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128 Hip hop is more than just a genre of music; it is a cultural movement that has had a profound impact on society since its inception in the 1970s. From its origins in the Bronx, New York, hip hop has grown to influence music, dance, art, fashion, and even politics around the world. But what exactly makes hip hop so unique? This article delves into the elements that distinguish hip hop from other genres, exploring its history, cultural significance, musical characteristics, and ongoing evolution. 1. Origins and History of Hip Hop The Birth of Hip Hop Hip hop emerged in the 1970s in the Bronx, a borough of New York City. It was born out of the creative expressions of African American and Latino youth who used music, dance, and art as a means of coping with the social and economic challenges they faced. DJ Kool Herc is often credited with pioneering the genre when he began isolating the percussion breaks of funk, soul, and disco songs, which he then extended by using two turntables. This technique, known as “breakbeat DJing,” became the foundation of hip hop music. The Four Pillars of Hip Hop Hip hop is built on four fundamental elements: DJing, MCing (rapping), breakdancing, and graffiti art. Each element plays a crucial role in the culture: DJing: The art of mixing and scratching records to create new sounds and rhythms. DJs were the original stars of hip hop, providing the beats that would later be rapped over by MCs. MCing (Rapping): The vocal element of hip hop, where artists speak rhythmically and poetically over beats. Rapping often involves complex wordplay, metaphors, and storytelling. Breakdancing (B-boying): A style of street dance that includes acrobatic moves, spins, and intricate footwork. It emerged as a way for dancers to express themselves physically to the beats of hip hop music. Graffiti Art: Visual art created in public spaces, often using spray paint. Graffiti artists use their work to make bold statements, often commenting on social and political issues. 2. Musical Characteristics of Hip Hop Beats and Production The backbone of hip hop music is its beats, which are created through a combination of drum machines, samples, and synthesizers. Producers like Dr. Dre, J Dilla, and DJ Premier are renowned for their ability to craft intricate, hard-hitting beats that serve as the canvas for MCs. Sampling, the process of taking a portion of a sound recording and reusing it in a different song, is a hallmark of hip hop production. This technique allows producers to pay homage to older music while creating something entirely new. Lyrical Content Hip hop lyrics are known for their raw honesty and often address themes such as social injustice, poverty, violence, and personal struggle. However, they can also celebrate wealth, success, and the party lifestyle. The diversity of lyrical content in hip hop reflects the varied experiences and perspectives of its artists. Eminem, Nas, Kendrick Lamar, and Tupac Shakur are celebrated for their storytelling abilities and their capacity to convey powerful messages through their lyrics. Flow and Delivery An MC’s flow, or the rhythm and rhyme pattern of their lyrics, is a critical aspect of their artistry. Flow can vary widely from artist to artist, with some favoring rapid-fire delivery and others opting for a more laid-back style. The ability to switch flows and maintain a strong rhythmic presence is a key skill for any successful rapper. Artists like Rakim, Biggie Smalls, and André 3000 are known for their distinctive and influential flows. 3. Cultural Impact of Hip Hop Fashion and Style Hip hop has had a significant influence on fashion, popularizing styles such as baggy clothing, sportswear, and streetwear. Brands like Adidas, Nike, and Supreme have become synonymous with hip hop culture. Fashion icons like Run-D.M.C., Kanye West, and Pharrell Williams have pushed the boundaries of style within the genre, merging high fashion with streetwear to create unique looks. Language and Slang Hip hop has contributed significantly to the evolution of modern slang and language. Terms and phrases originating in hip hop culture often find their way into mainstream usage. Words like “dope,” “bling,” and “lit” are just a few examples of hip hop slang that have become part of everyday vernacular. The genre’s lyrical creativity has also influenced the way language is used in other forms of media and communication. Social and Political Influence Hip hop has always been a platform for social and political commentary. Artists use their music to address issues such as racial inequality, police brutality, and economic disparity. Public Enemy, N.W.A., and Kendrick Lamar are known for their politically charged lyrics that challenge the status quo and inspire change. The genre has also been instrumental in raising awareness about social issues and mobilizing communities for action. 4. The Evolution of Hip Hop Subgenres and Diversity As hip hop has grown, it has diversified into numerous subgenres, each with its own unique sound and cultural significance. These include: Gangsta Rap: Characterized by its gritty, street-oriented lyrics and hard-hitting beats. Artists like Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, and Snoop Dogg are pioneers of this subgenre. Conscious Hip Hop: Focuses on social issues, political activism, and cultural awareness. Common, Talib Kweli, and Mos Def are notable artists in this subgenre. Trap: Originating in the Southern United States, trap music features heavy bass, hi-hats, and synths. Artists like T.I., Gucci Mane, and Future have popularized this sound. Alternative Hip Hop: Incorporates elements from other genres such as rock, jazz, and electronic music. OutKast, A Tribe Called Quest, and Childish Gambino are known for their innovative approaches to hip hop. Global Influence Hip hop’s influence has transcended borders, becoming a global phenomenon. Each region has developed its own unique take on the genre, incorporating local sounds