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons form Def Jam in a dorm room.
1986 Run DMC’s “Walk this Way” enters heavy rotation on MTV.
1988 NWA’s first album, Straight Outta Compton, introduces Gangsta Rap to the mainstream (ICE-T, Schoolly D, and BDP have defined the genre earlier for Hip Hop culture).
1988 Basquiat (the first Hip Hop visual artist to be recognized by “high culture” art circles) dies from a heroin overdose at the age of 27.
1989 Public Enemy scores Spike Lee’s film, Do the Right Thing (the single is entitled Fight the Power) positioning political rap and the director at the center of urban culture.
1990 2 Live Crew is arrested for performing songs from As Nasty as They Wanna Be. First Amendment advocates testify on their behalf and they are released, but Explicit Lyrics Labeling is born.
1990 September--The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air debuts on NBC, marking the first sitcom starring a Rapper.
1991 Soundscan technology becomes widespread and rap music usurps pop/rock as America’s most eagerly consumed music.
1991 Rapper/actor Ice Cube, actors Cuba Gooding Jr., Lawrence Fishburne and Morris Chesnut star in the film Boyz N the Hood. Directed by John Singleton
1991 Lyricist Lounge in NYC starts their open mic sessions.
1991 Sway, King Tech and DJ Joe Quixx broadcast the Wake Up Show in the Bay area on KMEL.
1992 FUBU Clothing is launched
1992 Karl Kani begins production of his distinctively logoed, loose-fitting, street-chic sportswear. Within two years, aided by ads that feature artists like Snoop Doggy Dogg and Tupac Shakur, the company will earn between $30 million and $40 million.

The NOW Age (a platinum Timepiece)

1993 Hip Hop’s greatest producer releases his first masterpiece (The Chronic
featuring Snoop Dogg and Tha Doggpound). Dr. Dre also produced NWA’s first two albums as well as various R&B artists prior to this release.

**1993** VIBE magazine is launched with Snoop Doggy Dogg on the cover. Snoop subsequently appears on the September 30th Rolling Stone cover (with Dr. Dre), even though his highly anticipated Doggy style debut hasn’t come out yet.

**1994** Sean Puffy Combs establishes Bad Boy Records. The notorious B.I.G. releases *Ready to Die* (Bad Boy).

**1994** February--Wu Tang Clan releases their debut album *Enter the Wu Tang (36 Chambers)*, (Loud/RCA).

**1994** Snoop Dogg releases his debut album *Doggy Style* (Death Row/Interscope).


**1996** September 13--Tupac Shakur dies from gunshot wounds after being shot at while driving through Las Vegas with Death Row CEO Suge Knight

**1997** March--Rapper Notorious B.I.G. dies of gunshot wounds while sitting in his car after attending a Vibe magazine industry party.


**2000** – present: Popular Hip Hop artists reduce lyrics to Dionysian exploits and experiences. Jay-Z and DMX supplant Biggie and Tupac as THE MCs of Hip Hop Culture. The well recorded battle between Nas and Jay-Z coupled with the popularity of Hollywood’s version of Eminem’s life story (*8 Mile*) reinvigorate the dominance of MCs in Hip Hop and popular culture.

"The Elements and Eras of Hip-Hop Culture” and the “Timepiece Hip-Hop Timeline” were written by Dr. James Peterson. Dr. Peterson is an assistant professor of English at The Pennsylvania State University, Abington."
section one

LESSONS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES
unit one

READING, WRITING, AND THINKING ABOUT CULTURE
LESSON 1: Understanding Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Content: Cultural Studies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.2; 1.6; 1.8; 9.1.c; 9.2.a,d,e,k,l; 9.3.b,f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: Information about different cultural groups of the world, Student worksheets (s2), “Cultural Rubric” (s2), Chalk Board or Flip Charts, Pens and Paper.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Required Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours</td>
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About This Lesson

This lesson will require students to argue whether or not hip-hop is a culture. Students will understand the components of a culture and the significance of culture. Students will use this understanding to arrive at their own conclusion about whether or not they believe hip-hop constitutes a culture in and of itself.

Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain what culture is.
2. Students will be able to discuss hip-hop culture using relevant concepts and terms to the general field of cultural studies.
3. Students will form an opinion of whether or not hip-hop constitutes a culture.

Brief Background

Many have argued the hip-hop has moved far beyond a form of artistic expression and instead constitutes a legitimate culture widely accepted among youth of many backgrounds. Typically, we think of culture as a learned (people are not born with a particular culture) set of practices, beliefs, and traditions, common to a specific group of people. This broad conceptualization of culture lends itself to widespread interpretation because shared practices, beliefs, and traditions can be attributed to many different groups. In short, if you think about it hard enough, any group can claim to have a culture. For the purpose of this lesson, we will adopt a more specific set of criteria for evaluating the presence and legitimacy of culture. Culture will be
examined based on values, language, groups and institutions, ways of life, traditions, and products (ie. art, work habits, etc.). Using these criteria, students will examine and challenge their own cultural identity and decide if hip-hop culture is a culture worthy of the same recognition that other cultures receive?

**Introductory Activity**

**Step 1:** Instruct students to answer the following question in writing: What is culture?

Allow students 5 minutes to write down their opinion. Ask some students share their answers. Write their responses on the board.

**Step 2:** Ask students to answer the following question: What is hip-hop? Again, ask some students to share their answers and write down their responses on the board.

**Step 3:** Ask students to think about whether they believe hip-hop is a culture based on the two writing responses. *Does their response the first question match the answer in the second response?* On the bottom piece of the student handout (see section 2, sheet s1), have students answer the questions by circling the response that they believe to be correct. Ask students to keep their responses to themselves. At the end of the lesson, students will be asked if they still agree with their initial answers.

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** The first step of the learning activity is for the teacher to explain the generally accepted ideas about culture. Ask students to find definitions of the terms in the “vocabs” section of their worksheet. Once students are clear about the definitions, move on to step 2.

**Step 2:** To gain a better understanding of their own culture, students will examine the beliefs, practices, and customs of a culture that they do not identify with or are unfamiliar with. Break students up into groups of 3-4 and provide them with information regarding different cultures (see section 2 for suggested readings and handouts). Students should conduct basic research to arrive at answers to the questions posed on their student worksheets. (The amount of detail required is at the teacher’s discretion).

**Step 3:** Students should complete the boxes in the “culture rubric” to illustrate the cultural aspects of the group or society that they examine (see student handouts). Ask students to present their findings to the class.
Concluding Activity

Exploratory Question: Can hip-hop be considered a culture in comparison to the other cultures that students examined? Based on the exploration of the “other” cultures, the class should arrive at a consensus about which aspects of culture exist and are strongly represented in hip-hop.

Step 1: To facilitate this discussion, complete the “culture rubric” column for hip-hop. Based on this rubric, lead a discussion that challenges the simplicity of how we often think of culture. Revisit some of the definitions and explanations that students gave at the beginning of the lesson.

Step 2: Introduce the following questions to the discussion: How many cultures are represented in this class right now? How many cultures do you as individuals identify with (there should be factors that shape these answers – e.g. religion, ethnicity, geography, gender, etc.). Does hip-hop represent a legitimate culture? Why or why not? What are the pros and cons of viewing hip-hop as a culture? (e.g. what kinds of values are represented, etc.)

Step 3: After students have discussed these various issues, have them rethink their initial position. Have students read Handout A1, about Black culture and Hip-Hop culture. Do they still agree that hip-hop is a legitimate culture? Why or why not?

Vocabs: Culture, Cultural Production, Values, Norms, Institutions
LESSON 2: The Aesthetics of Hip-Hop Art forms

Subject Areas: Art Appreciation and Aesthetics
Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.6; 9.2.j,k; 9.4.a,b,c,d
Materials: student worksheet, handout, various genres of music, art, pictures, etc.
Required Time: 1 ¼ - 1 ½ hours

About This Lesson
This lesson is designed to allow students to understand what is meant by aesthetics and genres. Hip-hop is one of few cultures that celebrate the inner city. In large part, this celebration of the inner city is due to hip-hop’s birthplace – the South Bronx of New York City. Essentially, hip-hop embodies the “feelings” of inner city life in America, and the music and art reflect the often harsh realities of inner city life. But how did this appreciation for such an underappreciated environment become a symbol of celebration among so many? This appreciation can in some part be explained by the study of aesthetics. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of beauty and value of the arts and inquiry processes and human responses they produce. This lesson examines the beauty of hip-hop art forms (or lack thereof) and why people appreciate or do not appreciate them. In what ways is inner city life reflected in hip-hop and how did this come about? Is the inner city represented in a positive and/or negative way? How do you arrive at this conclusion?

Objectives
1. Students will know the four original elements of hip-hop.
2. Students will know the general social conditions from which hip-hop emerged and how the inner city is celebrated through hip-hop expressions.
3. Students will be able to explain aesthetics and relate this term to other art forms.

Brief Background
The South Bronx “Rap Scene,” what eventually became to be known as hip-hop, was...
developed in the 1970s in South Bronx, New York. In the face of severely impoverished conditions, youth in the Bronx began participating in several activities that eventually culminated to create the original four elements of hip-hop culture. These activities were DJing, MCing, Breakdancing, and Graffiti Writing. Through these creative outlets, young people both captured the essence of their environment and celebrated their ability to persevere in the face of hardships. Several sub-genres of hip-hop have since emerged that capture the “feeling” of different experiences of youth throughout the country and world based on time and location.

**Introductory Activity**

*Hot or Not?* This introductory activity elicits students’ responses to different aesthetics. To conduct this activity, the instructor will expose students to a variety of cultural and social images (both visual and audible) and students will decide whether the images presented are “hot” or “not.”

**Step 1:** Present 10 to 15 images for students to collectively and individually decide on. Images can be cars, clothes, words, music, pictures of homes, etc. Student should write down a brief description of the image on their worksheet and note how they feel about it (S2a).

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** Instruct students to read one of the 4 articles (A2a, A2b, A2c, A2d) about the four original elements of hip-hop culture. After reading these articles, students should write on the following issue: Do I feel drawn to hip-hop? Do any elements of hip-hop interest me more than others? Why or why not? (students that do not like hip-hop should write about why they are not interested). What is beautiful about each of the elements of hip-hop? Have students make very brief presentations about what they have read. Other students should take notes.

**Step 2:** Briefly discuss the students’ answers. Most students will probably just “like” or “appreciate” or “dislike” the different aspect of hip-hop. Some may argue that it is difficult to master particular elements of hip-hop and for that reason they value the skill and artistic expression. If necessary, move the discussion forward with probing questions, such as: Why do you value writing on property (ie. Graffiti) that does not belong to you? Why do you appreciate this sound as opposed to another sound? Why do you prefer this car. Etc? Use your discretion and ask interesting questions. Also, encourage students to provide examples and try to
explain their responses.
To conclude this discussion, explain that they are essentially discussing aesthetics – a philosophical idea. Explain that aesthetics is an emotional response that may not be understood by others (Grandmother for example my not see what’s so great about a Hummer). From here, students will explore their emotional responses to hip-hop. During the introductory exercise, students responded according to what they valued as pleasing. Whether something is viewed as pleasing depends on a number of factors. Step three asks students to derive a list of these factors and discuss them with one another.

Step 3: What makes us think some things are beautiful and other things are not? Ask students to create a list that answers the preceding question. Some of the answers should be life experiences, media, environment, where you grew up, the year and time, lifestyle, race, gender, etc. Remember, you can always refer back to some of the images from the introductory activity to help students arrive at these answers. For example, show them a new car with rims and an older model car – they probably prefer the prior because of their age (year).

Step 4: Using some of the cultures from the previous lesson, what kinds of images do you think are “beautiful?” Why would they feel this way? What is their environment, lifestyle, etc? How does this contribute to their artistic expressions and cultural aesthetics?

Concluding Activity

Step 1: On worksheet S2b. Ask students to write a brief essay entitled “the hip-hop aesthetic.” Write about what is meant by this based on the discussion. Are their some images and ideas that are held in high regard but are problematic in hip-hop culture? What are some reasons that some negative images are valued? What are some of the images that are positive? Why are each valued? Keep this writing assignment handy. We’ll use it again at the end of the unit. Cut the words found in section 2 into squares. Choose a method of providing students with words. Have students create original poems based on the spelling of each word. The objective is to try to capture the “hip-hop aesthetic” in words to describe the word that they are given. Once all students have completed their poems, ask if anyone would like to share their work. Students with the same words should compare poems and discuss their emotional responses and why they wrote the poems in the way they did.

Step 2: In conclusion, review the concepts covered in this lesson (what are the
artistic elements represented in hip-hop?). Also remind students of the concepts that were explored in lesson 1. Students should make the connection that an important aspect of culture is expressive practices and the way that we are socialized to value particular images/activities. Remind students that these things are *learned*, not natural and can change when and if the various contributing factors change (age, location, types of people, experiences, etc).

**Vocabs:** Aesthetics, Graffiti, Breakdancing, MCing, DJing, Technology, Voice
Lesson 3: Place Matters – Geography, Genres, and Sub-Genres

Subject Areas: Geography and Social Studies

Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.6; 1.8; 9.1.a; 9.2. a,c,d,e,f,g; 9.4.a,b,c,d

Materials: articles

Required Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours

About this Lesson: With this lesson students will learn what is meant by the term genre. Students will arrive at an understanding that hip-hop music and culture is made of many sub-genres, including gangsta rap, down south rap, conscious rap, underground rap, etc. In addition to learning the genres, students will explore the geography, values, environmental, and social conditions that gave rise to the various sub-genres.

Objectives:
- Students will learn different musical and artistic genres.
- Students will learn the sub-genres of hip-hop.
- Students will relate social conditions, values, and geography to specific genres.

Brief Background:
Hip-hop is a musical genre that has gained worldwide prominence alongside country, classical, jazz, blues, rock, folk, and reggae music (among many others). Within hip-hop, there exist many different styles of music as well. Some of the more popular subcategories of hip-hop music are what are referred to as gangsta rap, hardcore rap, underground hip-hop, gospel rap, down south rap, Miami bass music, conscious hip-hop, and commercial rap. These categories are often tied to specific geographic regions of the U.S. For example, most agree that gangsta rap has its roots and strongest fervor in the West coast hip-hop scene. Moreover, different groups with different lifestyles and values support different sub-genres. Commercial
rap is for the most part whatever is popular at the time and the wide scale success of any genre usually results in its adoption by others groups from other regions (for example, G-Unit is gangsta rap, but the group is based out of New York).

**Introductory Activity**

**Step 1:** Provide students with the definition of a genre - category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique or content (e.g. prose, poetry). Or A type of category (e.g. writing – *fiction, non-fiction, poetry*; music – *rap, country, jazz*; theatre – *tragedy, comedy, drama*; dance - *breakdancing, modern, ballet*; visual art – *pastoral, portrait, graffiti, scenes of everyday life*). Hip-hop has contributed to society by creating new genres and sub-genres of expression. This lesson will focus on the various genres found within hip-hop (each of the elements explored in lesson 2 represent different artistic genres – review these if necessary).

**Step 2:** Have students describe what they think each environment is like in the various geographical areas of the United States (see S3). The areas that student should describe are the South, the West Coast, the East Coast, and The Midwest. Survey the class to discover any students have ever visited any of the locations. Have students that have traveled briefly describe their travels. What do students imagine each area of the country is like? How are they alike? How may they differ? Students should consider a number of factors, including, but no limited to racial/ethnic make-up, history, climate, natural environment (is it rainy, in the mountains), built environment (subways, cars, roads, skyscrapers), etc. Ask students to generate a list of various rappers (rap groups) and rap styles that represent each area on the map.

