

INTRO TO

HIP-HOP



WHAT IS HIP-HOP?

Hip-hop is a style of music and culture that began in the 1970s in New York City, most notably in a borough called the Bronx. Hip-hop includes music, dance, art, fashion, and self-expression. It gave young people a way to share stories about their lives, communities, hopes, and struggles.

Hip-hop has four main parts:

1. **DJing** – making music by mixing records and beats
2. **MCing (Rapping)** – speaking rhythmic rhymes over music
3. **Breakdancing** – energetic street dancing
4. **Graffiti Art** – colorful street art and murals



RAKIM

TODAY
hip-hop is popular
all around the world.

THE EARLY YEARS: 1970s

HIP-HOP started at neighborhood parties called “BLOCK PARTIES” where DJs played music outside for the community.

A pioneer of the genre was DJ KOOL HERC, later nicknamed the “Father of Hip-Hop”. He moved from Jamaica to 1520 SEDGWICK AVENUE on the southwest side of the Bronx and became famous for using two turntables to repeat the best dance parts of songs, called “BREAKS”, which allowed for announcements and hyping the crowd. Eventually, these “breaks” began to incorporate rhythm and rhyme, which evolved into rapping. (In fact, the “B” in “B-Boy” or “B-Girl” is short for “break” because that is when the B-Boys and/or B-Girls would dance.)



DJ KOOL HERC



GRANDMASTER FLASH

Another important pioneer was GRANDMASTER FLASH, who created new DJ techniques and helped make hip-hop music more exciting.

During this time:

- DJs became stars
- People danced at block parties
- MCs began rhyming over beats
- Graffiti art spread across city walls and subway trains

IMPORTANT SONG!

RAPPER'S DELIGHT – SUGARHILL GANG (1979)

is widely credited as being the first commercially successful hip-hop song, bringing the genre from a local underground culture into mainstream music for the first time.

(see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)



OUT OF DISCO... : 1980s

In the 1980s, hip-hop became more popular across the United States. Rap songs began playing on the radio and appearing on television, though the genre was still marked by simplistic rhyme schemes and patterns.

Groups like **RUN-D.M.C.** helped bring hip-hop into mainstream culture. They mixed rap with rock music and wore street fashion that inspired many young people.

Hip-hop also started sharing important messages in what became known as “conscious rap” and/or “reality rap”.

Topics included:

- **Equality**

Artists like Queen Latifah rapped about women’s empowerment, challenged discrimination, and promoted respect and social change through songs like *Ladies First*. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

- **Poverty**

Fight The Power by Public Enemy used politically charged lyrics to expose the struggles of inner-city Black communities (unemployment, poor housing, and hunger), which reflected the realities of neighborhoods across the country. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

- **Community problems**

The Stop the Violence Movement was a coalition of rappers formed in 1989 to respond to the violence in Black communities. Their song *Self Destruction* became a landmark social-awareness anthem against crime in inner cities, notably gang and Black-on-Black violence. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

- **Pride and identity**

Many artists promoted Black pride, cultural identity, self-respect, and empowerment as hip-hop became a voice for marginalized communities. Artists like Eric B. & Rakim projected confidence, intelligence, and dignified self-possession in songs like *Paid in Full*. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)



PUBLIC ENEMY



RUN-D.M.C. AND AEROSMITH

IMPORTANT SONG!

WALK THIS WAY – RUN-D.M.C. AND AEROSMITH (1986)

is one of the first major crossover songs with another genre, showing that hip-hop and rock audiences could enjoy the same music. Although it introduced hip-hop to wider audiences due to it charting highly on radio, Run-D.M.C. was initially strongly opposed to the collaboration; they worried it would ruin their hip-hop credibility and alienate their core audience. Instead, it became a massive cultural milestone that forever changed music. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

...AND INTO THE GOLDEN AGE: 1990s

Many people call the 1990s the “**GOLDEN AGE**” of hip-hop because of the speed at which diverse styles, innovations, experimentation, and influential styles and artists progressed the genre.

Important artists included:

- Dr. Dre
- 2Pac
- The Notorious B.I.G.
- Queen Latifah
- A Tribe Called Quest
- Missy Elliott



THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.