and cultural influences. In the UK, grime music has emerged as a distinct form of hip hop, with artists like Skepta and Stormzy leading the charge. In France, artists like MC Solaar and IAM have created a vibrant hip hop scene that blends traditional French music with rap. In South Korea, K-pop has embraced hip hop elements, with groups like BTS and BLACKPINK incorporating rap into their music. Technological Advancements The rise of digital technology has revolutionized hip hop production and distribution. With the advent of digital audio workstations (DAWs), producers can create complex beats and effects with greater ease and precision. Social media platforms like YouTube, SoundCloud, and TikTok have given artists new ways to share their music and connect with fans. This democratization of music production and distribution has allowed more artists to break into the industry and reach a global audience. 5. Hip Hop’s Future Continued Innovation Hip hop continues to evolve, with artists constantly pushing the boundaries of what the genre can be. The incorporation of new sounds, technologies, and cultural influences ensures that hip hop remains fresh and relevant. Artists like Travis Scott, Cardi B, and Lil Nas X are at the forefront of this innovation, blending hip hop with pop, rock, and electronic music to create new and exciting sounds. Impact on Future Generations Hip hop’s influence on future generations is undeniable. It has inspired countless young people to express themselves creatively and pursue careers in music, dance, art, and fashion. The genre’s emphasis on authenticity and individuality resonates with many, encouraging them to embrace their unique identities and tell their own stories. Social Change and Activism As hip hop continues to address pressing social issues, it will remain a powerful tool for activism and change. Artists will likely continue to use their platforms to speak out against injustice and inspire positive action. The genre’s ability to mobilize and unite people from diverse backgrounds makes it a potent force for social change. See Also: Who is the Most Sampled Artist in Hip Hop Music? Conclusion Hip hop’s uniqueness lies in its rich history, diverse elements, and profound cultural impact. From its origins in the Bronx to its global influence today, hip hop has continually evolved while staying true to its roots. Its distinctive beats, lyrical content, and cultural significance set it apart from other genres, making it a powerful and enduring form of artistic expression. As hip hop continues to innovate and inspire, it will undoubtedly remain a vital and influential force in the world of music and beyond. While there is some debate over the number of elements of hip-hop, there are four elements that are considered to be its pillars: deejaying, or “turntabling”; rapping, also known as “MCing” (emceeing) or “rhyming”; graffiti painting, also known as “graf” or “writing”; and break dancing, or “B-boying,” which encompasses hip-hop dance, style, and attitude, along with the sort of virile body language that philosopher Cornel West described as “postural semantics.” Many also cite a fifth essential component: “knowledge of self/consciousness.” Other suggested elements include street fashion and language. From the street corner to the world stage, hip hop has grown into one of the world’s most prominent musical genres and cultural influences. Explore significant events in hip hop history and its explosive evolution. Hip hop is more than music; it’s a cultural movement that incorporates different elements of art. Four foundational elements characterize hip hop culture. The original four main pillars of hip hop include DJing/turntablism, MCing/rapping, B-boying/breaking, and visual/graffiti art. These forms of expression have also developed into further subcultures with lasting legacies.“Rap is something you do; hip hop is something you live.” KRS One The intersection of these four elements also generated a cultural revolution that rapidly spread across the globe. The global influence of hip hop culture has shaped music styles, fashion, technology, art, entertainment, language, dance, education, politics, media, and more. To this day, hip hop continues to be a global phenomenon, developing new art forms that impact the lives of new and old generations. Hip hop is a subculture and an art movement that emerged from the Bronx in New York City during the early 1970s. Its development reflected the negative effects of post-industrial decline, political discourse, and a rapidly changing economy. Looking back to New York City during this era, we see an economic collapse. The city’s economy was falling apart due to the decline of the manufacturing industry and construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway. Much of the white middle class moved to the suburbs to escape the social and economic challenges. The migration shifted demographics and segregated communities. Conditions worsened in neighborhoods prominently populated by African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Caribbean immigrants. Urban despair also brought rising crime, gang violence, and poverty. Consequently, businesses closed their doors, causing many economic opportunities and sources of entertainment to evaporate. As a result, urban youth turned to the streets for recreation and self-expression. The abandoned buildings and parking lots set the stage for block parties. These block parties laid the groundwork for everything associated with early hip hop culture. DJs and MCs brought the music by setting up mobile “ Sound Systems ” introduced by Jamaican culture. Sheets of cardboard became dance floors for break-dancers, and brick walls transformed into canvases for graffiti. A new era was on the rise fueled by sentiments of anger, hardship, and abandonment. However, the emerging hip hop movement transformed despair and racial barriers into numerous creative outlets. It also became an outlet to deal with violence. Several people were influential