

Introduction to Hip-hop – January 10, 2018

### **Hip-hop**

Hip-hop culture emerged in the Bronx (New York City) in the 1970s, but it is now a global culture. There are many ways that people express hip-hop culture, and you can't understand hip-hop music without being aware of the other forms of artistic expression that define the style:

**DJing** – Mixing different pre-recorded music, usually for a live audience in a nightclub, dance club, or on the radio. DJs traditionally use turntables to *spin* vinyl records, although modern DJs usually use a laptop computer in addition or instead of turntables. DJs spun records for parties, learning how to switch between two different records using turntables. Crowds would come to an event because of the DJ.

Example: DJ Shiftee

**Rapping** – Rhythmic, often rhyming vocal delivery over a DJ's spinning or a track produced in a studio.

Example: Grandmaster Flash, "The Message" (1982)

**Dancing** (breaking, break dancing, b-boys, b-girls, pop locking)

**Graffiti** – Art, writing, or painting made in a public space, usually illegally

**Beat boxing** – Mimicking the sounds of a drum machine with one's mouth and body. Example: Slick Rick and Doug E. Fresh, "Lodi Dodi" (1985)

### **A closer look at rapping**

An MC (emcee), or Master of Ceremonies, was in charge of *moving the crowd*—keeping people partying, making focusing on the skills of the DJ, announcing the next party, and helping party goers enjoy the evening. A talented MC could get party goers' attention with their unique voice, clever rhymes, and artful boasting or bragging—rap was born.

Modern MCs and rap music continue or draw upon earlier performance styles:

- Griot – a traditional storyteller in West Africa who would deliver stories rhythmically over drums
- Blues – American Black storytelling and shared past experiences
- Jazz – each performer's distinct voice and style is celebrated
- Boasting/Toasting/Dozens – bragging games played by men and boys in New York City and the Caribbean

Listeners and people in hip-hop distinguish between different emcees based on several different factors

Content (what is said)	Delivery, rhythm, tone of voice, flow, rhyme
Slang	(how it's said)
Geographical identity (where someone is from)	Word play
	Authenticity, being a part of hip-hop culture

Example: There are 247 songs that reference or sample Grandmaster Flash's "The Message." (Puff Daddy, "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" 1997)

There are two basic strands of modern rap:

<u>Boasting/Party rap</u>		<u>Conscious rap</u>	<u>A mix of both</u>
Sugarhill Gang	Lil Wayne	Grandmaster Flash	Run-DMC
Kool Moe Dee	Twista	Afrika Bambaataa	Notorious B.I.G.
Naughty By Nature	Ja Rule	N.W.A.	Jay-Z
2 Live Crew	50 Cent	Chuck D/Public Enemy	Missy Elliott
LL Cool J	Kanye West	Tupac Shakur	Eminem
Dr. Dre	Ludaris	Ice Cube	Big Sean
Snoop Dogg	Lil Jon	Ice-T	
Beastie Boys	T.I.	Queen Latifah	
MC Hammer	Drake	Talib Kweli	
Will Smith	Nicki Minaj	Mos Def	
Puff Daddy (P. Diddy, Sean Combs)	Fetty Wap	A Tribe Called Quest	
Busta Rhymes	2 Chainz	KRS-One	
Lil' Kim	Cardi B	Nas	
		Lauryn Hill	
		Common	
		Dead Prez	
		Lupe Fiasco	
		M.I.A.	
		Kendrick Lamar	

A big part of successful hip-hop today are producers because hip-hop is often made in a studio. Some major producers include:

Dr. Dre	Timbaland	Swizz Beats
Rick Rubin	Puff Daddy/P. Diddy	Pharrell Williams
Q-Tip	Kanye West	DJ Khaled

Examples:

Jay-Z, "On to the Next One" (2009), produced by Swizz Beats  
DJ Khaled f. Justin Bieber, Quavo, Chance the Rapper, Lil Wayne, "I'm the One" (2017)

Hip-hop is often a way for people who are not the majority in their society to express themselves: to show that they are outsiders in their home, to show that they're a part of a global culture, and to share their ideas in a catchy way that others are more likely to listen to.

Examples:

M.I.A., "Bad Girls" (2010) – British rapper from Sri Lanka  
MC Solaar, "Inch'Allah" (2002) – French rapper from Senegal; his parents are from Chad

### **Homework and reminders**

Reading: None!

- Class on Monday, January 15 will take place at the Met Museum starting at 2:00pm
- Class on Wednesday, January 17 will begin at 10:30am

Magazine: Choose an individual time to meet with me on Wednesday, January 17: 9:30am, 10:00am, 2:00pm, 2:30pm, 3:00pm

Writing: Travel Essay #3 is due January 17. All 6 of your final magazine pieces are due via email by 11:59pm on Sunday, January 21