**Step 3:** Further introduce the concept of geography’s influence on how people express themselves. For example, California rap music is generally more “sunny” and “laid back” feeling and uses a great deal of melody, a clear reflection of their year round sunny climate. Also, L.A. rappers (along with Dirty South rappers) often talk about cars in their songs. Car culture is less important in Northern Cities where public transportation is more accessible and used by everyday people. Thus “car culture” has emerged as an expressive art in many L.A. and southern communities and cities. New York hip-hop tends to be more “hard” sounding, using less melodic sounds and more dissonant sounds – like the sound of a city. Political and social events can also shape the expressions of artists. For example, gangsta rap in the west coast was initially a response to police brutality. Bob Marley’s music reflected a
desire to eliminate poverty in Jamaica.

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** Assign different regions, cities, states, or countries to students. Examples of good regions are Miami, Chicago, Atlanta, Mississippi, New Orleans, California, etc (for a more adventurous lesson, assign students other countries – for example, what Switzerland, Ethiopia, South Africa, Iraq, etc). The regions that are assigned depend on the resources available to the class. Students should conduct small scale research to determine the characteristics of the given geographical area and determine what the expressions of the region may be based on the physical environment, political events, social events, etc. Which subgenre of rap music would probably be best represented in the region. Why do students believe this to be the case? What may rappers from this region rap about? What may artist’s graffiti represent? Why is graffiti more common in some places than others?

**Step 2:** Students must create a small collage that represents the region that they have been assigned. Students must work to capture the “essence” of their environment. In short, a look at the collage should be enough for the viewer to understand the basics of the environment. Why may one region have graffiti and another not? Why may one region have more artistic expression about political and social conditions? What will the artists look like – how will they dress? What kinds of values may the people of the region hold? Why? What events and conditions shape their values?

**Step 3:** Have student share their findings with one another. Make note of the differences in each region. Invite student to question one another about the choices they made for their collage.

**Concluding Activity**

Students will conclude this lesson by creating and/or defining a subgenre for the city in which they live. Student will develop a way of representing the “Style and Feel” of the city in which they live.

**Step 1:** Have students generate a list of the environmental factors that shape the way they act and think. For example, what are the weather conditions and how does this impact their attitudes and personalities? Students should review local newspapers to understand the current events of the city. What is happening politically and socially? What do the lyrics in the music often reflect? Is this reality?
What is the local hip-hop scene like? Does it represent the city or town as a whole? In what ways? In what ways does it not? What does this exercise reveal about the city? Are their both positive images and negative images? What are some aspects that students would change (eg. drugs, violence, dilapidated housing, pollution, etc.)

**Step 3:** Student should choose the genre of rap that represents their city. Is this a label that you can be proud of? If not, have students develop a new sub-genre that is distinct from those that already exist. Finally, review the concepts and terms explored in this lesson this lesson.

**Vocabs:** Genre, Sub-genre, Geography
Lesson 4: Historical and Social Context of Language and Art

Subject Areas: History, Language, Art Appreciation, Social Studies

Academic Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.2; 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 9.2.a,c,d,e,f,j

Materials: English textbook, book of poems, speeches, songs, etc.

Required Time: 2 – 2 ½ hours

About This Lesson

In the previous lessons, students were briefly introduced to the importance of culture and geographical location in shaping how and whether art, language, or other expressions are valued (aesthetics) and expressed. This lesson will require students to further understand the importance of time, culture, and place - what will from here on be referred to as historical and social context. Through reading and analyzing standard pieces of literary writing, students will explore the historical and social relevance of the text. Students will then consider contemporary context of hip-hop and how today’s language and arts speak to the hip-hop generation. Students will learn the importance the meaning found within communication and artistic expression and use these understandings to determine the merit of art across social and historical contexts.

Objectives:

1. Students will understand how the meaning in language and arts are determined by the historical context, the cultural context, and the social context of where it is used.
2. Students will understand how to appreciate language and art based on context.
3. Students will explain the importance of language in hip-hop and how hip-hop is a part of a historical legacy of African Americans that will be examined by historians and scholars in the future.
**Brief Background:**

Historical and social contexts are terms used to explain the situations, events, and circumstances that define particular moments in time. For example, if one was interested in studying the why Afro hairstyles are popular; one must consider the historical and social context of the Black Power Movement of the 1970s. Likewise to understand the popularity of Dredlocks, one must understand the significance of Jamaica’s independence, Bob Marley, and the Rastafarian belief system. Students should understand that hip-hop music has changed over time and this is in large part due to the changing social and historical context of hip-hop in our society. Therefore, hip-hop can have different meanings for people depending on when and how they encountered hip-hop, just as the Afro and Dredlocked hairstyles have different significance for different people based on location, social, and cultural encounters. For both good and bad, students should appreciate hip-hop’s contributions to this historical moment and consider how people 20, 50, or even 100 years from now will look back on the expressions, ideas, and culture of today.

**Introductory Activity**

**Step 1:** Provide students with the worksheet and photos (S4a, S4b). The teacher should begin this lesson with exploring language since this is the easiest way to explain context. From there, we will examine the context of other images in hip-hop. Begin by asking students to write definitions for the following words:
Set One - beef, bad, cool, fly, MC, dope, hot, crazy.
Set Two – piece, burner, ghetto, hood.

**Step 2:** Ask students to reconsider their definitions. What might be some other meanings found in these words (semantics). What circumstances give these words particular meaning? Briefly discuss the meanings and choose two or three words and write as many definitions as you can think of on the board. Assign a “situation,” “place,” and/or “time” or “year” to each word.

**Learning Activity**

This learning activity requires students to examine an older piece of literature (or art) and update it so that it is relevant in a contemporary context.

**Step 1:** Introduce the concepts of historical and social contexts. Explain to students that the meaning found within words (semantics) are based on the different context in which the communication and use of language takes place. Use an example from
the introductory activity to illustrate the point if necessary. Ask students if there are any questions. Explain to students that at this historical moment and in the current social context, their voice is unique and important. Because their voice is so important, they must "speak" to their peers in a way they can relate given the current social context.

**Step 2:** Select a short piece of writing (with historical and social relevance – speeches work well for this activity) for students to read and analyze. It should be some sort of work that is of particular importance to the students. The only requirement is that the piece of writing should represent a markedly different historical moment from what today’s hip-hop youth experience. The teacher can choose the works for the students – this is especially appropriate if there is a particular body of work or literature that students have or will examine in the class. Another option is to allow students the freedom to choose a passage, poem, or other expressive piece on their own. Students should read this work and become very familiar with it.

**Step 3:** After becoming familiar with the traditional text, students should work to update the piece of literature so that it is specific to today’s historical context and social context. Students should pay special attention to vocabulary and references to social situations that are relevant to contemporary times, while keeping the story, characters, and situations intact and maintaining the overall mood of the work. Students should name the pieces in a way that references the original work. They should also include an opening that explains that their story is an adaptation of a previous piece of writing.

**Concluding Activity:**
Students should ask themselves the following questions. Does the way I reinterpreted the older work capture what the author meant to say? Have students share their modern adaptations of their writing with the class.

**Beyond the Lesson:** Students can complete the learning activity by using other genres of art. Update a play, a song, or even a work of visual art. It is important that students understand the context of why and how art was created, the intentions of the artist, so that they can accurately contextualize the work.

OR Have student create a glossary of hip-hop terminology that can help people understand the vernacular of the hip-hop generation. Students must work to make
sure the pronunciation is correct and provide sentences to give words context.

**Vocabs:** Context, Historical Context, Social Context, Semantics, Mood, Vernacular, Context Clues, Contemporary
unit two

ARGUMENTATIVE AND OPINION BASED READING, WRITING, AND SPEAKING
Lesson 5: Researching Hip-Hop Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Subject Areas: English, Social Studies, Computer Science, Research Methods, Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards Addressed: 1.2; 1.6, 1.8, 9.3.b,c,f,g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: Research materials – up-to-date magazines, internet, library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours</td>
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**About this lesson:** This lesson will require students to determine relevant criteria and research hip-hop artists to decide who the best hip-hop artist is. Students will decide what makes a good MC and conduct research to decide who the best MC is. Students will explore quantitative as well as qualitative means of supporting their views.

**Objectives**

1. Students will learn how to conduct basic research to support their opinion.
2. Students will learn how to effectively argue for and against their opinion.
3. Students will understand the value of collecting pertinent information before arriving at an opinion.
4. Students will understand how to arrive at a consensus based on collecting relevant information.

**Brief Background**

Within the hip-hop community, their remains an ongoing debate about who the greatest MC is. This enduring debate is much like an argument over who the greatest composer, playwright, basketball player, or baseball player is. To establish one’s greatness, most persons must meet basic criteria and be judged against their competitors and the criteria by which the standard for consideration in the discussion is set. Rappers or MC, themselves often claim that they’re the greatest or the best MC. Many argue that rappers KRS-One, Rakim, Nas, Jay-Z, Tupac, and Notorious B.I.G. are frontrunners in this discussion. The students will decide for themselves. Students will be responsible for deciding the criteria by which greatness as an MC
can be judged, and conduct research to support their claims. Finally, they will argue their position using the research they have collected.

**Introductory Activity**

Students probably already have opinions about who the best rapper is. You may or may not be familiar with the rappers students’ reference when asked who the best rapper is. But they will have to decide.

**Step 1:** Begin this lesson by asking the students who the best hip-hop rapper/singer is. Write the students responses on the board. You can write as many as the students offer, but try to work towards having a minimum of 4 responses.

**Step 2:** Ask students why they made the choices that they made. Why do you believe the artists you have chosen are the best? How do you know what the best is? Briefly discuss the students’ responses and this provides a bridge into the learning activity.

**Learning Activity**

Explain that students will need to support their claims with research. Explain that there are different ways of deciding the value of the artists: explain quantitative data, qualitative data, and personal responses. Students will see if their opinion holds true based on generally accepted measures that the students choose to measure greatness.

**Step 1:** Student should work to understand what it means to be the best. Ask students to put their preferences aside and come up with a list of what it takes to be the “best” rapper. Expect students to provide some answers based on aesthetics, but to make this lesson work, push students to think about concrete information that can prove that someone is good. For example, how many albums does a rapper have to release to be considered the “best?” How many records sold? How long have they been a rapper? How much money has the rapper earned?

**Step 2:** Arrive at decisions regarding the quality of the MCs work. Is the rapper socially responsible and is this important? Does the rapper keep it “real?” Are they educated and does this matter? Has the MC received in honors or awards? How were the album reviews for this artist? Use the student worksheet to have students arrive at what the important things are to know before arriving at a final opinion.

**Step 3:** After students have listed the artist according to the criteria, then their task is to use their own personal responses and judgments to promote their artist as the
best. Students should understand how to use their words to capture what they like and think is valuable based on the aesthetics lesson.

Concluding Activity
Students should prepare a presentation that presents the findings of their research and take a class vote to determine who the best hip-hop artist is.

**Step 1:** To accomplish this, students should “artist report cards” that present basic quantitative data on the artists’ career. The report cards should also provide a description of the artist’s accomplishments and their sound (qualitative). Report cards can be created on large poster board, small paper, or generated using computer software (complete with pictures – see s5 for example). Display this information in a highly visible location in your classroom.

**Step 2:** Students have now conducted research to see how the rappers they have chosen perform based on the criteria they have established. From here, students should work to rank the artists based on what they feel are the most important factors. By the end of this lesson, the research should provide the answer of who the best artist is.

**Vocabs:** Qualitative data, quantitative data, personal response, aesthetics, data, research, consensus building
Lesson 6: Writing a Review

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Journalism, Research Methods

Standards Addressed: 1.2; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 1.8; 9.3,c,d; 9.4.b,d

Materials: City Paper, Magazines, or equivalent (arts, music, theatre, film sections for reviews).

Required Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours

Introduction: Using the prior learning activities, students will write a review of a song of their choosing. I recommend looking at what the top 20 “urban” songs are on the billboard charts. From here, have students select songs and write reviews of the songs. These reviews can be placed on a billboard in your class or preferably in the hallway of your school.

Objectives

- Students will understand the purpose of reviews in promoting arts.
- Using writing, students will effectively express their opinions about a piece of art.
- Students will use appropriate language to describe works of art.

Brief Background

Written reviews of various works of art (music, visual, dance, film, theatre) are often the consumers first exposure to the art. For example, before visiting an art gallery, most often people read reviews and advertisements that make them want to visit the gallery to view the art. The same is true for other mediums. Hip-hop and the industry producing it work the same way. The process of having an album, song, or art reviewed impacts overall exposure for artists and either helps or hurts the artists’ success.

Introductory Activity

Instruct students to read song reviews, art reviews, film review, etc. (recent reviews can be found free in PW, City Paper). Ask them to consider the fact that reviews...
influence whether the song or musician succeeds. Students should read at least three reviews and look for the style in which the reviews are written as well as the content covered in the reviews.

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** Ask students to decide what made the reviews interesting and useful and believable. Students will focus on these three components when writing their own reviews. As a class, have students generate a list of important information that are typically found in a review. Some of these will include date of release, location of event, where to view or purchase the art, information on the artist and brief mention of their previous work (if applicable), a description of work including the genre (comedy, country music, modern ballet, etc.), similar art that readers may be familiar with, opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of the art, and recommendations on whether the art is worth consuming. Students should make a list of these aspects of the review so that they can use them to write their own review. Students should also notice that reviews are relatively brief. Writing a review requires much to be said in a limited amount of space.

**Step 2:** Students should choose what they wish to review. In the supplementary section of this guide book, you will find some ideas. The important thing to remember is that students must choose some aspect of art or entertainment that they are interested in. This will make the reviews both fun and relevant.

**Step 3:** Each student should write their own review of a work of art in which they are interested. Before beginning the writing process, students must think about the important information to include based on the genre of art they are interested in (while we encourage students to use hip-hop art forms, it does not necessarily have to be a form of hip-hop expression.).

**Concluding Activity**

**Step 1:** Students should write reviews of the artistic expression they choose. Their reviews should be based on the ideas discussed during the learning activity. The challenge is to have students accomplish their review in as limited a space as possible. Students should ask themselves if they have illustrated their ideas effectively in as little space as possible.

**Step 2:** Students should “grade” the songs based on a rating system. For example, the source is famous for using a rating system based on “mics” – 5 “mics” means the
album is an instant classic and very few albums have been awarded such prestige. Rolling stone magazine uses stars and these systems of rating have become common in many music magazines, websites, and other periodicals where music reviews are commonplace.

**Step 3:** Create a billboard in your class that contains the reviews and ratings that students have written.

**Enhanced Activity:** Have students post their song or art reviews to websites such as amazon.com, cdnow.com, artist websites, etc.

**Vocabs:** derive vocabulary list from unfamiliar terms that student encounter in reviews.
Lesson 7: Critically Engaging with Hip-Hop

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Journalism
Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.6; 9.3.a,b,d,e,f,g
Materials: Article “Why Hip-Hop Sucks, pts. 1 & 2”
Required Time: 2 – 2 ½ hours

About this lesson: Through this lesson, students will begin to engage critically with hip-hop. Students will respond to critique of hip-hop music and its impact on youth and broader society. Using the format of a structured debate, students will examine critical issues that are of concern to the hip-hop generation's music and culture.

Objectives:
- Students will learn about democracy and voting based on informed decisions.
- Students will learn effective techniques of debate and argumentation.
- Students will learn to listen and respect ideas.
- Students will learn about critical issues in hip-hop music and culture.