in creating hip hop. However, the most notable pioneers are DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash. These three innovators are known as the “Holy Trinity” of hip hop. One of the most influential hip hop pioneers was DJ Kool Herc, a Jamaican immigrant regarded as the founding father of hip hop. Kool Herc made history in 1973 when he and his sister hosted the “Back to School Jam” in the recreation room of their Bronx apartment building at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue. This historical party is recognized for launching the hip hop movement. DJ Kool Herc also introduced the “breakbeat” DJ technique – a mixing practice he adapted from Jamaican dub music. However, Kool Herc would play funk, soul, and other genres with percussive sections. Using a pair of turntables, Kool Herc would play two copies of the same record and then switch between them to extend the percussive section known as the break. Kool Herc named this breakbeat juggling style of DJing “The Merry-Go-Round.” This breakbeat turntablism quickly became influential in the rise of hip hop music, rapping, and breakdancing. The break section was also the most anticipated part of a song where people danced the most. Break-dancers would form dancer circles and save their best dance moves for the break. Kool Herc named the people dancing to his music B-Boys and B-Girls, which was short for Break-Boys and Break-Girls. Overtime, breaking evolved and became a global subculture that transcended into the mainstream. Kool Herc also helped develop the rhythmic spoken delivery of rhymes and wordplay performed by MCs. He would speak in rhythm and rhyme over instrumental parts of songs to hype the crowd. His style of lyrical chanting and rhythmic wordplay was an early form of rapping inspired by the Jamaican tradition of toasting. He would shout phrases like “B-Boys, B-Girls, are you ready? Keep on rock steady,” “This is the joint! Herc beat on the point,” “To the beat, y’all,” and “You don’t stop!” Kool Herc also enlisted his friend Coke La Rock to control the mic at their parties. During one party, Coke La Rock dropped the line “There’s not a man that can’t be thrown, not a horse that can’t be rode, a bull that can’t be stopped, there’s not a disco that I Coke La Rock can’t rock.” Many consider this verse as the first rap lyrics and Coke La Rock as the first MC of hip hop. Afrika Bambaataa Another influential figure of hip hop to emerge from New York City was Afrika Bambaataa, also known as “The Godfather.” Bambaataa was a pioneering DJ and music producer who organized block parties in the Brox during the late 1970s. He was also a visionary who helped guide the city’s youth away from gang life, drugs, and violence. He formed Universal Zulu Nation , a music-oriented organization that encourages peace and unity through the expressions of hip hop culture. Members introduced urban youth to DJing, breakdancing, rapping, and visual art. Soon after, Bambaataa categorized these forms of expression as the “four elements” of hip hop. To this day, Zulu Nation continues to spread hip hop culture throughout the world. In 1982, Afrika Bambaataa and the Soul Sonic Force released “Planet Rock,” one of the most influential early hip hop songs. Instead of rapping over funk beats, Bambaataa created an electronic sound by sampling Kraftwerk and using the Roland TR-808 drum machine. The song helped popularize the TR-808, which became a staple of hip hop music. Grandmaster Flash Grandmaster Flash is another innovative DJ from the Bronx, New York City. He was the first DJ to manipulate records in a backward, forward or counterclockwise motion. He also invented distinct DJing techniques such as the backspin, cutting, punch phrasing, and scratching. Grandmaster Flash also organized a group called Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in 1976. The group became widely acknowledged as one of the most influential hip hop acts. They delivered a unique style by trading off lyrics between four rappers and blending them with Flash’s unrivaled DJ skills. Flash would also perform acrobatic DJing skills by manipulating vinyl with his fingers, toes, elbows, and objects. Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five had several influential songs. However, their most prominent song was “The Message.” This critical hit further solidified rap as a genre and put rappers at the forefront for the first time. The powerful lyrics also detailed the grim realities of life in the ghetto, which was a significant shift from the traditional rhythmic chants of early hip hop. In 2007, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five made history again. The group became the first hip hop act inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The early 1980s was a vital turning point for hip hop and music production . Synthesizers, samplers, and drum machines became cheaper and more accessible. Roland’s iconic TR-808 drum machine became the weapon of choice. Instead of relying on DJ breakbeats, music producers could now program original drum patterns. The TR-808 also became a cornerstone of hip hop for its powerful bass drum sound. Sampling technology also emerged during the 1980s. DJs experimented with early samplers such as the Linn 9000, E-mu SP-1200, and the Akai MPC60. They used these samplers to piece together breaks in songs rather than using turntables. Samplers also allowed producers to perform, rearrange sections, sequence arrangments, edit, and mix music in new ways. These production methods were an early form of remixing. Over time sampling technology advanced. A new generation of samplers such as the AKAI S900 provided increased memory, higher sampling rates, better editing capabilities, and more. Music producers experimented with techniques such as layering sounds, looping, sequencing elaborate arrangements, adding effects, and more. Turntable and mixer technology also advanced. There was an increase of DJs scratching records to create new sounds and effects. The most influential