

Introduction to Hip Hop:

Origins:

Hip Hop emerged in the 70's in the Bronx, Queen, and Manhattan neighborhoods of New York City. The Father of Hip Hop is known to be DJ Kool Herc even though hip hop culture was not born in one day. Socio-economic and socio-political events of the time, such as the Civil Rights Movements and the Bronx Fires led African American and Puerto Rican teenagers to create art. The culture of hip hop is intimately intertwined with Black and Brown communities' struggles and therefore, social justice.



The Get Down in the Bronx

To learn more about the history of Hip-Hop: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVTTphInZPw>

Battles:

Young people involved in hip hop culture formed crews to train and compete in battles. During the 70's and 80's the urban youth communities were often involved in gangs and experienced police brutality. The hip hop generation is a generation that is aware of their positionality in the society but who decided to express their frustration via various artistic elements instead of using violence. Competitions or battles, however, are spaces where artists can release their frustration against crews from different neighborhoods, show and prove their skills and crew identities, and gain respect.

The Art of the Remix:

"Hip hop did not invent anything. It reinvented everything" - Grandmaster Caz

Born in the socio-economically low neighborhoods of New York, young people did not have access to high technology, expensive records, dance studios, or painting canvas. Therefore, they re-used or re-mixed the old to make the new. They took old records from their parents collections, used the streets, hotel lobbies, or basketball courts as their training locations etc. They gathered in spaces where you were not supposed to gather according to Western ideologies. But it is through their imagination and their perseverance, that hip hop got slowly accepted and became the global culture we know today.

"Something from Nothing: the Art of Rap". Documentary on the origins of rap music:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhwBUydknWI>

The 4 Artistic Elements:

Hip hop is a multidisciplinary culture constituted of 4 artistic elements: DJing, Emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Writing. Regardless of the element practiced, Style, Authenticity, Naming, Identity, Community, are very important across the spectrum. Here are some of the core philosophies present in hip hop culture: “Come as You Are” / “I am Because We Are” / “Do It Yourself”. They show the communal, participatory, as well as the importance placed on self-representation in the culture.



Evolution of Hip Hop:

Although hip hop used to be a site-specific culture (African Americans in NY from the 70/80s), it developed rapidly since it speaks to youths across the globe. In hip hop dance, many sub-genres emerged in addition to the core ones which are locking, popp'in, breakdancing, boogaloo. Hip hop keeps expanding geographically and in terms of the sub-genres that are now associated with the culture. Since the 90's, the mediatization of rappers, dancers, and graffiti artists, have transformed hip hop from a street and more marginalized culture to a mainstream, globalized, and institutionalized culture.