Brief Background:
An ongoing argument over hip-hop concerns whether it’s good or bad. This argument can be held on a number of fronts: the actual music, the lyrics, the social impact and so on. It also seems that as people grow older they lose their genuine affinity for hip-hop music, culture, clothes, values, etc. In other words, many would argue that hip-hop sucks. Many choose to no longer listen to or participate in hip-hop culture. But are the unattractive aspects an illusion created by the media or has hip-hop music and culture deteriorated to a point of no return? Is all the fuss just a bunch of adults that just don’t understand? In the lesson, students will read and respond to some common criticisms of hip-hop. Through a structured in-class debate, students will explore both the good and the bad of hip-hop. In doing so, they learn the importance of open and honest disagreement, listening, sharing ideas and opinions, and respecting the ideas and opinions of others, all features of any successful society.
**Introductory Activity**

**Step 1:** Read article "Why hip-hop sucks, pts 1 and 2" by Dr. Marc Lamont Hill (see A7a and A7b)

**Step 2:** Ask students if they agree or disagree with what they have read in the articles. Inquire about why they feel how they feel about the articles. Hopefully, there will be some disagreement amongst students. If there is, great! If not, ask students if they can agree with anything written. What aspects of the article do students feel most strongly about?

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** Explain to students that they will take part in a debate. However, this debate will be structured and requires that students adhere to a particular amount of time to construct their argument, make their case, hear a response, and respond to their opponent's criticism. Explain that this style of debate used is useful in further developing their use of logic and reasoning when having debates. After each side has presented and went through cross examination, students will decide on a winner for the case, based on who argues their side the most effectively.

**Step 2:** Choose debate teams. Divide students in the class into four groups that represent four pre-selected opposing opinions (there can be more groups if students identify multiple issues that they disagree on). The number of groups simply depends on how many differences of opinion there are concerning the content of the article. Students can choose a name to best represent their group. Choose two students to be time managers and choose a group of 3 to 5 students to act as judges of the debates. In addition to assessing the arguments made during the debate, the judges are responsible for ensuring that participants adhere to the rules of engagement.

**Step 3:** Construct a case. To construct a case, in groups, students should consult with one another about why their position is correct. They must keep this information secret from the group with the opposing view. They can support their argument using logic or find research to support their opinion. Using the information that they have students should construct an argument using the following guidelines:

A. Create an opening statement - Students should work to provide a strong opening statement (an attention grabber) that will make classmates listen.

B. Provide Definitions and explanations of relevant terms - Students should
illustrate that they understand the important terms presented in the article.

C. Present and Support your Opinion - explain through logic, personal experience, or research why your opinion is correct.

D. Create Cross-Examination Questions - students should anticipate what the other team will argue and write questions that challenge the other team's argument.

Use the student worksheets in section 2 as an aide to help students develop their case.

Concluding Activity

Step 1: Debate the issue based on the prepared statements. The timing and structure of the debate should be as follows:

- Introduction (30 seconds)
- Definitions (1 minute)
- Presentation of Argument (5 minutes)
- Cross-examination (4 minutes)
- Prepare response (3 minutes)
- Response and Closing Statement (4 minutes)

Each group should present based on these guidelines. Cross-examination should be limited to three questions. After three questions, the group being examined should state that their cross-examination time has elapsed and then they should prepare a closing statement. After this time the opposing group should present their case in the format presented above.

Step 2: Using the debate rubric in section 2, have students not participating in the debate vote on which group did the best job of arguing their case. The judges should also vote and they are responsible for collecting and tallying the votes. After all groups have debated their issues, the judges should report these results back to the class. Among other issues, the votes will ultimately decide whether or not hip-hop really sucks.

Vocabs: cross-examination, consensus
Lesson 8: Hip-Hop and Identity

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Creative Writing,
Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 9.2.a,c,d,e; 9.3;
Materials: “We Wear The Mask” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar; “The Mask”
by the Fugees
Required Time: 1 – 1 ¼ hours
***No student worksheet for this lesson***

About this lesson: Students will explore identity formation and identity
management through reading and analyzing lyrics concerning wearing a “mask.”
Students are expected to understand the literary and figurative nature of the “mask”
and apply it to writing about the various kinds of masks they wear in their everyday
lives.

Objectives
- Students will understand that they and others have multiple identities
- Students will understand the concept of the mask in both a literal and
  figurative sense
- Students will read and analyze poetry and write their own poetry

Brief Background
Within hip-hop music and culture, much of the artists success depends on how they
“represent.” To represent in hip-hop context in large part means to be true to one’s
self. There are numerous examples of artists that have failed (e.g. Vanilla Ice,
JaRule, Black Eyed Peas) and succeeded at this task (e.g. N.W.A., Jay-Z). Still
others’ identity is still up for debate (e.g. 50 Cent). For other hip-hop artists, the
success of their careers has not been based on keeping in real, but instead on
wearing a mask or adopting an alter ego (Ghostface, Bobby Digital, MF Doom, Dr.
Octagon). This lesson explores identity and the reality that most people have many
different identities that they wear in various ways for various reasons. We will
examine Paul Lawrence Dunbar and two hip-hop songs and examine how each
discusses (one figuratively, one literally) identity through exploring the wearing of
mask

**Introductory Activity**

**Step 1:** Read “We Wear the Mask” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar (A8a). Break into groups of 10 and read “We Wear the Mask” silently once, then once aloud. Choose a group secretary. After this, instruct students to choose a word, phrase, or line that in some way affects them. You can ask “what word, phrase, or line in this poem is the most important to you?”

**Step 2:** After everyone has his or her set written down, say it one by one with no talk in between; no explanations, apologies or comments. Have a secretary in the group write down the words so you can share your poems with the rest of the class. After this do the same with the phrases and then the lines. Each time it will form an almost new poem, and it is helpful to hear the repetition and to hear the parts of the poem that speak to the most people.

**Learning Activity**

**Step 1:** Lead a discussion about what a mask signifies. What does a mask signify? Is this a literal or figurative mask? Why do people wear masks? Who is known for their mask wearing? (Robbers, clowns, minstrels, SWAT team, Carnival performers, etc. Nothing is wrong for this question). What are the reasons for their mask wearing? Are any reasons similar? Anonymity, disguise, shame, protection? What are the historical and social contexts that shape this portrayal of wearing a mask.

**Step 2:** Now read and/or listen to The Fugees “The Mask” (A8b). What kind of masks are they talking about? Is it the same as Dunbar’s? Is it literal or figurative? What’s the difference? Why is that difference important?

**Concluding Activity**

**Step 1:** Think of some everyday situations when you may be wearing a figurative mask. Can wearing a mask be positive? What benefits might we derive from wearing a mask? Think of one situation you have encountered, and free write on it for 10 minutes. Now, reread this free write. Is the point of view from the real person, or from the masked self? Is it neither?

**Step 2:** Finally, have students write a poem or essay about the masks that they wear. For younger students, have them draw a picture of the kind of masks to
accompany their poems.

**Vocabs:** literal, figurative, identity management
Unit Three

Media Literacy and Popular Culture
Lesson 9: Interviewing and Biographies

Subject Areas: Research Methods, Language Arts, Media Studies, Research Methods

Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.4; 1.5; 1.8

Materials:

Required Time: 1 ½ – 2 hours

Introduction: Students will write biography and press releases about one another. Students will learn to interview – ask questions, listen, and take notes – and write a personal biography about a fellow classmate. Students are encouraged to create aliases (i.e., adopt new names and hip-hop inspired alter egos).

Objectives:
1. Students will learn the basics of conducting an informational interview.
2. Students will learn to extract important information from an interview.
3. Students will write a brief biographical sketch about a classmate.

Brief Background:
Besides admiring the work of our favorite artists through listening to their music, watching them dance, or viewing their visual art, many people began to admire artists through understanding the story behind their art. Along with interviews, biographies are a way that we get a glimpse of who the artist are behind the "mask." They teach us about their past, their present, and their aspirations for the future. Without interviews and biographies, we would only have the artists’ final production by which to like the artist. Often times, we appreciate art more if we feel we know the artist beyond their work. There are individuals around us in our everyday lives that have stories beyond what we see. This activity seeks to help us appreciate the everyday people more by learning their stories of the past, their feelings about the present, and their dreams for the future. Everybody is a star!
Introductory Activity:

**Step 1:** Ask students to write a biography about their favorite rapper, singer, or entertainer. Have students write as much as they can. Ask students how they know this information. After hearing responses, inform students that the best way to learn about someone’s life is to ask them. **Step 2:** Begin a discussion of what information is relevant to gathering good information to write a biography. What do students want to know? What do students care less about knowing?

**Step 3:** Have students read sample biographies of artists from the internet, newspapers, and magazines (not provided in this guide).

Learning Activity:

Discovering the past, the present, and the future directions of your interviewee are at the essence of writing a good biography.

**Step 1:** Lead students through a process of constructing the interview protocol (or questions) that they will ask. The key is to have students ask questions that will garner a good response. For example, instead of asking “when were you born?” having students ask the “tell me about your life as a child” could yield a more interesting answer. Have students write questions that deal with the past, present, and future of the person they interview.

**Step 2:** Choose who students will interview. Students should be placed in groups of 3 (student A will interview student B. Student B will interview student C. Student C will interview student A). The way that students are grouped is up to you. To have this work well, students should interview someone that they are not close friends with. It is important to stress to students the importance of doing a quality job with creating the personal biography. It is a good idea to select one student to conduct a practice interview with the instructor that the rest of the class will watch. All students should practice listening and taking notes based on the information the instructor provides.

**Step 3:** Have students conduct interviews with their partner. Remind students to take notes and most importantly to listen. Give students 10 minutes each to conduct their interviews. After each interview is completed, have the student conducting the interview write down as much as they can remember about the interview.

Concluding Activity

**Step 1:** Organizing the information collected from the interview is important.
example, students should consider how they want to introduce their "Star." Exciting introductions are often very brief stories, quotes from the person interviewed, a quick introduction of where the person is currently at in his/her life, or where they want to eventually be. Compose a draft of the biography.

**Step 2:** Write the final draft of the biography. Remember to make it exciting by using interesting words and phrases.

**Enhanced Learning Activity:** Take pictures with a digital camera and use computer technology to insert the pictures (with captions) to accompany the biographies – just like hip-hop celebrities do – remember to pose and capture that hip-hop aesthetic! Post these student biographies in a visible place in your classroom.

**Vocabs:** interview protocol, biography
Lesson 10: Advertising and Socializing Messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Areas: Media Studies, Social Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards Addressed: 1.1; 1.2; 1.6; 9.3.a,b,c,d; 9.4.c,d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials: Hip-Hop Magazines, Other Magazines, Several Newspapers, other forms of Print Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Time: 1 – 1 ¼ hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Introduction: This lesson takes a hands-on approach to helping youth understand socializing messages in the media. Through exploring the mass media outlets of newspaper and magazines and music, students will learn to understand how images of violence, poverty, crime, and sex in the media perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes that exist about urban youth. Moreover, students will participate in critical analysis of various media outlets through guided discussion and experiential learning activities.

***This is a modified version of a workshop developed by Black Men 4 Black Youth

Objectives

1. Understand the detriment of violence in the mass media.
2. Understand how stereotypes contribute to violence and criminal activity by shaping what we believe to be reality.
4. Be aware of how media influences your consumption, your actions, and your way of feeling and thinking.

Brief Background

One of the most controversial aspects of hip-hop is the way in which the culture portrays life in inner-city American. The culture seemingly glamorizes guns, violence, negative stereotypes of both women and men (especially women), crime, drug culture, and other anti-social behaviors. Moreover, many youth find it difficult to recognize that these images are distributed at their own expense. Advertising agencies benefit from these portrayals and youth ultimately lose. One way for youth to minimize the effects of media imagery is to become critical consumers, that is, to...
understand and not passively accept the images are reflections of truth. Instead, students should understand how the media shapes our attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs by socializing us to believe their messages are true.

**Introductory Activity**

The purpose of this introductory activity is to illustrate how easily people can be socialized by the media.

**Step 1:** Discuss Mass Media. Ask students what mass media is and what aspects of the media have the most influence on youth. Have students provide answers. The answers are the internet, billboards, magazines, television, video games, music, radio, food advertisements, movies, etc. Media is everywhere. Have students point out advertisements in the immediate environment and explain what message the media is conveying.

**Step 2:** Ask students if they believe they are influenced by the media. Explain that the repeat exposure to messages socializes them into behaving and thinking a certain way that they may not have if not exposed to the messages (advertisements for example).

**Step 3:** In a rhythm that you establish, have participants repeat the word, spell the word and repeat it again. Do this process at least 3 times and make sure there is strong participation.

Quickly ask the question stated in the second column.

- **S*I*L*K** What do cows drink? *(milk)*
- **P*O*S*T** What do you put into a toaster? *(toast)*
- **P*O*T*S** What do you do at a green light? *(stop)*

Encourage students to pay close attention and think before answering each question. Most participants will be conditioned to answer with the word in parentheses, even though incorrect. Tell them the correct answer after each round. The correct answers are water, bread and go. By the third word, some students will have realized they should think before answering and will possibly answer correctly – this is good and what you want students to do.

**Step 4:** After performing all three, debrief with participants about how easy it is to be manipulated and the amount of resources society puts into this process through advertisement, education, etc. Also point out how difficult it was to resist even though they knew they were being manipulated.
Learning Activity

Step 1: Why is mass media important? Students take the media literacy test to understand how much consumption takes place (S10b).

Step 2: Introduce the media stations to students. Mention that there are other media outlets, such as the internet, television, and radio, but we will focus on print media. Hand out student worksheets (S10b). When exploring media outlets, walk around to engage students in a brief discussion of what they are looking at.

Students should consider the following questions as students visit the media stations:
- Do the images of violence in the media portray normal or abnormal life?
- How is violence portrayed?
- Is violence glamorized in the media?
- Is violence entertaining?
- How is violence portrayed according to race, class, age, and gender?
- What are the consequences of violence being entertainment?
- Who is responsible for the images presented?
- Why do media outlets portray violence?
- Who profits from images of violence?
- Who suffers as a result of media violence?
- Who is the target audience of the media outlets?
- Why do we make the choices we make? Do we have a choice?

Step 3: Students should be directed to break into groups to explore the various media outlets available in the workshop. Students choose cards from workshop facilitators with the different media outlets. Students visit each media station and take notes on their consumption and writing down the messages they receive at each station. Each student will visit station and rotate every 7-10 minutes (the key to this step is to make sure students do not remain at any one station too long. Student must examine the media and move on).

Station One: Hip-Hop Magazines
Station Two: Other Magazines
Station Three: Newspapers

Concluding Activity

Step 1: Revisit the questions that were asked at the stations – What did you discover at the stations? Which was better/worst? In what ways? Have students
volunteer to share their comments and notes based on your observations of media consumption. Provide students with a statement of how important it is to realize the corporations profit from depictions that exist in the media. For example, if there were now advertisements for ring tones, would you want them? Normal everyday people do not profit, but instead are conditioned by such media.

**Step 3:** Review answers to media literacy test and provide incentives for correct answers – answers will be provided to facilitators.