turntable was the Technics SL-1200 due to its strong motor, durability, and fidelity. During the mid 1980s and early 1990s, hip hop spread across the country in full force. It brought an era that significantly transformed hip hop culture. This new era became known as “the golden age of hip hop.” Many characterize this turning point by its explosion of diversity, influence, stylistic innovation, and mainstream success. Record labels recognized the genre as an emerging trend and invested a lot of money into the movement. Independent record labels like Tommy Boy, Prism Records, and Def Jam became successful. They were releasing records at a fast pace in response to the demand generated by local radio stations and club DJs. New scenes and different styles of hip hop also emerged from city to city as the culture popularized. However, hip hop music was still mostly experimental. Although, the new generation of hip hop producers had access to more advanced drum machines and samplers that allowed them to take hip hop music to the next level. One of the definitive characteristics of hip hop’s golden age was the heavy use of sampled music. No copyright laws protected music from being sampled, so artists could use samples from a variety of sources without legal troubles. They were capturing samples from various genres ranging from jazz to rock music. However, sampling was not limited to music. R.Z.A. of the Wu-Tang Clan sampled sound clips from his collection of 1970s Kung Fu films. The lyrical content of hip hop developed as well. The early rhythmic chants of the 1970s progressed into metaphorical lyrics exploring a range of subjects. Artists also performed the lyrics over a more complex, multi-layered instrumental arrangement. Artists such as Melle Mel, KRS-One, Rakim, Chuck D, and Warp 9 were pivotal in advancing hip hop lyrics and the art of rapping. There was also a wave of new school rappers who were pivotal in bringing hip hop to the mainstream. At the forefront was RUN DMC, a hip hop trio who fused rap with hard rock. They took rap into the Top Ten when they collaborated with Aerosmith on a rap remake of “Walk This Way.” The single conquered the radio and MTV, catapulting rap even further into the mainstream. Some other innovators in the golden age of hip hop were L.L. Cool J, Public Enemy, the Beastie Boys, A Tribe Called Quest, and many others. It wasn’t just the music propelling hip hop culture. Hip hop fashion also hit the mainstream. Various clothes, shoes, accessories, and hairstyles became a form of expression. Street slang, later known as Ebonics, also crossed over into the mainstream. For example, the words “bling” and “fo’ shizzle” have been added to the Oxford English Dictionary. Rap music heavily used sampling in the early 1990s. Original copyright owners of the music being sampled heard parts of their songs in new rap music. They didn’t like other artists cashing in on their work and wanted compensation for the use of their music. After many legal actions, the Government passed several copyright enforcement laws. They required artists to clear all samples in advance to avoid lawsuits. However, clearing samples was expensive, and many record labels could not afford to clear all the samples. Hip hop music took a whole new direction, and producers had to make original sounds rather than relying heavily on samples. We heard a different sound because producers were no longer sampling commercially released songs. As a result, the music lost much of its jazz and soul influences. Hip hop music became even more commercial, becoming the top-selling music genre by the late 1990s. Different regional styles also emerged such as West Coast hip hop, gangster rap, Southern rap, rap rock, and various other genres. A new wave of artists also emerged, such as N.W.A., Dr. Dre, Tupac Shakur, Snoop Dog, the Notorious B.I.G., Nas, Jay-Z, and several others. By the end of the decade, hip hop was an integral part of popular music. It even found its way into mainstream pop and electronic music. Hip hop history has a fascinating story worth exploring more. This cultural movement has seen considerable change and evolution since its inception in the seventies. What began as a local movement intended to provide a haven for African-American and Puerto Rican youth in New York City, has become a global phenomenon. To this day, hip hop continues to be a dominant force influencing the culture around the world. So, what is hip hop music? Hip hop is more than music. It’s a culture that was cultivated within inner cities of the United States but has become a worldwide powerhouse, influencing modern music and generations to come. In this guide, we’ll cover everything you ever wanted to know about the history, genre, and culture of hip hop music. From the instruments to the lyrics, we’ll look into what hip hop music is. Are you looking for a hip hop music definition? Hip hop is a musical genre from the inner cities of the United States. In the 1970s in New York City, African-Americans, Jamaicans, and Latinos combined rhythmic drum beats, DJing, and rapping to create a new and unique musical genre. Rappers usually provide the vocals in hip hop songs. These musicians use a rhythmic vocal technique over the music of a song. Instead of instruments, the backing music tracks come from a DJ playing records and performing turntablist techniques. Hip hop songs combine a variety of other genres, such as R&B, funk, disco, and dub, and can even sometimes include spoken word. Hip hop music has unique characteristics that differentiate it from pop, R&B, and rock music. While some hip hop songs will have singing and backing vocals, the MC is the lead vocalist on a hip hop track. The MC uses a rhyming vocal technique called rapping instead of singing. Rap has since splintered into many different subgenres and styles since the early years of hip hop. The DJ is just as important to a hip hop song as the MC. DJs originally used two vinyl turntables and a mixer to loop records and extend the length