2PAC

During this time:

- Rap styles became more creative
 - EAST COAST: known for complex lyrics, boom-bap beats, and DJ scratching
 - GANGSTA: non-regional rap that focused on street life, crime, and violence
 - HARDCORE: featured aggressive lyrics and intense delivery spanning cross-country
 - WEST COAST/G-FUNK: featured smoother beats, funk samples, and laid-back flows
- Hip-hop fashion grew popular
 - Street culture and Black urban style, like oversized jeans, sportswear, sneakers, chains, and snapbacks were brought into mainstream culture due in large part to their visibility in – and the rise of – music videos.
- Music videos became important
 - Channels like MTV and BET gave rap artists exposure, helping the genre grow from a regional culture into a global mainstream movement and giving visual power to hip-hop storytelling.
- More women became leaders in hip-hop
 - Female artists shaped music, business, performance, and women’s representation in the industry, proving they could succeed creatively and commercially in the male-dominated culture.
 - Missy Elliott, Lauryn Hill, Lisa “Left Eye” Lopes



MISSY ELLIOTT

IMPORTANT SONG !

CALIFORNIA LOVE – DR. DRE [FEAT. 2PAC] (1994)

marks 2Pac’s return to the music industry after signing with Death Row records and is arguably his most famous song. It became one of the defining songs of 1990s hip-hop and helped popularize West Coast rap around the world. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

MAINSTREAM AND THE BLING ERA: 2000s

During this highly commercial period, hip-hop culture focused heavily on wealth, luxury, and flashy success, with themes of party and celebration and a sound that often leaned toward mainstream appeal. This also marked the rise of Southern hip-hop following the domination of East and West Coast artists previously.

Important artists include:

- Jay-Z
- Eminem
- 50 Cent
- Outkast
- Nelly
- T.I.
- Ludacris
- Lil Wayne



EMINEM, 50 CENT, AND DR. DRE

This era showed hip-hop's growing commercial success and influence in mainstream culture, shaping fashion and pop culture trends far beyond music.

IMPORTANT SONG!



JAY-Z

EMPIRE STATE OF MIND – JAY-Z [FEAT. ALICIA KEYS] (2009)

shows that hip-hop can celebrate a city's identity on a global scale, as well as diversity and ambition, demonstrating that rap music shapes not just popular culture but civic pride. It also highlights storytelling through music, describing real life experiences, dreams, and challenges, showing how hip-hop can tell personal and cultural stories. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)

THE INTERNET/STREAMING ERA: 2010s - MODERN DAY

This era transformed – and continues to revolutionize– music through social media, streaming platforms, and internet culture. The barriers to entry have collapsed, allowing artists to easily produce and release music. This era also marks the beginning of trap dominance, emo rap, and the blending of other genres such as punk, electronic, country, and drill. It has also become a global culture, with artists from different countries creating rap music in their own languages.

Popular artists from recent years include:

- Kendrick Lamar
- Drake
- Cardi B
- Tyler, The Creator
- Bad Bunny

Hip hop is now connected to:

- Movies
- Advertising
- Sports
- Fashion
- Social media
- Education
 - Some teachers even use rap songs to help students learn poetry, rhythm, and storytelling.

IMPORTANT SONG !

ALRIGHT – KENDRICK LAMAR (2015)

demonstrates how hip-hop can go beyond entertainment and become part of real-world conversations and activism. During protests against police violence and racial injustice in the United States, people often quote the lyric “We gon’ be alright” from the song, which is considered the unofficial anthem for the Black Lives Matter movement. (see Hip-Hop Mixtape, pg. 11)



BAD BUNNY



KENDRICK LAMAR



CARDI B

WHY HIP-HOP MATTERS

Hip-hop is important because it:

- Gives people a voice
Hip-hop is a platform where people can share their experiences, challenges, and ideas in their own words, turning personal experience into music and storytelling.
- Encourages creativity
Built around improvisation, personal expression, and mixing different art forms, hip-hop has been a culture where people invent new ways to use sound, language, movement, and visual style from its inception.
- Builds community
By creating shared spaces, shared stories, and shared identity for people who might feel ignored or misrepresented elsewhere, hip-hop connects listeners who share similar experiences, making people feel less alone and more understood.
- Shares culture and history
Hip-hop works like a living archive of community life by turning real experiences into music that can be passed on and understood by new audiences through lyrics, rhythm, and storytelling.
- Inspires music, dance, and art
Hip-hop changed how music is made by encouraging sampling, remixing, and experimentation with rhythm and sound and inspiring innovation across genres. It helped create and spread dance styles such as breaking, popping, and locking. It also inspires visual art like graffiti, which became one of hip-hop's foundational art forms.



