

INTRO TO

# HIP-HOP



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# 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 neighborhood 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.



# 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 worestreet fashion that inspired many young people.



N.W.A.

Hip-hop also started sharing important messages. Some artists rapped about:

- Equality
- Poverty
- Community problems
- Pride and identity



PUBLIC ENEMY

Groups like **PUBLIC ENEMY** used music to speak about social justice and history.

## 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. Additionally, it introduced hip-hop to wider audiences due to it charting highly on radio.



RUN-D.M.C. AND AEROSMITH

# ...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
- Hip-hop fashion grew popular
- Music videos became important
- More women became leaders in hip hop



MISSY ELLIOTT

Hip-hop spread to schools, sports, movies, and television.

## 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.

# 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.

## 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.



BAD BUNNY



KENDRICK LAMAR



CARDI B

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# WHY **HIP-HOP** MATTERS

Hip-hop is important because it:

- Gives people a voice
- Encourages creativity
- Builds community
- Shares culture and history
- Inspires music, dance, and art



Hip-hop teaches people to express themselves and tell their stories.

## **Summary:**

Hip-hop began as a community movement in the Bronx during the 1970s. Over time, it grew into one of the world's most powerful music and art cultures. Through rap, dance, DJing, and art, hip hop continues to inspire people of all ages around the globe.



# 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

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
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

## ACTIVITIES

- Write your own spoken-word piece using the following prompts with an optional performance at the end:
  - “I come from...”
  - “A hero in my life is...”
  - “My community sounds like...”
- Design a graffiti-style name using colorful letters.
  - Discuss the difference between street art and vandalism and/or how artists communicate identity visually
- Learn basic breakdance moves (safely with supervision).
- Create a class timeline of hip-hop history.
- Make your own mixtape featuring important artists from each era of hip-hop.

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](#)
- *Eric B. Is President* – Eric B. & Rakim (1986) - [Spotify](#)
- *Walk This Way* – Run-D.M.C. and Aerosmith (1986) - [Spotify](#)
- *The World is Yours* – Nas (1992) - [Spotify](#)
- *California Love* – Dr. Dre [feat. 2Pac] (1994) - [Spotify](#)
- *Hypnotize* – The Notorious B.I.G. (1994) - [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.