of the break inside a track. This birthed turntablism, and DJs quickly learned how to use a turntable as a musical instrument. DJs began scratching records to create brand new sounds that revolutionized modern music. Thanks to the original DJs, the looping of key samples of a track is now a key component of countless modern pop and hip hop songs. Compared to a drum kit, drum machines were relatively inexpensive during the early years of hip hop. This made them an ideal alternative for inner-city kids who wanted to make music. The sound of the original Roland TR-808 is now iconic thanks to the rap pioneers of the 1980s. Other drum machines that impacted hip hop production included the Roland TR-909, E-MU SP-1200, and Akai MPC. The lack of instruments didn’t stop hip hop’s earliest musicians. All you needed to make a hip hop track was a turntable, a classic record, and a sampler. These young pioneers revolutionized the music industry by sampling the best parts of their parent record collection and creating new music with the samples. No musical genre was safe from sampling as aspiring DJs found grooves in old funk, soul, rock, and jazz records. Some of the most sampled artists of all time include James Brown, The Winstons, and Lyn Collins. Many hip hop musicians didn’t have the money to afford a drum machine or a DJ setup. Musicians learned how to mimic the sounds of the most popular drum machines with their mouths. Beatboxers used varying techniques to simulate an entire drum kit by using their vocal cords. Hip hop is an incredibly diverse musical genre. While it is a younger musical style, it quickly grew into a worldwide powerhouse. Below we’ve highlighted nine examples of hip hop music — you will find music from the last 40 years of hip hop evolution here. Arguably the first hip hop track to reach pop audiences, “Rapper’s Delight” was released in 1979 by The Sugar Hill Gang. The song uses Chic’s addictive hook from “Good Times” to keep the listener dancing and mesmerized throughout the song. Clocking in at over 14 minutes, the original 12” record provided every member of The Sugarhill Gang plenty of time to showcase their MCing skills. It wasn’t until the 1980s that hip hop began to get noticed by mainstream and pop radio. Thanks to MTV, RUN DMC’s video for “Walk This Way” opened the floodgates for rap artists and musicians. Sampling Aerosmith’s “Walk This Way”, the song crossed over and saw rock and hip hop fans lining up at record stores to buy a copy. The song also revitalized Aerosmith’s career, which faltered in the early 80s. Not to be outdone by men, “Push It”was one of the first major all-female hip hop tracks to break through to the mainstream. Salt and Peppa as MCs, with their DJ Spinderella, showed that women can produce popular hip hop music, as well. “Push It” offers a seductive dance song that is upbeat and fun. While suggestive, Peppa insists that it is not a sexual song and the phrase “push it” could mean anything. In the late 90s, Dr. Dre and west coast rap dominated the hip hop industry. “The Next Episode” was one of Dr. Dre’s biggest hits and solidified Snoop Dogg as a major player in the hip hop industry. Known as one the greatest hip hop producers of all time, Dr. Dre used David McCallum’s track, “The Edge”, perfectly for “The Next Episode”. Bad Boy Records, which the Notorious B.I.G. was a part of, dominated East Coast hip hop. Thanks to his lyrical genius, he used a smooth and seductive rap style to dominate the charts in the 90s. “Juicy” is no exception. The song is a history of his life and how much he has gained as a rapper. Backing samples — provided by Spoonie Gee and The Rubber Band — add to the seductive sound of this track. Often heralded as the greatest rapper of all time,“Lose Yourself” might be Eminem’s magnum opus. Featured in the movie 8 Mile, the song parallels Eminem’s struggle to make it as a rapper. “Lose Yourself” is an anthem for anyone who’s wanted to give up but couldn’t — emphasizing the idea that no matter how hard things may be, people can work as hard as they can to have the opportunities to succeed in life. Kanye West masterfully samples Daft Punk in his release “Stronger”. The samples and rap blur the lines between French house, EDM, and hip hop flawlessly. West used the lyrics of “Stronger” to vent out his frustrations and to show that you need to stay strong to survive adversity. This is best displayed in the refrain as West paraphrases Friedrich Nietzche. Pushing the Emo Rap genre forward, Lil Uzi Vert hit the charts with his song “XO Tour Lif3”. The song uses a combination of airy elements and lo-beats to produce its distinct backing music. Throughout the song, Vert looks back at the sadness in his life, including suicidal thoughts, drug addiction, and failed relationships. Inspired by a trip to South Africa, “Alright” is a story about hardship. After seeing how hard the struggle is there, it inspired him to write this record. Lamar’s line “everything will be alright” is a proclamation to anyone who’s working through a tough moment in their life. The song uses jazz-influenced samples similar to other popular artists such as A Tribe Called Quest and The Roots. Combined with a few tonal changes, “Alright” is a unique and masterful example of hip hop music. Over the past 50 years, countless musicians shaped the hip hop community and its music. Below are five of the most respected rappers in the industry. Each of these musicians had a major impact on subsequent hip hop musicians and every modern rapper or producer. Born Christopher Wallace, The Notorious B.I.G. had a monumental impact on hip hop music. As the focal point of the east coast rap scene during the golden age of rap, Biggie Smalls made gangsta rap sexy and seductive. Working along with Bad Boy Records, Biggie revolutionized the NYC rap scene and gangster rap. His tracks used seductive samples that helped blur the line between R&B and gangster rap. Classic tracks like “Juicy” and “Big Poppa”stood the test of time and are still regularly played