***The correct answers to the media literacy quiz are as follows:

1. a
2. b
3. b
4. c
5. d
6. a
7. b
8. d

**Vocabs:** Critical Consumption, Media Literacy, Socializing Messages

**Enhanced Learning: Beyond the classroom**

Ask students to monitor their media consumption for one week. Students should take notes on how many ways they are being socialized through exposure to media outlets.
Lesson 12: Represent - Show what you know!

| Appropriate Subject Areas: All classes that utilize Production, Performance, and/or Exhibition for learning |
| Standards Addressed: 9.1 |
| Materials: Student work from previous lessons |
| Required Time: varies |
| ***No worksheet for this lesson*** |

**Curriculum Culminating Project**

Students, in groups, are to prepare a presentation about hip-hop culture. The presentation should address explore hip-hop in a way that capture the its relevance to American culture and to youth culture. Using all the previous learning activities, this presentation should be prepared so that someone who has never heard of hip-hop can understand what hip-hop is. Require that students use the vocabs learned throughout the lessons.

Pictures – how will people in the future know the context? For example, a picture of break dancer could be interpreted in many ways, right? What about graffiti – how will explain these colorful writings of the wall? For younger students, create a culture capsule. What are the important things to include so that people 500 years from now will understand hip-hop? Ask students why they make specific choices? Are they leaving anything out? What do these choices about what would go into the culture capsule suggests about the current state of hip-hop?

**Need some ideas for a final class project?**

- Create a compilation CD of music and poetry, including promotional materials.
- Write and perform a hip-hop inspired play or theatrical piece (or update and perform a piece from lesson 4).
- Create a “Hip-Hop” display at your school or community center that exemplifies all that has been learned.
- Create a video production that explores issues relevant to hip-hop and youth.
Lesson 13: Writing about Hip-Hop

Appropriate Subject Areas: English, Language Arts, Social Studies
Standards Addressed: 1.4; 1.5
Materials: Student work from previous lessons
Required Time: Varies
***No student worksheet for this lesson***

Introduction
This lesson requires individual students to write about the issues presented in the curriculum guide. Students will write a coherent, well organized essay illustrating and understanding of the concepts learned through engaging with the guide. Essays should be assessed according to the writing assessment domain found in section 3 of this guide.

Sample Essay Questions:

Essay One: Given hip-hop’s popularity among youth, many educators argue that using hip-hop related educational materials, such as songs, lyrics, movies, and artistic expression is a great idea. However, others do not believe that hip-hop should be used in education because of glorification of violence and drugs, derogatory language, mistreatment of women, and other values that hip-hop promotes. Do you agree or disagree with using hip-hop in the classroom? Why or why not?

Essay Two: To understand hip-hop, one must understand the context of our contemporary society in the United States. Write an essay that discusses the various issues in society that are reflected in hip-hop music and culture. What are some positive reflections in hip-hop? What are some negative reflections in hip-hop?

Option Three: Create essay questions specifically related to the discussions held in class while using this guide. You can even ask students to come up with their own ideas. Good Luck!
section two

Student Worksheets and Supplementary Materials
student

worksheets

Section “S”
What is Hip-Hop?

Directions: Complete the first two questions of this sheet and wait for further instructions from your classroom leader.

Vocabs: Culture, Cultural Production, Values, Norms, Institutions, Traditions, Customs

What is Culture?

What is Hip-Hop?

Should Hip-Hop be considered a culture?  Yes  Maybe  No

"The Culture Rubric"

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Group</th>
<th>Language / Comm.</th>
<th>Traditions and Customs</th>
<th>Institutions/Organization</th>
<th>Music and Arts</th>
<th>Location(s)/Appearance</th>
<th>Values / Ethics</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Group 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Hip-Hop)</td>
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Worksheet S1
Learning the Elements

Directions: Write down your general impression of the images, sounds, and ideas your instructor presents to you. Do you like it or dislike it? What words describe how you feel about what you see / hear / taste / feel?

Vocabs: Aesthetics, Graffiti, Breakdancing, MCing, DJing, Technology, Voice

Art Piece 1 -

Art Piece 2 -

Art Piece 3 -

Art Piece 4 -

Art Piece 5 -

Art Piece 6 -

Art Piece 7 -

Art Piece 8 -

Art Piece 9 -

Art Piece 10 -

What is beauty?

How does this relate to culture?

Worksheet S2a
The Hip-Hop Aesthetic

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Worksheet S2b
Vocabs: Genre, Sub-genre, Geography

West Coast Characteristics:

East Coast Characteristics:

South Characteristics:

Midwest Characteristics:

Worksheet S3
Vocabs: Context, Historical Context, Social Context, Semantics, Mood, Vernacular, Context Clues, Contemporary

**Explain the following words based on the corresponding year:**

(2005) hustle -
(2005) cool -
(2005) fly -
(2005) MC -
(2005) dope -
(2005) hot –
(1905) Beef –
(1905) bad –
(1905) cool –
(1905) dope –
(1905) hood –

**Read the following passage aloud:**

Person A: What’s up?
Person B: Nothing at all.
Person A: Cool.
Person B: I’m not. I meant to tell you that my younger brother has beef.
Person A: Really? You should get a piece.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What are some of the various ways that the following conversation can be read and understood?
2. What shapes the context of the conversation?
3. How could you help someone who reads this in the year 2060 make sense of it? What context clues could be provided that would give the conversation a clearer sense of meaning?
4. How does the passage represent mood, semantics, and vernacular?

**Worksheet S4a**
Next to each picture, describe the following pictures based on the year. When doing so, consider how someone unfamiliar with hip-hop or from another time period might understand each picture? Where might the pictures have been taken? Who are the people? What are they doing?...

Worksheet S4b
Who's the Best MC?

Vocabs: Qualitative data, quantitative data, personal response, aesthetics, data, research, consensus building

1. What quantitative data can support your choice? List any statistical information you find.

2. What qualitative data can support your choice? List any descriptive information you find.

List the top MCs according to your research
1. 2. 3.
4. 5. 6.

Sample Artist Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Place:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Roundhead Rapper&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record Sales:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Albums:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
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<td>Category:</td>
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<td>Category:</td>
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Worksheet S5
The Power of the Pen...

Sample Album Review

Young Jeezy is hardly breaking new ground in rapping endlessly about the similarities between the trap game and the rap game. He joins a distinguished line of former 'caine slangers turned MC--Scarface, Jay-Z, the Clipse, Biggie, etc. However, despite the familiarity of Jeezy's topics, this Atlanta rapper has managed to make a bi-coastal splash through the strength of his mic presence and charisma. As the stand-out member of ATL's Boyz N Tha Hood, Jeezy has distinguished himself against the field of contemporary rappers. More rugged than the Game, though not as charming as Cam'ron, Jeezy's work-horse flow and lyrics are draped into evocative street-level realism. Though the Southern influence is obvious in many of the album's bounce and crunk-influenced beats, he shows an impressive diversity of sound selection including on his current street anthems for this summer like "Trap Star," "My Hood," and the sublimely melancholy "Go Crazy." — Oliver Wang - Amazon.com, Editorial Views

Write a draft of your review here:

What genre of art are you reviewing?

Who else is doing similar work?

Describe the quality of the art?

Worksheet S6
Does Hip-Hop Really Suck?

Introduction (30 seconds) – Introduce the topic you are debating. Be creative and grab your audience’s attention.

Definitions (1 minute) – Provide a clear explanation of the terms and ideas you will use to make your argument.

Presentation of Argument (5 minutes) – Present you logic, reason, or research that supports your position.

Cross-examination (4 minutes) – This is the time that your opponents have to question you. Do not respond immediately. Instead, take notes on what they say.

Prepare response (3 minutes) – prepare a short speech to address the questions your opponent raised during cross-examination.

Response and Closing Statement (3 minutes) – present your response and conclude by restating your main points and position. Your closing statement should begin with “in closing…”

Worksheet S7
Use this sheet to write the interview questions and answers:

About the interviewee’s past:

About the interviewee’s present:

About the interviewee’s future goals:

Worksheet S9
HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MEDIA CONSUMPTION?
http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/library.htm

1. The average American seventh grader:
   a. watches three hours of TV per day
   b. listens to three hours of music per day
   c. surfs the internet and communicates via e-mail three hours per day
   d. plays video games three hours per day

2. Excessive TV viewing has been linked to:
   a. nearsighted vision  
   b. obesity
   c. attention deficit disorder  
   d. fine motor skill impairment

4. Which of the following statements about children and music is correct, according to research?
   a. On average, teens watch three hours of music videos per day
   b. Only 30% of school-age children know the lyrics to their favorite songs.
   c. Teens rate music as a more important influence on their decision making than their parents/guardians
   d. There is a direct cause-and-effect relationship between violent lyrics and violent, real-world behavior.

5. By age 18, the average U.S. child's TV viewing has included 16,000 of these. That's a lot of:
   a. beer commercials  
   b. sexually explicit scenes
   c. murders  
   d. infomercials

6. In the top 20 TV shows among teen viewers in 2001-2002, the average number of scenes per hour with sexual content is:
   a. 0.8 scenes per hour  
   b. 3.5 scenes per hour
   c. 5.2 scenes per hour  
   d. 6.7 scenes per hour

7. By the time kids reach senior citizen status, they will have spent three years of their lives doing this:
   a. watching local news  
   b. watching commercials
   c. talking to telemarketers  
   d. talking in chat rooms

8. During Fall 2000, TV stations spent less than a minute per day on this:
   a. international news  
   b. public service announcements
   c. local sports  
   d. political discourse among candidates

worksheet S10a
Vocabs: Critical Consumption, Media Literacy, Socializing Messages

Use this sheet to take notes of the various images you are exposed to while exploring media. What images stand out the most? How regularly do these images appear? Is any of this a surprise? How are youth represented? What about men, women, different races, etc? What are the differences based on the media outlet?

Violence:

Drugs:

Sexism:

Stereotypes:

Notes:

Worksheet S10b
student handouts

Section “A”
Handout A1

Black Culture & Hip-Hop: One & the Same?

An Article written by NyceStylez

People seem to attribute Hip-Hop's success among the masses due to the assumed fact that Hip-Hop is black culture. It's a mistake that I can understand, since most of the faces one sees involved in Hip-Hop seem to be of African-American descent. But then again, when you watch the television, you don't see much Hip-Hop, or even rap. Only BET and MTV will play rap videos, and it's not like they've got real Hip-Hop on these two channels twenty-four-seven. So, when the casual observer walks along the "Rap/Hip-Hop/R&B" section of their local branch of Camelot, Sam Goody, or K-Mart, all they seem to see are black faces. Therefore, it's only natural for the casual observer to think that Hip-Hop is black culture.

I'm here today to challenge this myth. And that's precisely what it is: a false myth. Sure, most of the exposed rap artists and emcees out there are African-American, but what about the DJs? What about the graff writers out there? What about the b-boys and b-girls out there? What about all the people who respect the culture and follow it and love it? What about the people who contribute to Hip-Hop magazines and newsletters? What about all the people who read that damn shit? If one could count all those people, one could easily see that Hip-Hop isn't black culture. Rather, Hip-Hop is a part of black culture and Hop's universal, dammit! It's fuckin' universal because members of practically every society out there's rockin' to this shit!! I wouldn't be surprised if some X-Files case out in the cosmos is listening to some Invisible Skratch Piklz right now.

It didn't start out as black culture, either, because Hip-Hop has always been its own culture. Let me say that shit again, just in case you didn't catch that. Hip-Hop has always been its own culture. Not all of the fathers and godfathers of Hip-Hop were African-American. The original breakers were black and Hispanic. The first graff writer, Taki, was Greek. Speaking of graff, Seen isn't black. I could go on and on, but it would be quite long and boring, so I'll just stop here with my point that Hip-Hop was composed of different races, different ethnic groups, different styles, and different cultures. Hip-Hop still is composed of all these things, as well as different
age groups, different nationalities, and straight up different people.

So can you see why people into Hip-Hop aren't "acting black"? Can you see why people need to know the truth rather than spread the myth? African-American culture is different from Hip-Hop, although the two do have a relation. Asian-American culture is different from Hip-Hop, although the two do have a relation. Hispanic-American culture.... etc. You know what I'm trying to say. Hip-Hop is its own culture, so don't mix it with any other. Peace to all my Hip-Hop brothers and sisters. Support Hip-Hop unity.
Preface: As we complete the third decade of what has been termed "hip-hop culture," much has yet to be explored regarding its roots, history, terminology and essence. Deciphering theories from facts is a gradual, seeming endless process since many resources are scattered, leaving missing links in the chains of history. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that there are authentic facts, proven by sound testimony and evidence, regarding "hip-hop" history. These truths, unanimously agreed upon by the pioneers of the culture, should constitute the "hip-hop gospel," whereas the questionable theories should remain as footnotes until proven to be fact.

In order to properly report the history of hip-hop dance forms, one must journey both inside and outside of New York City. Although dance forms associated with hip-hop did develop in New York City, half of them (i.e. popping and locking) originated and developed on the west coast as part of a different cultural movement. Much of the media coverage in the 1980s grouped these dance forms together with New York's native dance forms (b-BOying/gIRling and Brooklyn uprocking), labeling them all "break dancing." As a result, the west coast "funk" culture and movement were overlooked and underrated as the public ignorantly credited "hip-hop" as the father of the funk dance forms. This is just one example of misinformation that undermines the intricacies of each dance form, as well as their origins and structure. The intent behind the following piece is to explore the past, present and future of these dance forms and their contributions to the performing arts worldwide.

Note: The facts in this piece were obtained through conversations with and/or public appearances by: Boogaloo Sam, Popin' Pete, Skeeter Rabbit, Sugar Pop, Don Campbelllock, Trac 2, Joe-Joe, King Uprock, Kool DJ Herc, Afrika Bambaataa and other pioneers. Information was also obtained from various interviews in magazines.
In the early 1970s, the unnamed culture known today as "hip-hop" was forming in New York City's ghettos. Each element in this culture had its own history and terminology contributing to the development of a cultural movement. The common pulse which gave life to all these elements is rhythm, clearly demonstrated by the beats the DJ selected, the dancers' movements, the MCs' rhyme patterns and the writer's name or message painted in a flowing, stylized fashion. The culture was identified in the early 1980s when DJ Afrika Bambaataa named the dynamic urban movement "hip-hop." The words, "hip-hop," were originally used by MCs as part of a scat style of rhyming, for example: "Hip-Hop ya'll and ya don't stop, rock on, till the break of dawn."

At about the same time, certain slang words also became titles of the dance forms, such as "rockin'" and "breakin'," used generally, to describe actions with great intensity. Just as one could rock the mic (microphone) and rock the dance floor, one could rock a basketball game or rock some fly gear (dress impressively). The term "break" also had more than one use in the 70s. It was often used as a response to an insult or reprimand, for example, "Why are you breakin' on me?" Break was also the section on a musical recording where the percussive rhythms were most aggressive and hard driving. The dancers anticipated and reacted to these breaks with their most impressive steps and moves.

Kool DJ Herc, originally from Jamaica, is credited with extending these breaks by using two turntables, a mixer and two of the same records. As DJs could re-cue these beats from one turntable to the other, finally, the dancers were able to enjoy more than just a few seconds of a break! Kool Herc also coined the terms "b-boy" and "b-girl" which stood for "break boys" and "break girls." At one of Kool Herc's jams, he might have addressed the dancers just before playing the break beats by saying, "B-Boys are you ready?! B-Girls are you ready?!" The tension started to mount and the air was thick with anticipation. The b-boys and b-girls knew this was their time to "go off!"

Some of the earliest dancing by b-boy pioneers was done upright, a form which became known as "top rockin'." The structure and form of top rockin' has infused dance forms and influences from Brooklyn uprocking, tap, lindy hop, James Brown's "good foot," salsa, Afro-Cuban and various African and Native American dances. There's even a top rock Charleston step called the "Charlie Rock"! Early influences on b-boys/girls also included martial arts films from the 1970s.
Certain moves and styles developed from this inspiration.

