



**VH1:**

***And You Don't Stop - 30 Years of Hip-Hop***

*Episode 1*

VH1 Music Studio

Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Social Studies

Grade Level: Secondary (7-12)

Lesson 3 – “Back in the Day” (One World)

Note to Teachers: The multi-media resources used in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references to substance abuse, violent acts, illegal activities, and topics of a sexual and/or political nature. Some academic communities may consider the material inappropriate for educational use in the classroom, thus you are encouraged to review the resources before presenting them to your students. If necessary, consult with an administrator, send a letter/waiver to the parents/guardians, or choose the specific resources that will enhance your lesson and are acceptable for classroom use.

**Teacher Toolbox** (websites & texts related to Hip Hop):

**Hip-Hop America** by Nelson George  
**Rap & Hip Hop: The Voice of a Generation** by S. Ayazi-Hashjin  
[www.vh1.com/shows/events/hip\\_hop\\_honors/2004](http://www.vh1.com/shows/events/hip_hop_honors/2004)  
[www.ohhla.com](http://www.ohhla.com) (lyrics)  
[www.daveyd.com](http://www.daveyd.com)  
[www.hiphop-directory.com](http://www.hiphop-directory.com)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip\\_hop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop)  
(\*free encyclopedia)

**Vibe History of Hip Hop** edited by Alan Light  
[www.hiphopsite.com](http://www.hiphopsite.com)  
[www.sohh.com](http://www.sohh.com)  
[www.rapdict.org](http://www.rapdict.org) (rap dictionary)  
<http://rap.about.com>

## Objectives

- Students will discuss the urban socioeconomic and political problems in the United States that caused hip hop to emerge in the 70's and 80's.
- Students will compare and contrast similar problems shared by cities worldwide, to build an understanding among people from different cultures and regions of the world.
- Students will relate to unification of people, cultures, and problems through hip hop music.
- Students will chronicle the historical events and factors underlying the evolution of Hip Hop Culture.
- Students will gain an understanding of the cross-cultural influences on this genre of music/art form.

### **National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Thematic Strands:**

- Culture
- Time Continuity & Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Global Connections
- Civic Ideals & Practices

## Materials

- VHS/VCR Player
- Television
- Audio Playback Equipment
- Web-Based Lesson Materials
- Writing Utensils (pencils/pens)
- Notebooks/Paper
- Internet Access
- Overhead Projector, Screen, & Transparency Materials
- Audio recording of the song "Why?" by the artist Jadakiss and the song "The Message" by the artists Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five
- Copy of the lyrics for the song (transparency or student handouts) [[www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com)]

## Procedures

1. a) Stimulate the minds of the students by playing the recordings of Jadakiss' song, "Why?" and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's song, "The Message".  
b) Distribute copies of the lyrics or provide a copy on the transparency and place it on the overhead projector. Ask the students to identify the social, economic, and political problems questioned in these hip hop songs. Compare the problems/issues identified in the 80's song with the current song. Narrow the list by focusing on the problems the plague American cities, such as New York.  
c) Have students follow-up this discussion by researching various resources (i.e. the American Cities series by Greenhaven Press or the computer program Sim City) to validate their ideas concerning the problems

in major cities. Some problems that may be identified include: crime, violence, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, drugs, poor schools, racial conflict/injustices, etc.

2.

- a) Divide students into cooperative learning groups to research one of the largest cities in the world to explore similar problems to the plight of major American cities (specifically New York) in the past and present. Provide student teams/groups with a selection of possible major cities to explore and research, yet extend the opportunity for groups to research a major city of their choice. [List of possible city searches: Seoul, Mexico City, Tokyo, Beijing, Delhi, Bombay, etc.]
- b) Students should research in terms of cultural heritage, history, reasons for growth, level of employment, jobs, education, housing, environmental conditions, and any other problems or areas of interest that were revealed in the initial activity (Procedure 1).
- c) Student groups must prepare a compare/contrast chart of their global city and New York (focusing on urban decay). Within the groups, students can discuss and/or make connections with the problems they researched and the emergence of hip hop music locally and globally. Students may discuss or examine the idea that hip hop is a lyrical portrayal of what was/is happening in the urban areas in this nation and the world. Students may identify similar patterns between the cities researched and discover how music served as “voice” for the urban dwellers.

3.

- a) Have student teams/groups write a narrative about the day in the life of an American/Global urban dweller. Identify the “message” of the dweller by sharing his/her concerns about the socioeconomic, political, and/or environmental ills that have plagued their community. Unite these trans-national voices by exploring possible solutions to the problems identified and emphasize the collective consciousness of hip hop that offers hope for the future.

## Extensions

- Student groups/teams can continue or extend this project by identifying solutions for the problems identified and create a “utopia” city or community reflective of the ideas they generated. (Create-your-own-city)
- Student groups/teams could write letters to other students in the global city they researched to gain information and another perspective on the topics discussed and studied in this unit. (Global pen pals)



*This lesson plan was created by Charity Jones, Secondary Educator at Oak Park High School, Oak Park, MI*