HIP-HOP TEACHES PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND TELL THEIR STORIES.



WRAP UP



QUESTIONS

1. Where did hip-hop begin?
2. What are the four main parts of hip-hop culture?
3. Who was DJ Kool Herc?
4. Why is the 1990s called the “Golden Age” of hip-hop?
5. How does hip-hop influence the world today?

VOCABULARY

Word	Meaning
DJ	A person who mixes and plays music
Emcee (MC)	A rapper who speaks rhythmic rhymes
Beat	The rhythm of music
Breakdance	A style of street dancing
Graffiti	Art made on walls or public spaces
Rhythm	A repeated pattern of sound
Culture	Shared traditions, art, and ideas

Name: _____

TO HIP-HOP, WITH LOVE.

Y C C K A Z R L U L E Y Z F O C B I X J M O X
O K O R B F P Q G K D I S Y A U H S Z B T L X
V G M C C E K O B O L U B M H T Y H R C I L G
L D M Z I E A E A F T T S S R I Y M J L K O U
R J U O E R G T R H U P N A G W T U V V I C T
B I N Q G U E C N A D K A E R B I A A V D K D
L R I G P T D O P O H P I H A D L Z U J E I F
O P T G C L B H P X N O R B F Z A W D A N N C
C M Y K Q U T U H A E B J L F G U C E E T G X
K W R C K C A Z J E X F R C I T Q Q V F I D V
P P O P P I N G M S H L X R T P E N I C T G Z
A T A W O N D E R T W I N S I B W U L K Y J T
R R R H C T O N O I T A L O S I E U L Q F B R
T V B R Z E M I M N M Y H P A R G O E R O H C
Y B Q R A P P I N G S D G X V S E G U Q B T X
C A W T S K Z U C L D C L T O B O R K Z D T T

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden  and  and  and  and 

BEAT
BLOCK PARTY
BREAKDANCE
BRONX
CHOREOGRAPHY
COMMUNITY
CULTURE

EQUALITY
GRAFFITI
HIPHOP
IDENTITY
ISOLATION
LOCKING
MIME

POPPING
RAPPING
RHYTHM
ROBOT
VAUDEVILLE
WONDERTWINS



- *Rapper's Delight* – Sugarhill Gang (1979) - [Spotify](#)
- *The Message* – Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five (1982) - [Spotify](#)
- *Paid In Full* – Eric B. & Rakim (1986) - [Spotify](#)
- *Walk This Way* – Run-D.M.C. and Aerosmith (1986) - [Spotify](#)
- *Ladies First* – Queen Latifah [feat. Monie Love] (1989) - [Spotify](#)
- *Self Destruction* – Stop the Violence Movement (1989) - [Spotify](#)
- *The World is Yours* – Nas (1992) - [Spotify](#)
- *California Love* – Dr. Dre [feat. 2Pac] (1994) - [Spotify](#)
- *Hypnotize* – The Notorious B.I.G. (1994) - [Spotify](#)
- *Waterfalls* – TLC (1995) - [Spotify](#)
- *Ready or Not* – Fugees (1996) - [Spotify](#)
- *The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)* – Missy Elliott (1997) - [Spotify](#)
- *Ms. Jackson* – Outkast (2000) - [Spotify](#)
- *Lose Yourself* – Eminem (2002) - [Spotify](#)
- *A Milli* – Lil Wayne (2008) - [Spotify](#)
- *Empire State of Mind* – Jay-Z [feat. Alicia Keys] (2009) - [Spotify](#)
- *Started From The Bottom* – Drake (2013) - [Spotify](#)
- *Alright* – Kendrick Lamar (2015) - [Spotify](#)
- *Old Town Road* – Lil Nas X (2019) - [Spotify](#)
- *DTMF* – Bad Bunny (2025) - [Spotify](#)

Links directly to clean edits



RESOURCES

Hip Hop: A Culture of Vision and Voice. (n.d.). Kennedy-center.org. Retrieved May 19, 2026, from <https://www.kennedy-center.org/>

History of Rap & Hip-Hop. (n.d.). Timeline of African American Music. Retrieved May 19, 2026, from <https://timeline.carnegiehall.org/genres/rap-hip-hop>

Serrano, S. (2015). *Rap Year Book, The.* Abrams Image.