**Capoera**, a form of self defense disguised as a dance, was introduced to Brazil by African slaves. This form has some movements which are very similar to certain b-boy/girl steps and moves. Unlike the popularity of the martial arts films, capoera was not seen in the Bronx jams until the 1990s. Top rockin' seems to have developed gradually and unintentionally, leaving space for growth and new additions, until it evolved into a codified form.

Although top rockin' has developed an identifiable structure, there is always space for individual creativity, often expressed through the competitive nature of the dance. The same is true of all dance forms associated with hip-hop and west coast funk; as long as dancers represent the root forms of the dances, the rest can be colored in with his/her own flavors.

As a result of the highly competitive nature of these dances, it wasn't long before top rockers extended their repertoire to the ground with "footwork" and "freezes." For instance, one dancer might start top rocking then drop to the ground, suddenly going into leg shuffles then a freeze before coming to his feet. His opponent might have to do twice as much floorwork or a better freeze to win the battle. The fancy leg movements done on the ground, supported by the arms, were eventually defined as "footwork" or "floor rocking." In time, an impressive vocabulary of footwork, ground moves and freezes developed, including the dancers most dynamic steps and moves.

Top rockin' was not replaced with floor rocking; it was added to the dance and both were key points in the dance's execution. Many times one could tell who had flavor and finesse just by their top rockin' before the drop and floor rock. The transition between top and floor rockin' was also important and became known as the "drop". Some of these drops were called: **front swipes**, **back swipes**, **dips** and **corkscrews**. The smoother the drop, the better.

Equally significant was the way dancers moved in and out of a freeze, demonstrating control, power, precision, and at times, humor. Freezes were usually used to end a series of combinations or to mock and humiliate the opponent. Certain freezes were also named, the two most popular being the "chair freeze" and the "baby freeze." The chair freeze became the foundation for various moves because of the potential range of motion a dancer had in this position. The dancer's hand, forearm and elbow
support the body while allowing free range of movement with the legs and hips. From the chair freeze came the floor trac, back spin with the use of arms, continuous back spin (also known as the windmill), and other moves. These moves pushed the dance in a new direction in the early 1980s, the era of so-called "power moves."

The first spins done in b-boying were one-shot head spins originally known as pencils; hand spins originally known as floats; knee spins; and butt spins. The first back spin came from a butt spin. Once a dancer gained momentum on his butt he could lie back and spin into a freeze. The next phase of backspin came from a squatted position tucking the arm and shoulder under the body onto the floor, then rolling onto the back and spinning. This spin developed from the neck move (a move in which the dancer rolls from one shoulder to the other). Finally, the backspin, from the foundation of a chair freeze, was developed.

"Power moves" is a debatable term since it is questionable which movement requires more power: footwork and freezes or spins and gymnastics. One notable point introduced by B-Boy Ken Swift is that spins are fueled by momentum and balance which require less muscular strength than footwork and freezes. The laws of physics prove this to be true: spins require speed and speed creates momentum. The advent of "power moves" brought about a series of spins which became the main focus of the media and the younger generations of dancers. The true essence of the dance was slowly overshadowed by an overabundance of spins and acrobatics which didn't necessarily follow a beat or rhythm. The pioneers didn't separate the "power moves" from the rest of the dance form. They were B-Boys who simply accentuated their performance with incredible moves to the beat of the music.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, Brooklyn, NY gave birth to another dance in Hip-Hop culture, known as "Brooklyn uprocking." Inspired by similar or the same break beats used by b-boys/girls, this dance was more confrontational. Typically, two opponents faced each other and engaged in a "war dance" consisting of a series of steps, jerks, and the miming of weapons drawn against each other. There were also the "Apache Lines" where one crew stood in a line facing an opposing crew and challenged each other simultaneously. This structure was different from b-boying/girling since dancers in b-boy/b-girl battles took turns dancing while Brooklyn uprocking was done with partners. Brooklyn uprocking was also done to records played from beginning to end. In Brooklyn, DJs were mixing records and not cutting
break beats. This allowed the uprockers to react to the song in its entirety, responding to the lyrics, musical changes and breaks.

Just as power moves became the focus of b-BOYing/girling, one particular movement known as "jerking" became the highlight of Brooklyn uprocking. Jerking is a movement which is used in direct battles, typically repeated throughout the break of the record. Today, Brooklyn uprocking consists almost entirely of jerking; the original from has been all but forgotten by the younger generation.

**Brooklyn Uprocking** also depended on quick wit, humor and finesse as opponents attempted to humiliate each other. Winning meant: displaying the swiftest steps; being receptive to the rhythms and counter rhythms of the music and the opponent; catching the opponent off guard with mimed assaults, humor, and endurance. Brooklyn uprocking consisted of quick arm and leg movements, turns, jumps, drops, and freezes. This dance was similar in spirit to b-BOYing/girling, yet different in form. Some pioneers believe top rocking’s first inspiration was Brooklyn Uprocking. The two forms developed simultaneously from similar inspirations yet kept their own identities.

The west coast was also engaged in a cultural movement throughout the 1970s. This scene was nourished by soul, R&B and funk music at outdoor functions and discotheques.

In Los Angeles, California, **Don Campbell**, also known as **Don Cambellock**, originated the dance form "locking." Trying to imitate a local dance called the "funky chicken," Don Campbell added an effect of locking of the joints of his arms and body which became known as his signature dance. He then formed a group named "The Lockers," who all eventually shared in the development of this dance. The steps and moves created by these pioneers were named and cataloged. Some of these include: **the lock, points, skeeters, scooby doos, stop n'go, which-away and the fancies.** Certain members of The Lockers" incorporated flips, tucks, dives and other aerial moves reminiscent of the legendary **Nicholas Brothers.** The main structure of the dance combined sharp, linear limb extensions and elastic-like movement.

The "lock" is a specific movement which glues together combinations of steps and moves similar to a freeze or a sudden pause. Combinations can consist of a series of points done by extending the arms and pointing in different directions. Dancers combined fancy step patterns with the legs and moves done in various sequences.
The Lockers also jumped into half splits, knee drops, butt drops, and used patterns which would take them down to the ground and back up to their feet. This dance gained much of its popularity through The Lockers' various televised performances which include: the "Johnny Carson Show," the "Dick Van Dyke Show," the "Carol Burnett Show" and "Saturday Night Live."

In 1976, The Electronic Boogaloo Lockers was formed in Fresno, California by Sam "Boogaloo Sam" Solomon, Nate "Slide" Johnson and Joe "Slim" Thomas. Since the group's inception, Sam has continued to recruit and help each member master his individual form. Some of Sam's early inspirations were Chubby Checker's "Twist;" a James Brown dance called "the Popcorn;" "the Jerk;" cartoon animation and the idiosyncrasies of everyday people. From these many influences, Sam combined incredible steps and moves conceiving a dance form which he named "Boogaloo." This form includes isolated sharp angles, hip rotations and the use of every part of the body. Sam's brother, Timothy "Popin' Pete" Solomon, described Boogaloo as a dance which was done by moving the body continuously in different directions.

He also compared the body to a musical instrument in which the movement was as varied as the notes. Originally, "popping" was a term used to describe a sudden muscle contraction executed with the triceps, forearms, neck, chest and legs. These contractions accented the dancer's movement causing a quick, jolting effect. Sam's creation, popping, also became known as the unauthorized umbrella title to various forms within the dance, past and present. Some of these forms include: boogaloo, strut, dime stop, wave, tick, twisto-flex and slides. The transitions between steps, forms, and moves were fluid, unpredictable, precise, and delivered with character and finesse. Various forms were clearly showcased throughout the dancer's solos and group routines. Eventually, popping was also misrepresented and lost its purity as younger generations strayed from its original forms.

The titles, "Electric Boogie" and "Boogie" were given, in ignorance, to the dance, in New York, after the Lockers and Electric Boogaloos performed on the television program, "Soul Train." Unaware of the dance's history, New Yorkers attempted to name the dance after The Electric Boogaloos (derived from the Electronic Boogaloo Lockers).

Dancers in Los Angeles also distorted the name by calling it "pop-locking," while in...
France, it was called "The Smurf." Elements of pantomime were merged with the
dance, diluting its original essence. Miming creates illusions of the body without a
rhythmic structure whereas popping and boogaloo create movement synchronized to
rhythmic patterns. Most of the time, this fusion was done unsuccessfully since one
would stray from the beat of the music. Other townships in central California are
credited for creating original forms of dance as well. Each region was identified by its
style: San Jose was known for "flying tuts" and "dime stopping;" San Francisco
had the "chinese strut;" "Filmore strutting" originated obviously in the Filmore
area. Oakland became known for "Frankenstein hitting" and "snake hitting." East
Palo Alto was also known for "snake hitting." "Roboting" and "bopping" were
popularized in Richmond. Sacramento had its own dances called "Oak Parking,"
"Bustin;"," and "Sac"-ing (pronounced 'sacking'). Dime stopping, strutting and hitting
all predate popping and have their own histories within the west coast funk
movement. In summary, all of these dance styles have contributed to the evolution
of phenomenal forms of expression!

A connection between the east and west coast movements are certain records which
are danced to by b-boys/girls, Brooklyn uprockers, and lockers. One example is
"Scorpio" by Dennis Coffey and the Detroit Guitar Band. For the most part, each
dance form had a different musical influence, dress code and terminology (all of
which were mismatched and misrepresented during the 1980's media coverage of
these dance forms).

As relatively new dance forms, b-woying/girling, Brooklyn uprocking, locking and
popping are rarely seen in a theatrical setting. They are usually performed in music
videos, commercials or films for just a few seconds revealing very little of their full
potential. In many cases, the filming of these dances has been poor where only part
of the body is captured, taking away from the full impact of the steps, moves, and
illusions. The film editing of these dances also deprives the audience of transitions
and composition, since the editors are usually unfamiliar with the structures of the
dance forms. Proper consultation with the dancers concerning filming and editing can
remedy this recurring problem.

Another challenge related to the commercialization of the dance forms is the loss of
spontaneous performance. In a cipher, a circular dance space which forms naturally
once the dancing begins, the dancers can direct their performance in various
directions, uninhibited and free from all counts and cues. This freedom is the key to
creativity since the dancer is constantly challenged with variations in music, an undefined dance space and potential opponents among the audience. The transition from cipher to stage has had its effects on the dancers and their craft.

What was once improvisational forms of expression with spontaneous vocabulary became choreography in a staged setting. A stage performance creates boundaries and can restrict the free flowing process of improvisation. The dancers are challenged in a different way. Nailing cues and choreography becomes the objective.

Another major difference between the original dance forms and staged versions is the positioning of the audience, since most traditional theaters have the audience facing the stage in one direction. Having to entertain an audience in one general location requires the dancer or choreographer to consciously space the performance allowing the best viewing of the dance. In order to preserve the true essence and dynamics of these dance forms, they should exist as a social and cultural reality celebrated in their natural environments i.e.: jams, events, clubs, etc. Theatrical film and video productions can be used as vehicles for their preservation as long as the essence of the form isn't compromised and diluted in the process.

The same concern applies to the storylines and scripts pertaining to the dance's forms and history. The mixing and blending of popping, locking, b-booing/girling, and Brooklyn uprocking into one form destroys their individual structures. Unfortunately the younger generations of dancers either haven't made enough effort to learn each dance form properly, or lack the resources to do so. However the outcome is the same: hybrid dances with unclear form and structure.

In addition, each of the dance forms are performed best with their appropriate musical influences. Intermixing dance forms and their music forms dissolves their structures and ultimately destroys their identities. Dancing on beat is most important. Riding the rhythm makes the difference between dance and unstructured movement. The formula is simple, submission to the music allowing it to guide and direct equals dancing.

Finally, the best way to preserve the dances is by learning from the earliest available sources or a devoted practitioner of the form. The pioneers of these dance forms hold the key to the history and intentions of the movement. They remain the highest authorities regardless of other opinions or assumptions.
Unraveling the history of locking, popping, b-boys/girls and Brooklyn uprocking takes us towards a true understanding of their essence and significance in the world today. Many other genres of dance have borrowed without giving credit to their rightful owners. Hopefully, we will see the day when these dances are clearly distinguished and given their due respect. Every so often, the dance world is introduced to innovations which revolutionize the arts. In summary, the hip-hop and west coast funk movements have succeeded in replenishing the world with new exciting dance forms which entertain and change the lives of many people worldwide.

http://www.daveyd.com/historyphysicalgrafittifabel.html
Handout A1b

**The MC**

**Master of Ceremonies to Mic Controller**

by Grandmaster Caz of the Cold Crush Brothers

**MC** - those two initials have always stood for **Master of Ceremonies**, the host or announcer. To us, the guys on the street, it meant the guy on the mic. Not singing, just talking on the mic. Today the role of the MC in hip-hop culture has grown far beyond its initial function of announcing what the next jam is going to be. In order to fully understand the role of the MC in hip-hop culture, we must examine the origin of the MC. Today, the MC can boast about being responsible for a multibillion-dollar industry. But how did the role of the MC come about? We will have to go back, way back. Let’s call it **1974 - BR** (before rap). When the cultural phenomenon we now know as **hip-hop** was in its infancy.

DJs emerged at a rapid rate to supply music to the growing demand of b-boys and young eager "hip-hoppers." It was the DJ who supplied the sound system (usually plugged into a lamppost or donated electricity from an apartment) and decided when the first MCs would use their catchy phrases. The DJ decided when the name of the DJ and crew would be announced. The DJ was responsible for any break in the flow of music. The MC was there to put a little extra on it. The main job and function of the MCs were to blow up the DJ and big up the crew.

By 1977 the MC had become a fixture in every hip-hop crew. Crews started to pop up like toast. There were many wannabes in the first crop of MCs. A better description would be that they were DJs with no equipment trying to stay close to the game. Some were crate-carrying hopefuls wanting to be down and trying to get girls. Whatever the motivation, the game was on. As the number of MCs continued to increase, competition rose. Just as the DJs had battled and raised the standards of excellence, turning their hobby into an art form, so began the MC craft.

When you are an MC for a DJ or crew you represent everyone, you are the voice of the group. There is no way you are going to let anyone sound better than you are. The game was to be the best. Some MCs were naturally talented, like some people are born to sing. Other MCs studied, practiced and persevered. Another group of MCs
were ham sandwiches that skated through the cracks and landed on winning teams. But, like it or not, the field was full, and the streets were the prize.

MCs came in all shapes and sizes. There were solo MCs (one MC along with a DJ), groups (two or more MCs with a DJ) and girl MCs (Sha-Rock of the Funky 4, Lisa Lee, Cosmic Force's Lil Lee and Cool DJ A.J.). It was no longer enough to be "the man" in your own hood. This was the big time, and it felt like being in front of the audience at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, New York. Talk about a tough crowd. It was the job of the MC to act as ambassadors, bringing their signature brand of hip-hop to the different hoods and boroughs. It proved not to be a problem for some because heads were hungry for good hip-hop, no matter where it came from. Many crews tried to conquer new territory. Many were crushed and left by the wayside as is the balance of nature. Only the cream rose to the top.

MCs rhymed about how great they were and how big and bad their crew was. Some were writing stories that were either close to home or totally fictitious. One MC in particular was primarily a crowd rocker. He did not rhyme that much but his quick clever one-liners have echoed throughout the hallowed halls of hip-hop history, Chief Rocker Busy Bee. Busy Bee was the first MC to translate that disco MC style to hip-hop. He is the hip-hop master of audience call and response.