for fans of hip hop music from around the world. Unfortunately, Biggie’s life abruptly ended at the age of 24 after a drive-by shooting in 1997. Eminem is one of the most successful and critically acclaimed rappers of all time. He’s also been known to smash racial barriers in the hip hop industry. His global success is also second to none, selling over 220 million records. His first major release, The Slim Shady LP, showed his lyrical skills and rhyming technique. Since then, Eminem grew into one of the most respected lyricists of our time and often tops many “Best Rapper of All Time” lists. Tupac found commercial and critical success after his move to the west coast. Here joined the West Coast Hip Hop scene and pushed gangster rap to the forefront of pop music. Shakur was also known for producing conscious rap songs during his career. A prolific artist, Tupac starred in several films in the 90s, including Juice and Poetic Justice. Unfortunately, Shakur’s life and his feud with East Coast Hip Hop ended his life early. And just like Notorious B.I.G., Shakur was murdered in a drive-by shooting in 1996. One of the most prolific female rappers, Missy Elliot showed that women can be an important part of the hip-hop industry. As a singer, songwriter, and producer, Elliot dominated the hip hop charts in the late 90s and 2000s. Known as the Queen of Rap, Missy sold over 30 million records and won 4 Grammy Awards. She’s also the first female rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Kendrick Lamar burst onto the hip hop scene with his debut album, Good Kid, M.A.A.D City, in 2012. Since then, he is often heralded as one of the most influential artists of his generation. One of the most awarded hip-hop artists of all time, Lamar won 13 Grammy Awards and a Pulitzer Prize. Lamar’s diverse musical style helps him stand out in today’s flooded hip hop markets. While you’ll notice the West Coast influence in his work, Lamar incorporates so many different genres that it can be hard to pin down his style. You can expect jazzy tunes, soul, spoken word, danceable tracks, and more while listening to a Kendrick Lamar album. Where did it all begin? Hip hop is a relatively new music genre compared to rock, pop, country, and disco. Let’s learn more about the history and origins of hip hop music. NYC and its melting pot community sparked the revolution that we know as hip hop. DJs like Kool Herc, Disco Wiz, and Grandmaster Flash hosted block parties in the Bronx throughout the 70s. Here, DJs played a mix of disco, funk, Jamaican dub, and soul records. They used two record players and a mixer to extend the break of the record. All the while, MCs would rap over DJs. Hip hop was an underground artform until 1979 when the Sugarhill Gang released their single, “Rapper’s Delight”. This was the first hip hop single to see commercial and crossover success. Thanks to its inspiring sampling of Chic and the clever rapping of the Gang, “Rapper’s Delight” became an overnight classic hip hop song. The early 80s gave hip hop home in nightclubs around the country. The electronic sound and samples on hip hop tracks were a perfect match for late-night parties in NYC, LA, and other cities. The earliest old-school hip hop tracks have their roots in disco and often sampled the most popular disco songs of the era. By the mid-80s, artists began to expand and diversify their sounds. Pioneers like Afrika Bambaataa and Marly Marl improved hip hop production techniques and began using classic drum machines and samplers to create the beats for the biggest tunes of the era. Rappers also upped their game during the 80s. From Rakim to KRS-One, rap became poetry. These artists revolutionized rap, flow, and technique, creating a huge impact on every rapper who followed. The mid-1980s changed everything for hip hop. During this time, hip hop artists like RUN DMC, LL Cool J, Public Enemy, and the Beastie Boys broke through the charts and into mainstream pop culture. Many of the biggest tracks and albums of the decade can be traced back to one producer — Rick Rubin. Rubin made a monumental impact on hip hop music during the 80s. Along with Russel Simmons, their label Def Jam Recordings got hip hop music played everywhere. MTV started airing videos during this time, as well. With little play on public radio, Def Jam was happy to provide the start-up with new videos. Thanks to MTV play and their mainstream appeal, The Beastie Boys were the first rap artist to have a number 1 hit in the Billboard charts. Hip hop was finally ready to grow in the late 80s. During the golden age of hip hop, the genre grew by leaps and bounds. Artists took liberties and diversified their sounds and tracks. This experimenting gave birth to many of today’s subgenres of hip hop. Here, you saw artists like A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Gang Starr, and Public Enemy rise to prominence. The songs had intricate lyrics fused into a variety of musical themes. Hip hop finally received critical praise during this time, as well. Public Enemy’s album, It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back, is lauded as one of the greatest albums of all time. As the 90s grew closer, gangster rap burst onto the scene. Within NYC and LA, an East Coast – West Coast feud emerged. On the west coast, NWA released Straight Outta Compton, and it changed music forever. The protest album lit a spark, and hip hop was never the same again. After NWA, we saw superstars like Tupac, Snoop Dogg, and Dr. Dre dominate the hip hop scene. NYC and the rest of the east coast were busy, as well, during the golden age. Albums from the Wu-Tang Clan, the Fugees, NAS, and The Notorious B.I.G. were necessary to listen to for many hip hop fans. During this time, hip hop expanded its reach outside of New York and California. Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, and Detroit eventually began to see success in the hip hop world. By the late 90s, hip-hop musicians saw massive crossover success. Led by Jay-Z, Puff Daddy, Timbaland, and Lil’ Wayne, rap and hip hop became commercially accepted. By 2000, hip hop began to dominate the airwaves of pop radio. Hip hop musicians dominate the charts now, and artists like Kendrick Lamar, Kanye West, and Jay-Z sell millions of records. Pop stars started to take notice and often incorporated hip hop elements and raps into their songs to appeal to larger audiences during this time. Recently, trap and mumble rap have dominated the scene. Artists like Lil Nas X, Future, and Juice Wrld appeal to a new generation of hip hop fanatics. While the genre is controversial with older rappers, these new artists are pushing music and hip hop into new directions. Pop artists like Katy Perry, The Weeknd, and Beyonce have been quick to add trap and mumble tracks to their albums. Many trap and mumble rap artists found success through streaming services. Artists during the 2000s began releasing their music directly online. YouTube, Soundcloud, and Spotify helped artists like Lil Xan, Lil Pump, and XXXTentacion gain superstar status without a major record label deal. Since its start in the Bronx, hip hop has splintered into a wide range of genres. It is popular worldwide, allowing countless musicians to add their unique style and elements to the genre. A quick review of a list of hip hop genres will show that there are hundreds of sub-genres to listen to. What started as a local underground music scene quickly grew into a worldwide powerhouse by the 2000s. Where will the sound go from here? While old school and gangster rap will always have a special place in hip hop, today’s artists are branching out into new sounds. Trap, emo rap, and mumble rap are incredibly popular currently. Hip hop musicians are also embracing EDM sounds, vaporwave, lo-fi sounds, and country music. The Weeknd’s latest release, Dawn FM, takes advantage of vaporwave, synth-wave, and new wave musical stylings. Alternative hip hop artists like Atmosphere, Aesop Rock, and Run the Jewels are also pushing hip hop into new directions and revolutionizing lyrical techniques. On the worldwide front, grime music is growing in popularity in the UK, and Asia has seen an explosion of hip hop artists. As you can see, hip hop artists continue to break boundaries and transform the sound of the genre. No musical style is off-limits for modern hip hop musicians. From its beginnings in NYC block parties to becoming the most influential musical genre, hip hop has a long history. The genre has gone through growing pains and come out on top. Hip hop continues and will continue to evolve and thrive with today’s young musicians and shows no signs of slowing down.P.S. Remember though, none of what you’ve learned will matter if you don’t know how to get your music out there and earn from it. Want to learn how to do that? Then get our free ‘5 Steps To Profitable Youtube Music Career’ ebook emailed directly to you! Entertainment & Pop Culture Music, Contemporary Genres Rap & Hip-Hop Music hip-hop, cultural movement that attained widespread popularity in the 1980s and ’90s and also the backing music for rap, the musical style incorporating rhythmic and/or rhyming speech that became the movement’s most lasting and influential art form. Although widely considered a synonym for rap music, the term hip-hop refers to a complex culture comprising four elements: deejaying, or “turntabling”; rapping, also known as “MCing” or “rhyming”; graffiti painting, also known as “graf” or “writing”; and “B-boying,” which encompasses hip-hop dance, style, and attitude, along with the sort of virile body language that philosopher Cornel West described as “postural semantics.” (A fifth element, “knowledge of self/consciousness,” is sometimes added to the list of hip-hop elements, particularly by socially conscious hip-hop artists and scholars.) Hip-hop originated in the predominantly African American economically depressed South Bronx section of New York City in the late 1970s. As the hip-hop movement began at society’s margins, its origins are shrouded in myth, enigma, and obfuscation. Graffiti and break dancing, the aspects of the culture that first caught public attention, had the least lasting effect. Reputedly, the graffiti movement was started about 1972 by a Greek American teenager who signed, or “tagged,” Taki 183 (his name and street, 183rd Street) on walls throughout the New York City subway system. By 1975 youths in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn were stealing into train yards under cover of darkness to spray-paint colorful mural-size renderings of their names, imagery from underground comics and television, and even Andy Warhol-like Campbell’s soup cans onto the sides of subway cars. Soon, influential art dealers in the United States, Europe, and Japan were displaying graffiti in major galleries. New York City’s Metropolitan Transit Authority responded with dogs, barbed-wire fences, paint-removing acid baths, and undercover police squads. DJ Kool HercJaimaican American deejay, 2019.The beginnings of the dancing, rapping, and deejaying components of hip-hop were bound together by the shared environment in which these art forms evolved. The first major hip-hop deejay was DJ Kool Herc (Clive Campbell), an 18-year-old immigrant who introduced the huge sound systems of his native Jamaica to inner-city parties. Using two turntables, he melded percussive fragments from older records with popular dance songs to create a continuous flow of music. Kool Herc and other pioneering hip-hop deejays such as Grand Wizard Theodore, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash isolated and extended the break beat (the part of a dance record where all sounds but the drums drop out), stimulating improvisational dancing. Contests developed in which the best dancers created break dancing, a style with a repertoire of acrobatic and occasionally airborne moves, including gravity-defying headspins and backspins. In the meantime, deejays developed new techniques for turntable manipulation. Needle dropping, created by