

HIP-HOP

Hip-Hop started in the ghetto of the South Bronx, New York in the 1970's. People there were poor, and many artists got into trouble with the police because they stole money or took drugs. The music, slang and fashions of the African-Americans who invented the culture of Hip-Hop have become popular all over the world. Hip-Hop has been one of the main contributory factors that have helped reduce gang violence, giving people a chance to channel their strength through this art form.

Hip-Hop, like any other culture, has its own language, writing, dance, music and style. One of the elements, break dancing, is an acrobatic style of dance. Its roots can be traced back to an African martial art form.

In the late 1970's, a Jamaican DJ known as Kool Herc, moved to the Bronx. There, he tried to make the Jamaican style of music popular and performed his Reggae records at parties. Unfortunately, the New Yorkers didn't like Reggae at that time. So, Kool Herc, changed his style and played the drum parts of American pop songs, the moments in a record when the vocals and other instruments would drop out completely for a few beats of just rhythm. These parts were very short, so he learned to make them longer by using two identical records and playing them over and over again. Today, Hip-Hop music is still based on the DJ's drum beats.



Soon, rapping was added and DJ's began arranging the beats so that rappers could easily find a rhythm to speak in time with. Rappers often wrote lyrics that told about things they had experienced in their own lives such as what life was like in the ghetto is like, how to get away from it and how to live on when friends die from drugs in a shooting. With the addition of rapping, Hip-Hop became an artistic outlet for African-Americans, a new way for them to tell their stories. Hip-Hop also served as a response to Disco, a dance music craze of the time. Disco was all about wealth and status, but Hip-Hop emphasised reality and community. Hip-Hop music and culture became a way for the musicians and listeners to deal with the hardships of city life.

By the summer of 1973, DJ Kool Herc had been using and refining his break-beat style for the better part of a year. On August 11th, he performed to his biggest crowd ever and with the most powerful sound system he'd ever worked with. It was the success of that party that would begin a musical revolution and after six years the term "Hip-Hop" entered popular vocabulary.

Last, but certainly not the least element, is an art form known as graffiti. Although the majority of the society labels graffiti as rubbish and often vandalism, graffiti artists do not share this point of view. When people just scribble their names on a window of a bus or on a wall, that could be considered vandalism, but graffiti art is involved with your emotions and should be seen as an expression of this. However, today, many people like the great paintings of graffiti artists, some of which have been influenced and continue to be influenced by Hip-Hop music.



1. Where and when did Hip-Hop originate?
2. What three parts of Hip-Hop culture have become popular?
3. What style of dance is associated with Hip-Hop?
4. What is the foundation of Hip-Hop music based on?
5. What are popular subjects for the lyrics of rappers in Hip-Hop music?
6. What other genre of music was Hip-Hop regarded as "a response to" and why?
7. What two factors led to an increase in DJ Kool Herc's popularity in 1973?
8. What visual art form is often associated with Hip-Hop?