Most MCs gathered into groups consisting of three or more individuals:
Grandmaster Flash and three MCs (later billed as The Furious 4 then The Furious 5 with the addition of Scorpio and Rahiem, respectively), DJ Breakout, Baron and The Funky Four + 1 More, The L Brothers featuring Grand Wizard Theodore, Mean Gene, Cordio and the Three MCs (before adding Prince Whipper Whip and Dotarock, thus The Fantastic Five), Charlie Chase, Tony Tone and the Cold Crush Four MCs (featuring yours truly).

Soon, the role of the MC catapulted to the next level. The MC was now a showman, the leader of a unit, a team. The MC's role as an artist grew as a result of the recording industry's interest in the hip-hop forum. Not only was the MC the new cultural icon, but the pillars upon which the rap industry was built. The MC represented hip-hop in every way. MCs represented through their rhyming skills, their style of dress, their walk and their attitude. While the DJ was delegated to background status, the MC came forward, and became "the man." The MCs became writers, composers and arrangers. The DJs became producers.
Prior to the industry’s involvement, competition on the street was fierce. There was no love lost between rival MC camps. The crew at the forefront of hip-hop prior to the "official" rap era was Grandmaster Flash and The Furious 5. With their DJ marquee, tight routines and flashy leather outfits, they set the standards for all MC groups. Their leader was one of the most prolific rhymers of all time, Melle Mel. When they made the transition from tri-state (NY, NJ, CT) shows to touring with established artists, the battle was on for the number one status in New York. So began one of, if not the fiercest, rivalries in hip hop history: the Cold Crush Brothers versus The Fantastic 5. The two Bronx crews put the B in battle with one of the most anticipated showdowns of the era.

July 4, 1981 at the Harlem World Disco, Cold Crush Brothers vs. The Fantastic Five. The Cold Crush Brothers went on first, wearing matching pinstriped gangster suits and brims, along with prop machine guns. The Fantastic 5 came out in their trademark white tuxedos, to the squeal of female fans. The audience chose the winner and the Fantastic 5 prevailed. However, the standards were set. Battles like this and MC conventions became the proving ground for rival MCs and up-and-coming crews.

Now you have heard of the Furious 5 and you have heard of The Funky 4 + 1 More and I am sure you know The Fantastic 5 with D.J Grand Wizard Theodore and you are familiar with The Love Bug Starski and the Chief Rocker Busy Bee. But, ladies and gentlemen, there were the eighties and it was all about CC Cold Crush, Cold Crush Brothers 1980.

By the 1980s, the era of the MC as a showman and entertainer was just about over and the art form was about to be simplified to its barest elements: no long hair, elaborate routines, flashy costumes or intricate rhyme patterns. The arrival and wild success of Run-DMC made everyone want to become an MC. It was not hard anymore because beats and rhymes became a simple formula. All the glam and glitter became a thing of the past.

So where are MCs today? Look around, chances are you are listening to and watching them every day. You are watching them in music videos, perhaps wearing their new line of sportswear, or clothing endorsed by them. Maybe you have watched one of the sitcoms on television or even a motion picture starring an MC. Maybe you have attended one of their sold out concerts, or have seen one in a commercial. One
way or another, people all over the world have been affected by the impact hip-hop has had on society. At the core of all the excitement... the MC. At a closer look, the role of the MC has not changed much. They are still inventive, informative and entertaining.

I remember back in 1982 shortly after the first hip-hop movie Wildstyle was released, several cast members and I were flown to Tokyo, Japan for a promotional tour. We made several appearances and performed on radio and TV. We were there for three weeks. By the time we left, the influence and impression we made on the people was overwhelming. DJs were attempting to scratch and kids were trying b-boy moves. Some even tried short rhymes in English and in their native tongue, Japanese.

Our role back then was as ambassadors of hip-hop. This role increased as hip-hop grew out of the neighborhood into the mainstream. The MC's role was to introduce the hip-hop culture to the world. Now that hip-hop is accepted worldwide, the role of the MC today is to grow the art form, to be innovative and to continue to communicate with the masses. MCs must also continue to teach, entertain and set positive examples for our youth, and for the future.

http://www.daveyd.com/historyemceegmcaz.html
Like the Jedi in Star Wars fighting against evil, enduring strenuous training, accepting a life-long commitment to obtaining the knowledge of the universe and being heard but never seen, the hip-hop DJ has very much the same destiny. The hip-hop DJ has to endure the process of obtaining a vast knowledge of music and rhythm (the force), be able to synchronize the grooves and beats, and continually search for new sounds to maintain his status in the culture. Much as the Jedi is rumored to be the ultimate warrior of the universe, the hip-hop DJ has become just that, a rumor. Nevertheless, the DJ will always play a major role in hip-hop culture despite its ever-changing nature.

In Star Wars, becoming a Jedi meant that a warrior had to feel the "force," know it and always recognize it. The hip-hop DJ has to do the same. As a DJ, a person has to feel the rhythms and identify them as being a natural part of their existence. Either the force is with you or it isn't. Feeling rhythm is a skill that cannot be taught. This was a sign of a true beat hunter - someone who could instantly feel the rhythms. DJs listened to all genres of music from rock, Latin, country, opera ... whatever, but their main inspiration came from funk and R&B.

Funk/R&B music is the closest source of music that resembles the original drum sounds from Africa. No matter what, funk always moved a crowd. Somehow, after 400 years of displacement out of Africa, the true hip-hop DJ can still feel the rhythm of the drums of Africa. Once you've established a vast music collection, now you have to know how to work it! Not only does a DJ have to know the music on the record; a DJ must also know exactly where the rhythm is on the record. Developing DJ skills requires hours of practice and listening. Techniques such as needle dropping, cueing records, backspinning, scratching and the like are skills that have evolved out of pure hard work and creativity. Developing your own style is key in making your mark in the culture.

The Tri-Force Kool DJ Herc had a style of playing oldies but goodies and only playing the dopest part of the records. He also traveled with a massive sound system
that was impressive in its own right. Grandmaster Flash was a technician about his work. He went against the rules of the disco DJs and left behind smooth mixes. He went straight to the cut. However, despite the equipment and technique, a DJ has to be in total harmony with the rhythms. That means being at one with the force (the rhythms of Africa), and the one who understood that overall was Afrika Bambaataa. He played rhythms that would penetrate your soul and make you move. In the old African tribes he would have been known as the medicine man!

Other DJs during that time (early 1970s) were Kool DJ Dee, DJ Smoke and the Smokatrons, Mean Jean, Disco King Mario (Chuck Chuck City), Pete DJ Jones, Grand Master Flowers and DJ Hollywood, just to name a few. However, Herc, Flash and Bambaataa had the most profound influence on the development of hip-hop culture. These three men represent the Tri-Force of the hip-hop DJ: Kool DJ Herc (presence), Afrika Bambaataa (energy) and Grandmaster Flash (technique). Their examples inspired young teenagers from all over the Bronx to become hip-hop DJs.

Out of the hundreds of DJs spawned from the spirit of the Tri-Force, sweeping through the parks and clubs of the Bronx, only a few stood out, for they had truly harnessed the power: DJ Jazzy Jay, DJ Charlie Chase, Tony Tone, DJ Lil Quick, Imperial Jay Cee, Whiz Kid, DJ Breakout & DJ Baron, DJ Tyrone, Grand Wizard Theodore (inventor of record scratching), DJ Africa Islam (the son of Bambaattaa) and Grandmixer D.ST. whose turntable skills mutated the turntable into a musical instrument. These young men along with Herc, Bam, Flash (the Tri-Force) and their MCs are the Jedi Knights of hip-hop culture. From them you have all the DJs and MCs you see and hear today. In fact, hip-hop culture has disseminated the force from the ghettos of the Bronx, New York to almost every culture in the world.

**Looking for the Perfect Beat**

The hip-hop DJ's original mission overall was rocking the house, and to do this he or she needed an arsenal of beats (records). The DJ's ability to keep a dance floor packed relied on his selection of records. Not only did he have to have radio favorites, he also had to keep up with the latest beats the other DJs had. In addition, he had to have his own collection of obscure beats and this wasn't an easy task. It was only a matter of time before the other DJs would find out the names of your
beats. So, to keep your uniqueness, you had to constantly search for new beats. Thus begun, "The Quest for Beats!"

Other than the development of the MCs, the "quest" was one of the most important events in hip-hop culture because of the demands of maintaining the codes of discipline. First, you had to develop a vast understanding of music - this required much research. You had to listen to all forms of music, no album or album cover was too serious or silly. Nothing was excluded. If it was on vinyl, it had potential. So the more you researched, the more your knowledge of music grew along with your record collection. Second, always travel alone - and if you were with someone, they had to be part of your crew. Any rare recording found was declared top secret and no one outside of your crew could know its name.

Everyday, DJs would head out into the streets of New York to find beats. They would look for thrift shops with large collections of used records. The major record stores were next, to find the latest radio hits. However, the best stores were the small mom and pop record shops throughout the five boroughs of the city. Unlike the bigger commercial stores, the mom and pop record shops would have the old and the new. There wasn't any place that the hip-hop DJ wouldn't dig for beats. It could be mom's, dad's, aunt's, uncle's, cousin's, neighbor's or friend's. No one's record collection was excluded. If there were mountains with caves full of vinyl, you would find a DJ mining for hip-hop gold.

Once you collected enough beats, sometimes just hours before your next party, you had to remove any part of the record label that revealed the artist or the name of the song. Then, you had to subconsciously find where the new beats would fit in your set. Next was practicing - the new beats had to be played in a way that wouldn't give away the artist. If it was just a drumbeat, it was hard for other DJs to know who made the record. So cutting the beat before the other instruments or singers came in was critical. This meant that you had to be fast and precise, and the fastest way to go from one part of a song to another is needle dropping (placing the needle in the same groove at will). This was the ultimate hip-hop DJ skill and was truly mastered by only a few.

The next best thing was Grandmaster Flash's "Clock Theory" which later became known as backspinning. This technique proved to be very useful and allowed DJs to create more new tricks. However, there is a down side to this technique: the more
you backspin the more you destroy that part of the record, and some records are too rare to be used like that. As time went on, hip-hop DJs began to incorporate other instruments (for example, Flash's beat box and D.ST.'s synthesizer) into their sets. Always finding something new to mesmerize the crowd. This competition was key to the growth of hip-hop culture, as each DJ's skills increased, the threshold of hip-hop perfection was raised.

**The Empire Strikes Back**

The hip-hop DJ now had power throughout the city. People would come from miles around just to see Bronx DJs git down. More people became interested in the culture, because they recognized the true spirit in the expression of hip-hop and its magnetizing effect on people. Some hated it because of its universal potential and some only saw one thing: **MONEY**. Unfortunately, they all played a part in the decay of the culture and the DJ's transition into the shadows.

First, the DJs themselves made a critical mistake. They allowed non-DJs to learn the names of songs that were secret. People from outside hip-hop culture would come to parties to meet DJs so they could discuss records. Sometimes DJs would need new copies of some of their rare beats, and these men would provide them. In return they would ask for the name of a beat that you played. At the same time they'd offer the name of a beat that they got from your competition that you did not have. By doing this, the hip-hop DJ was breaking his own code of secrecy, unaware that their sacred collection of records (their energy) was being consolidated into what we now know as **Super Disco Breaks** and **Break Beat records**. So now without the knowledge that could only be acquired through research and hard work, anyone who wanted to be a DJ had access to the sacred beats. This caused a great disturbance in the Tri-Force, and was the beginning of the hip-hop DJ's transition to obscurity.

Second, record companies began signing hip-hop groups with no true interest in the culture to record deals. The DJ and his MC were the two components of one unit, each complimenting the other. Their presence on stage would create energy levels that would leave crowds in awe. However, this was not important to record executives; they only cared about record sales and the MCs were all they needed to sell records. Record companies began to push the MCs into the spotlight, pulling them away from their DJs (the foundation of hip-hop) and pushing the DJs further out of the picture.
Third, the MC now had his own power, but this power was false because he received it from record company executives through their perversion of hip-hop culture and not from the Tri-Force. (And this is still the problem today.) In this perversion, the MC could easily be programmed to think that he or she was still representing hip-hop, even if he or she replaced a DJ with a DAT tape.

**Return of the Jedi (The DJ)**

We now see a new genre of music: A distorted by-product of true hip-hop culture called *rap music* (really rap-u-sic) where the MC has been transformed into something called a "rapper." Where money is energy, jewelry and expensive cars are his presence and he possesses no technique at all. For in his blindness he has been used to destroy everything hip-hop culture stands for. Within this madness, the DJ, who has become nothing more than a sidekick to the rapper, continues to struggle, doing everything he can to bring hip-hop from the underground to the service where it belongs.

The *hip-hop DJ* now spends more time with samplers, computers, synthesizers and drum machines than with turntables. Now some DJs just call themselves producers and the rap artist depends on them to make up beats with the new technology. So it seems that everything happens for a reason, because now that sampling is the main process of rap music, the producer has to find new sounds to sample. He must educate himself like the original hip-hop DJs did because the only way to compete is to practice hard and research (the new "**Quest for Beats**"). In this quest/search you will find hip-hop culture; it's there, it's always been there, and it will always be here.

http://www.daveyd.com/historythedeejaydxt.html
The late 1960s and early 70s ... burn baby burn. It seems appropriate, that during a time period of political debate, racially heated atmosphere and struggle, black and Latin power let their voices be heard. **Writing** [graf] became a voice of many of the youth in the inner cities of New York.

Philadelphia had its **Cool Earls, Philadelphia Phils**, names of whichever rang a bell in New York City where the writer who made a name for himself like Comet, Ajax, or Mr. Clean, was a Greek kid named Demetreus who says he adapted the form after seeing the name Julio 224, on upper west sidestreets in his neighborhood.

Bombing the system did indeed seem to be the inner city youth's battle cry and with that, last but not least, the fever caught on. Amongst its very early writers, who combined their own styles were **SLU II** and **El CID**, followed by **LEE 163d!**, the Bronx first king, who along with Phase 2, set another unprecedented stage for bombing, where writers like **Super Kool** would catch on an take the trend to heights as yet to be known. Its early influences were **Uncle Rich, Johnny 800, Pior 168, Lionel 168, Tracy 168, M&M 177**, and a DJ known in the Bronx as **Kool Herc** who's face in the letters **K-O-O-L** changed about as much as his beats in a Jam.

**Super Kool**'s summer of '72 brainstorm, forever changed the writers approach to writing. By placing his name on the side of the train in thick extra letters, the master piece was born and adapted by the entire writing movement, as was his next venture - a masterpiece that started at the top of the car to its bottom practically from one end to the other. He also introduced a spray cap which enabled one to fill in their pieces with more efficiency and also write their signatures large with less effort. With the culture ever evolving and adapting different paths to "**Get Up,**" (have ones name in as many places as possible), the transformation of the letter as it was known, was taking place, bombing had to reckon with the style factor and concepts such as 3ds. At the same time while cars and scenic backgrounds came into the picture to compliment its most important element - the name - which in the light of respect, one seemed to cherish as they did life. Indeed. To go over one's name was indeed as if to break a law, which could result in the harshest of penalties. The name was one's
honor, one's claim to existence, thus an area where violation was virtually intolerable.

From the early to mid 70s, writing now with a basic foundation, had more or less a blue print for up-and-comers seeking to fill its ranks. As time past into the later 70s and 80s, those picking up and taking on its trade continued metamorphosing the letter, defining style and continuing the evolution that's been a trademark of aerosol writing.

