

Rap Project

OVERVIEW

Aims for Pupils:

- Compose their own rap song.
- Improve and refine their work in groups and individually.
- Perform and record their songs on a multitrack tape recorder.
- Appraise their own and each other's work.

Learning Objectives:

- To develop awareness of rhythm by creating and performing word patterns.
- To develop an understanding of the role of the individual in the context of group work.
- To create group compositions with an emphasis on texture, rhythm, and structure.
- To develop an awareness of Rap as a genre and the culture of Hip-Hop.
- To increase self-esteem by allowing self-expression of pupils, and encouraging individual participation.
- To develop an awareness of the recording process.
- To rehearse and perform with an awareness of the audience.

Assessment:

- Ongoing formative assessment for effort, teamwork, and rhythmic understanding (see sheet for guidance)
- Summative assessment for performance.

ICT skills:

- To use the Internet/CD ROM's to research the history of Rap and the multitrack recorder.
- To develop a basic understanding of the multitrack recorder through discussion (and possible individual use).
- To use a software sequencer (such as *Cubase*) to loop a drum sample and record own ideas (extension activity).

RESOURCES

Audio CD Resources:

- *Lost Ones* by Lauryn Hill (*The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, Ruff House, 4898432)
- *Get Out Of My Life Woman* by Allen Toussaint (New Orleans Funk, Soul Jazz Records, SJRCD47)

Web resources:

- *Rap History Homepage*,
<http://busboy.sped.ukans.edu/~music/rap/rap.html>
- *History of Rap* by Kurtis Blow,
<http://rhino.com/features/liners/72851lin.html>
- *The UK Hip Hop Database and History*, <http://britishhiphop.co.uk/>
- *Rap Dictionary*, <http://www.rapdict.org>

Midi files:

- <http://www.nowopen.com/drums/dmidi.htm>
- <http://www.vtg.org/cimonline/ComposingEx.html>
- <http://www.synthzone.com/midifile.htm>

Audio files:

- http://www.phatdrumloops.com/old_site/welcome.html
- <http://www.break-beats.co.uk/>
- <http://www.loops.net/>

ICT:

- Multitrack tape recorder, microphones, headphones, stands.
- Software (or hardware) sequencer such as *Cubase* or *Logic*.

National Curriculum (Key Stage 3)

Performing skills:

- 1a, 1b, 1c

Composing skills:

- 2a, 2b

Appraising skills:

- 3a, 3b, 3c

Listening:

- 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d

Breadth of study:

- 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e

Lesson Plans

❖ Lesson 1

Preparation - Create a drum loop by sampling 1st bar of *Get Out Of My Life Woman* by Allen Toussaint (or similar loop @84 bpm - see **Audio Files**) and copy to audio tape.

Introduce topic by checking for prior knowledge - pupils' favourite Rap artists or songs. Play *Lost Ones* by Lauryn Hill and discuss basic elements (Drums, Vocals, Song Structure, Backing vocals). Explain the idea of a **sampled drum loop** and play beginning of *Get Out Of My Life Woman*. Discuss the idea of musical **collage** - is this original music? Play tape of drum loop and give pupils 'Let's talk about Rap' handout sheet. Arrange pupils into friendship groups (max. 4) and give time for composition of first ideas. Finish by discussing potential problems, answering questions, and clarifying **assessment** methods and criteria.

Homework: Write 1 verse of original rap (at least 8 lines in length).

Key Words: Hook, Break, Loop, Sample, Rap, Hip-hop, Chorus, Verse.

Assessment: Effort, Team Work, Rhythmic Understanding, Comments on Homework.

National Curriculum: 1a, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e.

SMSC: Discussion of Copyright issues/original music, The role of Women in Rap music, Racism in Rap, Negative influence of Gangsta Rap.

❖ Lesson 2

Preparation - Collect and mark homework before Lesson 2. Choose a good homework example and copy onto a transparent sheet. Have an overhead projector available.

Discuss the difference between the **beat** (or **pulse**) and **rhythms** by playing the drum loop tape and asking pupils to clap the beat. Get pupils to mark dots above the **strong** words or syllables on the overhead transparency. Discuss how placing the dots (strong beats) over different words gives the phrase a different **rhythmic feel** (see Example 1). Clarify that the beat is **regular** and rhythms are **irregular** - get pupils to say and/or clap the suggested phrases together. Give individual time for applying dots to own words and group time for rehearsal - play drum loop quietly in the background to help consolidate the tempo. Ask pupils to create a **hook**, or **chorus** together.

Key Words: Beat, Rhythm, Pulse, Regular, Irregular, Tempo, Hook.

Assessment: Effort, Team Work, Rhythmic Understanding.

National Curriculum: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e.

❖ Lesson 3

Preparation - If facilities and resources are available, make copies of the drum loop tape (one for each group) and arrange separate practise rooms for each group.