Hence forth in the 90s, the science of the letter and the sport of getting up/around remains as a forum for youth worldwide to adhere to and become practitioners in, which in itself, is a testament to its longevity and the strength of its existence, as a force to be recognized and reckoned with.

http://www.daveyd.com/historygrafphase2.html
Handout A7a

By Dr. Marc Lamont Hill

Hip-Hop sucks. There, I've said it. After years of ignoring my feelings and hoping that things would change with the next album, video, or artist, I have finally accepted the fact that hip-hop simply isn't good anymore. The swagger is gone. Hip-hop is still cool but it's no longer fly. It's still hot but it's no longer dope. Most important, hip-hop is no longer fun. I can't say for sure when it happened, but somewhere between Wu-Tang's grimy "Protect Ya Neck" and the Ying Yang Twins' disgusting "Whisper Song", hip-hop became boring and predictable.

To be sure, my disaffection is likely a natural response to having recently suffered the indignity of turning to the local urban radio station and discovering that one of the songs that I listened to in high school had been relegated to the "old school lunch hour". Consequently, like any newly made hip-hop "old head", I now invoke a degree of nostalgia in order to protect my most precious memories of the recent past from what Stuart Hall calls the "tyranny of the new". As such, I must hate a little on the new stuff in order to keep the old stuff fully relevant and valuable to me.

Nevertheless, I maintain that we have reached a low point in hip-hop culture. But unlike most of my friends who have elected for early retirement from hip-hop fandom, I am not content to simply walk away in a self-righteous huff. Instead, I am willing to put my issues on the table in the small hope that things can turn around. After all, unlike Common, I still love H.E.R. I just can't find H.E.R.

In this recurring series, I provide some of my explanations for hip-hop's decline. Moving beyond the more frequently discussed issues like wanton materialism, female objectification, or corporate co-optation, I point to some equally critical issues within hip-hop that have pushed me to this point. Here goes:

Where my girls at?
Although hip-hop has always been a hyper-masculine boys club, quality female representation has dipped to an all-time low. No one has picked up the baton once carried by MC Lyte, Queen Latifah, or Salt n' Pepa and successfully run with it. Even the sex driven (and often ghostwritten) acts of Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown have been reproduced as uninteresting caricatures like Khia and Trina. While Missy Elliot's
creativity and old school flavor keep the music fun, her lyrical abilities are drastically sub-par. Artists like Bahamadia and Jean Grae keep the underground alive with their top shelf skills, but their lack of selling power makes it difficult for them to start a movement. Our brightest hope was Lauryn Hill before (she became) Unplugged, when she ranked among the illest MCs on the planet, male or female. Word on the street is that she's on the road to personal and lyrical recovery. We'll keep our fingers crossed.

They don't freestyle no mo'
Not so long ago, freestyling was a centerpiece of hip-hop culture. In order to be considered a complete MC, an individual had to be literally battle tested in the world of improvisational rhyming. Until the mid-'90s, the mixtape market, live shows, and local ciphers all served as fertile sites for freestyle raps from both seasoned veterans and hungry up-and-comers. Today, mixtape and live show "freestyles" are little more than album pre-releases and verses retrieved from the cutting room floor. Even worse, many underground and national rap venues (like BET's Freestyle Friday) privilege predictable one liners, insults, and clearly rehearsed verses over the raw, perfect imperfections of an authentic freestyle. There are exceptions, of course, like Toni Blackman's "Freestyle Union" movement, as well as rappers like Common who aren't scared to drop a verse from the dome in front of thousands. Nevertheless, the future of the freestyle is pretty grim.

Manufactured rap wars
Like the freestyle, MC battles have been the lifeblood of hip-hop culture since the '80s. LL Cool J vs. Kool Moe Dee, Roxanne Shante vs. Real Roxanne, KRS One vs. MC Shan, and most recently Nas vs. Jay-Z, have all marked highpoints in hip-hop history. While there is certainly no shortage of battles in today's rap world, there has been a dramatic shift in the quality, authenticity, and motivations for the latest rap wars. Since the overwhelming commercial success of the Nas vs. Jay-Z feud, it seems that every new MC must find someone to beef with in order to make his or her mark and boost record sales. Perhaps the most transparent example of this is 50 Cent, who managed to stir controversy with Nas, R. Kelly, Fat Joe, Jadakiss, and Game right around the time of his album release date. In addition to the WWF-esque feel of the battles, the lyrical quality of the latest feuds has waned considerably. Instead of engaging a spirited game of the dozens filled with personal and professional disses, most rappers use the songs as a space to make personal threats
and air dirty laundry. For this reason, it is no surprise that so many of today's beefs have extended beyond the songs and into the streets.

**The Superproducer**

While hip-hop has always had its share of elite producers, the last 10 years have given birth to a new breed of "superproducers". Beginning with the ever-present P. Diddy (née Puff Daddy), this group of overexposed hit men has moved from behind the boards and into the videos and songs of their artists. Superproducers like the Neptunes (particularly Pharrell) and Kanye West have become so large and appear so frequently on the songs they produce that they almost always overshadow their artists. Furthermore, superproducers have created sounds so distinctive and, as of late, predictable that the hip-hop Top-40 sounds like one big remix album. For example, even Lil Jon' himself would have difficulty distinguishing between the beats for his 2004 mega-hits "Freek-a-leek" and "Yeah!" Another consequence of this sonic oligarchy has been the construction of barriers for many talented young producers to gain access to the big stage because of their lack of star power or failure to reproduce the sounds *de jour*. The only viable alternative for many is to serve as a ghostproducer for the giants of the day and patiently wait for a chance to get noticed. The only catch is that the role of ghostproducer requires them to constrain much of their own creativity in order to approximate the sounds of the superproducer. The rich get richer . . .
Why Hip-Hop Sucks part 2
By Dr. Marc Lamont Hill

Since writing the cathartic piece, "Why Hip-Hop Sucks Part 1" a few months ago, I have received a constant flurry of e-mails, phone calls, and letters from a wide range of hip-hop critics, fans, and artists who have responded in a variety of interesting ways to my lamentation. While many people, including prominent artists (shout out to Common and Nas!) shared my sense of sadness about the state of hip-hop, others criticized me for my pessimism, romanticism, and failure to acknowledge the extra-musical dimensions of hip-hop culture like b-boying and graffiti. Some, like the several members of the Zulu Nation who wrote angry rejoinders to the piece, even questioned the authenticity of my connection to hip-hop culture.

After a few months of reflection, I’ve come to some conclusions. First of all, hip-hop still sucks. Nonetheless, I am not pessimistic about its future. On the contrary, I am quite hopeful that we will be able to find our way. Am I admittedly and unavoidably romantic about the hip-hop of the past? Yes. But, like Chris Rock said after first listening to "Get Low" and "Move Bitch", it's getting hard to defend this new shit. Why do I focus on the music and not the other dimensions of hip-hop? Three reasons: 1) the other stuff doesn't suck nearly as badly; 2) the other stuff matters largely because of the status of the music; and 3) no disrespect to the other elements, but hip-hop music is what I care about the most.

In part two of this recurring series, I provide further explication of my position by not only describing problematic trends in hip-hop, but also identifying the key figures in the culture who embody them. To be clear (both for journalistic purposes and as a disclaimer for desperate and crazed backpacker zealots), I am not suggesting that these individuals are the cause of hip-hop's ills. Rather, they are but symptoms of much larger problems that demand serious attention.

The Source
Since its inception in 1988, The Source magazine has been the New York Times of the hip-hop community, updating its readers on the latest news, trends, and up-and-coming artists. No magazine in hip-hop history has had the ability to make or break
a career like The Source, whose "mics" are the unit of measurement not only for its own rating system, but also the critical shorthand for the entire hip-hop community. While a five mic album can virtually certify an album's success and assure legendary status for the artist, a low rating (below three mics) can end a career before it starts.

In recent years, coinciding with co-owner Raymond "Benzino" Scott's increasing public role with the magazine, The Source has come under considerable scrutiny for its questionable editorial practices. While there have always been questionable reviews and "money for mics" rumors surrounding The Source, as well as other music magazines, a series of events over the past five years have drastically and permanently tarnished its reputation.

Despite being commercial flops, Benzino and his untalented rap crew Made Men (formerly the Almighty RSO) have been given extraordinary attention from The Source. Despite selling only 14,000 copies of his Redemption album, Benzino has graced the cover of the magazine while Made Men, who received only scant media attention, have been nominated for the magazine's annual awards. In 1999, editor-in-chief Selwyn Hinds resigned from his position after being forced to change the magazine's Made Men rating from 3.5 (fairly average) to 4.5 (nearly classic) mics. More recently, in August 2005, Joshua "Fahiem" Ratcliffe resigned after being forced to lower Little Brother's rating from 4.5 to 4.0 mics. Word on the street is that Lil Kim's upcoming pre-jail LP, The Naked Truth, will receive 5 mics. This questionable call will do nothing to stop the rumors.

In addition to its questionable music criticism, The Source has become increasingly focused on courting commercial advertising dollars and disseminating hip-hop gossip. In doing this, The Source has essentially ignored many substantive political issues affecting the hip-hop generation and the larger black and Latino communities. The most notable exception to this has been The Source's crusade against Eminem in a series of articles, and through Benzino's kamikaze rap battle with the white lyricist.

In addition to critiquing his privileged industry position, The Source released a CD of Eminem's disturbing and racist teenage rants against black women. Given their historic indifference to the treatment of black women, as evidenced by the magazine's nearly pornographic ads and photo spreads, as well as its blind eye towards the remainder of hip-hop misogyny, it appears that Benzino and The Source were fighting for exclusive rights to call and treat black women like bitches and hos - - no white man was gonna do it for 'em.
**Lil' Jon**

A relative once told me "Never eat watermelon in front of white people!" His advice was based on the belief that if white people saw black people doing stereotypical things, it would serve to reinforce racism and somehow justify continued unequal treatment. This same ideology causes me to look around for white people whenever I see Lil' Jon on television, and internally cringe when my white colleagues ask me to explain his antics. Lil' Jon's image, which amounts to postmodern minstrelsy or what Jeff Chang calls "crunkface", serves as a brutal reminder of the poverty of black representation in the mass media. While Lil' Jon is certainly not the first Stepin Fetchit throwback that hip-hop has seen — figures like Flava Flav and Ol' Dirty Bastard can certainly claim OC (original coon) status — Lil' Jon somehow manages to strip his identity of any self awareness and complexity that his predecessors possessed. In place of Flav's musical activism and ODB's Five Percenter allusions is Lil' Jon's lyrically impoverished rants that are just plain "ign'ant", even under hip-hop standards.

**Bishop Don "Magic" Juan**

For the past few years, the "reformed" pimp has been a fixture on the hip-hop scene, accompanying Snoop Dogg on videos, interviews, and award shows. While hip-hop has never been short on misogyny, the rise of the pimp marks a depressing downward shift in hip-hop's gender politics. The term, which refers to the practice of manipulating and dehumanizing women through rape, beatings, and the use of their bodies for sexual commerce, has become a staple of both mainstream and underground hip-hop discourse. Consequently, the sex industry that largely exploits poor black and Latino women is, at best, an afterthought to suburban white MTV viewers who want their rides pimped, energy deprived urban professionals in desperate need of pimp juice, and pseudo-revolutionaries who follow "conscious" MCs like Dead Prez's exhortations to pimp the system.

Some intellectuals have argued that "pimp" is merely a metaphor that has been appropriated by the hip-hop generation and given a new and redemptive meaning. This wouldn't be outside the realm of possibility if the people historically designated as "hoes" were refashioning the pimp, as black people have done with "nigger". But how can the very people who enable and benefit from the hateful practices that normalize pimping (in this case, the male-driven hip-hop industry) suddenly decide to separate it from its vicious history? That's like George W. Bush saying, "N-gg-r, no
longer means what it used to mean to blacks. Okay n-gg-rs?"

**Kanye West**

Given his recent courageous statements about the Bush Administration's response to the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, I am willing to give Kanye a pass for the arrogant, childish, and narcissistic characteristics that have turned him into hip-hop's first full-fledged diva. Nevertheless, every time that I listen to a track from Kanye West's two "classic" albums, I find myself wondering "Am I the only person on the planet that realizes that this guy can't rap?" While no one can doubt Kanye's genius behind the boards, or his ambition and creativity on the mic, his lyrical frailty becomes apparent whenever he shares a track with real MCs like Common, Talib Kweli, Jay-Z, Nas, or even Cam'ron. Of course, hip-hop has always had its share of compelling but sub-par MCs like Chuck D, Eazy E, and Guru, but none of them were billed as top-flight lyricists. On the contrary, Kanye has been positioned as a hip-hop heavyweight in spite of his average skills.

More importantly, Kanye represents a disturbing trend in hip-hop lyricism. Complex rhyme schemes, clever allusions, and poetic flows are slowly falling to the wayside in favor of predictable punch lines, wack similes, and uninventive interpolations of earlier songs. At least part of the blame for this pattern goes to Jay-Z, who has often bragged that he never writes his lyrics down. This type of statement — which is the equivalent of Michael Jordan confessing to a young hoopster that he never really practiced over the summer — does an extraordinary disservice to the other 99.9% of the rappers who cannot create quality rhymes without the benefit of a pen.

**Marion "Suge" Knight**

Who said that I had a problem with Suge Knight? Somebody has a problem with Suge Knight? I ain't got no problems with Suge Knight.

*To Be Continued...*
Handout A

We Wear the Mask by Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be overwise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!
The Mask by the Fugees

[CHORUS:]
The mask one-two one-two,
(M) to the (A) to the (S) to the (K)
Put the mask upon the face just to make the next day,
Feds be hawkin me
Jokers be stalking me,
I walk the streets and camouflage my identity,
My posse in the Brooklyn wear the mask.
My crew in the Jersey wear the mask.
Stick up kids doing boogie woogie wear the mask.
Yeah everybody wear the mask but how long will it last.

[CLEFT:]
I used to work at Burger King. A king taking orders.
Punching my clock. Now I'm wanted by the manager.
Soupin me up sayin "You're a nice worker,"
"How would you like a quarter raise, move up the register"
"Large in charge, but cha gotta be my spy,
Come back and tell me who's baggin my fries,
Getting high on company time."
Hell no sirree, wrong M.C.
Why should I be a spy, when you spying me?
And you see whatcha thought ya saw but never seen.
Ya missed ya last move, Checkmate! Crown me King,
Hold my 22 pistol whipped him in his face.
Hired now I'm fired, sold bud now I'm wired,
Eyes pitch red but da beat bop my head
Hit the streets for relief, I bumped into the Feds,
I got kidnapped they took me to D.C.,
Have me working underground building missiles for World War III.

[CHORUS:]
(M) to the (A) to the (S) to the (K),
put the mask up on the face just to make the next day.
Brothers be gaming, Ladies be claiming.
I walk the streets and camouflage my identity.
My posse Uptown wear the mask.
My crew in the Queens wear the mask.
Stick up kids with the Tommy Hil wear the mask.
Yeah everybody wear the mask but how long will it last.

[LAURYN:]
I thought he was the wonder, and I was stunned by his lips,
Taking sips sipping Amaretto sour with a twist,
Shook my hips to the bass line, this joker grabbed my waistline,
Putting pressure on my spine trying to get L-Boog to wind,
I backed up off him then caught him with five finger to his face,
I had to put him in his place,
This kids invading my space,
But then I recognized the smile, but I couldn't place the style,
So many fronts in his mouth, I thought he was the Golden Child,
Then it hit me that's Tariq from off the street around Grams.
I haven't seen him since fifteen, when he got booked for doing scams.
I tried to walk away but he wouldn't let me leave,
He ran up quick behind me asking, "Yo what happened to my nigga Steve?"
Steve was like this kid I went with back in Grammar School.
I chuckled knucklehead I seen him yesterday he's cool,
He's busted, "so who you checking for now?"
Probably some intellectual.
I kept the conversation straight and he kept trying to make it sexual.
Then his old lady tried to play me waved her hands up in my face,
Yo I told her check your man cause b**** you acting out of place.

[CHORUS:]
(M) to the (A) to the (S) to the (K),
put the mask up on the face just to make the next day.
Brothers be gaming, Ladies be claiming.
I walk the streets and camouflage my identity.
My posse Uptown wear the mask.
My crew in the Queens wear the mask.
Stick up kids with the Tommy Hil wear the mask.
Yeah everybody wear the mask but how long will it last.

[PRAZ:]
3a.m. in th morning on the Boulevard,
I'm still at large engaged with my entourage,
me and Godfather and a 67 Dodge.
I stepped out the note to post up my guard
searching for my car that was stolen from Scotland Yard.
My first instinct was to check the chop shop garage.
As I rung the bell someone tapped me on my back,
I turned around to look it was a rookie in a mask.
He said, "I got a itchin' on my trigger,
Don't move n**** I'm taking you for murder."
See cops got two faces like two laces on my Reeboks.
My knees knock as I step back for a clear shot,
Well did you shoot him? Naw kid I didn't have the balls,
That's when I realized I'm pumpin' too much Biggie Smalls.

[CHORUS:]
(M) to the (A) to the (S) to the (K),
put the mask up on the face just to make the next day.
Brothers be gaming, Ladies be claiming.
I walk the streets and camouflage my identity.
My posse Uptown wear the mask.
My crew in the Queens wear the mask.
Stick up kids with the Tommy Hil wear the mask.
Yeah everybody wears the mask but how long will it last?
section three

ACADEMIC STANDARDS
Learning and Academic Standards

This guide is designed specifically with teachers in mind. Being mindful of the wide ranging availability of resources, we have attempted to create lessons that accommodate educators with both limited and readily available resources. Much of what is written in this guide will be somewhat familiar to the students that you encounter. It is important to be willing to learn with your students and about their views. This guide solicits opinions and ideas from students. You may not agree with what your students think in regards to much of the content of this guide; however, there is more fundamental learning taking place than just learning about hip-hop.

In writing this learning guide, learning standards for reading, writing, speaking, and listening and standards for the arts in humanities were considered. The guide is aligned with standards according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Academic Standards. The specific standards can be accessed in PDF format at the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s website. In the state of Pennsylvania, the standards are actually based on learning benchmarks that students are expected to attain by a certain grade level. For this guide, we have designed activities that allow students to reach the benchmarks necessary for grades 8 to 12.

To gain the most from this guide, it is important for educators concerned with teaching to standards to understand the standards he or she seeks to meet. Doing so allows teachers to effectively assess the learning that takes place as a result of using this guide. We recommend that educators refer to the domains of assessment that have been adopted by your school district of program leadership. Lastly, this guide is designed to reinforce learning in a fun and culturally relevant way. It should in no way replace traditional curricula in teaching students academic standards. Instead, the reinforcement of learning standards in the context of hip-hop allows students to see the cross-cutting nature of the traditional standards and skills learned in their regular academic classes. We hope that this guide provides a fun culturally and academically enriching way of reinforcing the academic standards of your school or education center.

For a complete listing of Pennsylvania’s Academic standards and benchmarks, visit: www.pastatestandards.org or go directly to the PDF by visiting: www.pastatestandards.org/benchmarks/allstandardsfinal.pdf
GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT ACADEMIC TERMS

**Aesthetics**: A branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of beauty and value of the arts and inquiry processes and human responses they produce.

**Aesthetic Criteria**: Standards on which to make judgments about the artistic merit of a work of art, derived from cultural and emotional values and cognitive meaning.

**Aesthetic Response**: A philosophical reply to works in the arts.

**Alliteration**: The repetition of initial consonant sounds in neighboring words.

**Allusion**: An implied or indirect reference in literature to a familiar person, place or event.

**Analysis**: The process or result of identifying the parts of a whole and their relationships to one another.

**Antonym**: A word that is the opposite of another word.

**Artistic Choices**: Selections made by artists in order to convey meaning.

**Art Resources**: An outside community asset (e.g. performances, exhibitions, performers, artists).

**Assess**: To analyze and determine the nature and quality of the process/product through means appropriate to the art form.

**Characterization**: The method an author uses to reveal characters and their various personalities.

**Community**: A group of people who share a common social, historical, regional, or cultural heritage.

**Compare**: Place together characters, situations, or ideas to show common or differing features in literary selections.

**Contemporary technology**: Tools, machines, or implements emerging and used today for the practice of production of works in the arts.

**Context**: A set of interrelated background conditions (e.g. social, economic, political) that influence and give meaning to the development to reception of thoughts, ideas, or concepts and that define specific cultures and eras.

**Context Clues**: information from the reading that identifies a word of group of words.

**Conventions of Language**: Mechanics, usage and sentence completeness.

**Create**: To produce works in the arts using materials, techniques, processes,
elements, principles, and analysis.

**Critical Analysis:** The process of examining and discussing the effective uses of specific aspects of works in the arts.

**Critical Process:** The use of sequential examination through comparison, analysis, interpretation, formation and testing of hypothesis and evaluation to form judgments.

**Critical Response:** The act of process of describing and evaluating the media, processes, and meanings of works in the arts and making comparative judgments.

**Criticism (Formal):** Discussion and evaluation of the elements and principles essential to works in the arts and humanities.

**Criticism (Intuitive):** Discussion and evaluation of one’s subjective insight to works in the arts and humanities.

**Contextual Criticism:** Discussion and evaluation with consideration of factors surrounding the origin and heritage to works in the arts and humanities.

**Culture:** The way of life of a group of people, including customs, beliefs, arts, institutions, and worldview. Culture is acquired through many means and is always changing.

**Cultural Production:**

- **Elements:** Core components that support the principles of the arts.
- **Evaluate:** Examine and judge carefully.
- **Figurative Language:** Language that cannot be taken literally since it was written to create a special effect of feeling.
- **Fluency:** The clear, easy, written, or spoken expression of ideas. Freedom from word-identification problems which might hinder comprehension in silent reading or the expression of ideas in oral reading.
- **Focus:** The center of interest or attention.
- **Genre:** A category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique or content (e.g. prose, poetry). Or A type of category (e.g. music – rap, country, jazz; theatre – tragedy, comedy; dance; breakdancing, modern, ballet; visual art – pastoral, portrait, scenes of everyday life).
- **Graphic Organizer:** A diagram or pictorial device that shows relationships.
- **Homophone:** One or two more words pronounced alike, but differing in spelling or meaning (e.g. hare/hair, scale (fish)/scale (musical)).
- **Humanities:** The branch of learning that connects the fine arts, literature, languages, philosophy and cultural science. The humanities are connected with the
understanding and integration of human thought and accomplishment.

**Hyperbole:** An exaggeration or overstatement (e.g. I was so embarrassed I could have died.).

**Idiomatic Language:** An expression peculiar to itself grammatically or that cannot be understood if taken literally (e.g. Let’s get on the ball.).

**Improvisation:** Spontaneous creation requiring focus and concentration.

**Irony:** The use of a word or phrase to mean the exact opposite of its literal or usual meaning; incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the expected result.

**Literary Conflict:** The struggle that grows out of two opposing forces in a plot.

**Literary Elements:** The essential techniques used in literature (e.g. characterization, plot, setting, theme).

**Literary Devices:** Tools used by the author to enliven and provide voice to the writing (e.g. dialogue, alliteration).

**Literary Structures:** The author’s method of organizing the text (e.g. foreshadowing, flashbacks).

**Metaphor:** The comparison of two unlike things in which no words of comparison (like or as) are used (e.g. That new kid is class is really a squirrel.).

**Meter:** The repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry.

**Multimedia:** The combined use of media, such as movies, cds, television, radio, print, and the internet for entertainment and publicity.

**Narrative:** A story, actual or fictional, expressed orally or in writing.

**Original Works in the Arts:** Dance, music, theatre, and visual arts pieces created by performing or visual artists.

**Paraphrase:** Restate text or passage in other words, often to clarify meaning or show understanding.

**Pattern book:** A book with a predictable language structure and often written with predictable text; also known as a predictable book.

**Personification:** An object or abstract idea given human qualities or human form (e.g. The flowers danced about the lawn.).

**Phonics:** The relationship between letters and sounds fundamental in beginning reading.

**Point of View:** The way in which an author reveals characters, events and ideas in telling a story; the vantage point from which the story is told.

**Public Document:** A document that focuses on civic issues or matters of public
policy at the community level and beyond.

**Principles:** Essential assumptions, basic or essential qualities determining intrinsic characteristics.

**Reading Critically:** Reading in which a questioning attitude, logical analysis and inference are used to judge the worth of the text; evaluating relevancy and adequacy of what is read; the judgment of validity and worth of what is read, based on sound criteria.

**Reading Rate:** The speed at which a person reads, usually silently.

**Research:** A systematic inquiry into a subject or problem in order to discover, verify or revise facts or principles having to do with a subject or problem.

**Satire:** A literary tone used to ridicule or make fun of human vices or weakness.

**Self-monitor:** Know when what one is reading or writing is not making sense; adjust strategies for comprehension.

**Semantics:** The study of meaning in language.

**Simile:** A comparison of two unlike things in which a work of comparison (like or as) is used (e.g. She eats like a bird.).

**Sources (Primary):** Text and/or artifacts that tell or show a first hand account of an event; original works used when researching (e.g. interview, video footage of an event).

**Sources (Secondary):** Text and/or artifacts used when researching that are derived from something original (e.g. magazine article, research report).

**Subject Area:** An organized body of knowledge; a discipline; a content area.

**Style:** How an author writes; an author’s use of language; its effects and appropriateness to the author’s intent and theme. Or A distinctive or characteristic manner of expression.

**Synonym:** One of two or more words in a language that have highly similar meaning (e.g., sorrow, grief, sadness).

**Syntax:** The pattern or structure of work order in sentences, clauses, and phrases.

**Technique:** Specific skills and details employed by an artist, craftsperson or performer in the production of works in the arts.

**Theme:** A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work.

**Thesis:** The basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it; the subject or major argument of a speech or composition.

**Timbre:** A unique quality of sound.
**Tone:** The attitude of the author toward the audience and characters (e.g. serious or humorous).

**Traditions:** Knowledge, opinions, and customs a group feels is so important that members continue and practice it and pass it on to other generations.

**Traditional Technology:** Tools, machines, or implements used for the historical practice of works in the arts.

**Vocabulary:** Age and content appropriate terms used in the instruction of the arts and humanities that demonstrate levels of proficiency as defined in local curriculum.

**Voice:** The fluency, rhythm and liveliness in writing that makes it unique to the writer.
Additional Resources

**Hip Hop Education Resources**

Compiled by Marcella Runell, 9/19/2006
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Hip Hop Education 101 article for VIBE (overview of Hip-Hop education as a “movement”).


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**Lesson Plans/Curriculum:**

**Hip-Hop as an Educational Literacy Program (H.E.L.P.)** has comprehensive lesson plans for teaching language arts/literacy skills for 13-18 year olds,
http://www.guerillaartsink.com/

The **Rappin’ Mathematician** is a great resource with accompanying CDs’ at www.mathraps.com

**Ron Clark** from the recent TNT movie, has a whole CD, which teaches the Presidents, the Bones of the body, and other interesting and useful lessons including knowledge about MLK, Jr., and South Africa.

The **New York Times** provides FREE interdisciplinary lessons for educators teaching grades 6-8, 9-12, with at least fifteen specifically using Hip-Hop,

The **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** has a comprehensive list of FREE interdisciplinary lesson plans created by fellow educators on various genres of music for various grade levels, including Hip-Hop at http://www.rockhall.com/programs/plans.asp.

**Flocabulary** is an amazing resource, and they even have a new book coming out Winter 2006 on Hip-Hop History, as well as several FREE lesson plans accessible on their Web site, http://www.flocabulary.com/teacher/lessonplanmosdef.html.

**The Hip-Hop Circuit: Teachers**

hiphopcircuit.com/teachersup.htm
A tremendous resource for using hip-hop in education. FREE lesson plans, articles, unit materials.

**Hip-Hop Poetry and the Classics for the Classroom**

hiphopintheclass.com
Alan Sitomer and Mike Cirelli co-wrote an instructional guide for how to incorporate hip-hop into the classroom specifically through language arts skills. At this site, teachers can see some sample lessons and order the book for more information.

**Flipping the Script: Critical Thinking in a Hip-Hop World**
http://www.justthink.org/flippingthescript/ A curriculum for teaching students media literacy and other topics using hip-hop music and culture.
VH1 has FREE curriculum to accompany their Hip-Hop programming And You Don’t Stop: 30 Years of Hip-Hop, which can be found at http://www.vh1.com/partners/vh1_music_studio/supplies/specials/downloads/hip_hop2-lesson5.pdf#search=%22hip-hop%20lesson%20plans%22.


Ithaca College hosts a Web site called, WISE (Working to Improve Schools and Education) which has FREE lesson plans, articles, and other useful resources on Hip-Hop and education, http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/topics/hip_hop.htm

PBS has a FREE lesson plan on Transcending Jazz, Poetry and Hip-Hop, which can be found at, http://www.pbs.org/jazz/classroom/transcend.htm.


Lesson Planet costs money, but you can get a free seven day trial for what seem to be some interesting lesson plans that focus on hip-hop and dance at http://www.lessonplanet.com/search/Art_and_Music/Dance?startval=10#.

Organizations:

The Hip-Hop Association’s education initiative (H2Ed) has WIKI data base with lesson plans and other educator resources (www.hiphopassociation.org).

Hip-Hop Matters, Executive Director Andrew Ryan, hosts a Web site (www.hiphopmatters.org) with educational resources as well as information on The Journal of Hip-Hop, which provides a space for critical dialogue about hip hop culture (http://www.johh.org).

The University of Hip Hop Web site (http://uhiphop.uchicago.edu) provides a useful model for educators seeking to implement hip hop education programs.

The Temple of Hip Hop, founded by KRS-ONE, has a mission to promote, preserve, and protect hip-hop as a strategy toward health, love, awareness, and wealth (www.templeofhiphop.org).

Russell Simmons, in partnership with the Urban League, created a literacy program for NYC high school students called Hip-Hop Reader (http://www.nyul.org/whatsnew.asp?intCategoryID=75&intArticleID=442).

Kanye West, also has an innovative education program called, Loop Dreams, http://www.erniebarnes.com/kanyewestfoundation.html.

Recent Films:

Award-winning documentary on Hip Hop and education, “Reading Between the Rhymes,” (2005) by filmmaker Keith Morikawa. (http://www.uthtv.com/about/team/)

Dead Prez (www.bossupbu.com) has a Web site that offers relevant educational information on various topics for the community, also check out the Starz in Black documentary on Bay Area Politics, “It’s Bigger Than Hip Hop.”

**Useful Web sites:**

Daniel Zarazua, Oakland based DJ/Teacher hosts a Web site (www.domingoyu.com) with up-to-date information on education and identity.

The mission of the Hip Hop Archive Portal housed at Stanford University is in part to facilitate and encourage the pursuit of knowledge by creating a resource guide of: hip hop-related books, articles, and courses (www.hiphoparchive.org).


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