Restate timescale for pupils and remind of **assessment criteria**. Pupils should use this lesson as a final opportunity for **rehearsal** and **refinement** of their raps. Each pupil should perform their own **verse** and the group should use a **hook** (chorus). Discuss ways in which groups can make a creative **arrangement** of their raps by considering **texture** (use of backing vocals; echoing; repeating; swapping parts; unison sections). Ask groups to perform to each other at end of lesson - choose groups to start **recording** next lesson.

Key Words: Rehearsal, Refinement, Arrangement, Texture.

Homework: Pupils **not** recording next lesson: Give pupils web site addresses (see **Web Resources**) and ask them to research the History of Rap. (* Pupils who are recording next lesson may use homework time for rehearsal and receive this task as next lesson's homework instead)

Assessment: Effort, Team Work, Rhythmic Understanding, Performance, Comments on Homework.

National Curriculum: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e.

SMSC: Homework relates to the roots of rap music (Black Culture).

❖ Lessons 4 & 5

Preparation - Record the drum loop onto one track of the multitrack recorder. Have all hardware ready for recording.

Discuss the basic elements of multitrack recording (magnetic tape, microphones, overdubbing, monitoring). Pupils may like to watch the recording process in the first lesson (emphasise the need for silence!) Groups will record their raps and may use drop-in recording and/or overdubbing to correct mistakes. More able pupils may try recording their song into a software sequencer. Pupils who recorded first may also try looping a drum sample on a sequencer (It may be useful to record the more able students first to allow for this extension activity).

Key Words: Multitrack recorder, Microphone, Monitoring, Magnetic Tape, Drop-in, Overdubbing, Looping.

Homework: (* Lesson 4 see last lesson's homework) Lesson 5 - Ask pupils to research information about multitrack recording (Internet, CD ROM's, library).

Assessment: Effort, Team Work, Rhythmic Understanding, Performance.

National Curriculum: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e.

❖ Lesson 6

Preparation - Mixdown or compile all rap songs ready for listening. Make copies of 'Appraisal' handout sheet.

Check for understanding following last lesson's homework - consolidate key point and words. Discuss any problems/successes during the project and explain the need for appraisal. Play each rap, allowing time for questioning and feedback. Give pupils 'Appraisal' handout sheet and explain questions. Ask for individual answers and reflection.

Key Words: Appraisal, Rhythm, Chords.

Assessment: Effort.

National Curriculum: 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e.

❖ Differentiation

Less Able - Pupils should be encouraged to be creative both individually and as part of a team. All pupils will be able to create and perform a short verse which will contribute towards the end product.

More Able - Pupils may create arrangements using a sequencer or multitrack recorder, which combine melodic or harmonic ideas. Pupils may use their own instruments to enhance the end result.

❖ Extension topics/cross-curricular links

- Women in Rap (Salt n' Pepa, Lauryn Hill, TLC)
- The negative message of Gangsta Rap
- Rap and Hip-hop in black culture
- Racism and white Rap artists (Vanilla Ice, Eminem)
- Scat singing
- Kinaesthetics - Beatboxing and Break dancing
- DJing and scratching

Example 1

Place dots over the strong beats or syllables (2 per line)

Version A

● ●
Me and my mates we always have a good time,

● ●
You'll find us chillin' at break and also lunchtime.

Version B

● ●
Me and my mates we always have a good time,

● ●
You'll find us chillin' at break and also lunchtime.

Let's Talk About....

Rap

What is Rap? Rap is talking in rhyme to the rhythm of a beat.

What is Hip-hop? Hip-hop is a culture of rap, DJing, break dancing, and graffiti. Hip hop music can feature loops (or *breaks*) containing drums and other instruments. It can also have melodies and harmonies in the vocal track and in the backing track.

Listen to: *Lost Ones* by Lauryn Hill (*The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*)

Using a drum loop (*break*) sampled from a 1960's funk record, create your own rap. Try and create interest in your rap by using:

- A *hook* or repeated line for the CHORUS
- Swap between voices and echo the lead voice
- Use unusual rhymes and rhythms - this is not a limerick!
- Have fun with your voice and words - be creative.

Your rap should last at least 30-40 seconds and involve all members of your group. Use the space below and the back of this sheet to write your lyrics.

Rap Appraisal

Comment on your own Rap - did it turn out as expected?.....

.....

How did **you** contribute towards the end result?.....

.....

If you were to start again, what would you change?.....

.....

Re-arrange these words in order of importance. How important they were in the outcome of **your** Rap (1=Most important, 5=Least important):

RHYTHM 1)

CONFIDENCE TO PERFORM 2)

TEAMWORK 3)

CHORDS 4)

IMAGINATION 5)

What does a multi-track (or 4-track) recorder do?.....

.....

What did you learn about the recording process?.....

.....

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