Grandmaster Flash, prolonged short drum breaks by playing two copies of a record simultaneously and moving the needle on one turntable back to the start of the break while the other played. Sliding the record back and forth underneath the needle created the rhythmic effect called “scratching.” Old-school foreverThe Sugarhill Gang performing at the Apollo Theater, Harlem, New York, March 9, 1990.Kool Herc was widely credited as the father of modern rapping for his spoken interjections over records, but among the wide variety of oratorical precedents cited for MCing are the epic histories of West African griots, talking blues songs, jailhouse toasts (long rhyming poems recounting outlandish deeds and misdeeds), and the dozens (the ritualized word game based on exchanging insults, usually about members of the opponent’s family). Other influences cited include the hipster-jive announcing styles of 1950s rhythm-and-blues deejays such as Jocko Henderson; the Black power poetry of Amiri Baraka, Gil Scott-Heron, and the Last Poets; rapping sections in recordings by Isaac Hayes and George Clinton; and the Jamaican style of rhythmized speech known as toasting. Rap first came to national prominence in the United States with the release of the Sugarhill Gang’s song “Rapper’s Delight” (1979) on the independent African American-owned label Sugar Hill. Within weeks of its release, it had become a chart-topping phenomenon and given its name to a new genre of pop music. The major pioneers of rapping were Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Kurtis Blow, and the Cold Crush Brothers, whose Grandmaster Caz is controversially considered by some to be the true author of some of the strongest lyrics in “Rapper’s Delight.” These early MCs and deejays constituted rap’s old school. Did you know there are independent musicians making thousands of dollars every month on Youtube?! You won’t see them in the charts, yet they’re making good money; enough that they don’t have to get a day job. Want to learn how to do the same? Our free ebook will show you exactly that. AS SEEN ON (AMONG OTHERS): Latest Guides On All Subjects You can also see all guides ordered by subject or by date. Tools It’s our aim to make your life as a musician (or someone who works in the music industry) easier. Because of that, we’ve developed free music tools to do just that. Please share if useful. What an incredible journey through music we’ve been on! Over the last few months, we’ve explored the fundamental characteristics of a wide chunk of the musical spectrum, but we’re only really started to starch the surface of what music has to offer. We’ve explored everything from classical to pop, from jazz and R&B to rock and roll and country, and from folk to punk. Last week we even explored the characteristics of some of Canada’s Indigenous music. But when it comes to the wide world of music, we’ve only just begun! This week we’re taking a look at something that’s more than a genre of music, it’s a cultural movement: Hip Hop. What is Hip Hop? More than merely a musical genre, hip hop is a cultural movement that has swept music, poetry, dance, art, fashion, and political philosophy up into itself. In fact, many people use “rap” and “hip hop” synonymously, but strictly speaking, rap is a specific musical technique that falls under the umbrella of the hip hop movement. According to DJ, songwriter, producer, and hip hop pioneer, Afrika Bambaata, hip hop has four critical pillars: Rapping Rapping, or MCing, is a vocal technique that uses both rhythm and lyrics, but typically doesn’t have a melody. With this lack of melody, it’s somewhat less like singing than it is like reciting poetry over a backbeat. As a matter of fact, the term “rapping” comes from a 1970s slang word for “talking” – anyone that was talking, reading poetry aloud, or giving a speech could be said to be “rapping.” As hip hop culture bloomed, the word “rap” took on today’s more specific definition. Today, rapping is a distinctive and common feature of most (but not all) hip hop music. Turntablism Or as it’s more commonly known today, DJing, is a way to make music with a turntable. Using records often produced by other artists, a creative DJ mixes, combines, and otherwise manipulates the music on the records to create something new. In the past, this has involved the DJ actually interfering with the normal functions of the turntable, speeding it up or slowing it down to change how the sound is played, for example. Today, however, with modern digital tools, DJs can create the same sounds electronically. Breakdancing Sometimes called BBoy/BGirling, breakdancing is a unique, demanding, and instantly recognizable style of dance that few performers have mastered. Breakdancing has been a central element of hip hop culture since it began. However, thanks in no small part to its incredible level of difficulty, it hasn’t enjoyed the same mainstream succuss as other elements of the hip hop movement. Street art Street art is a visual art that goes hand in hand with hip hop. Usually created with spray paint, street art is known for its hectic visual style. Of course, not all graffiti is associated with hip hop culture, but the movement has created a unique style that is iconic. Musical Characteristics of Hip Hop When it comes to the music of hip hop, the central feature has to be the interplay between the rapper and the beat. Beats are often created from electronic instruments or samples from older recordings. In fact, few hip hop artists play physical instruments during their performances. The creativity of the style comes from finding interesting ways to weave beats and melodies together to create something right and new. With such focus on the beat, hip hop beats can be sparse and relaxed, harsh and dark, and every imaginable combination in between. But what connects them all is a driving, steady beat and (usually) a minimalist approach to musical complexity, so as not to distract from the main focus: the lyrics and the rapper. Rap has risen to become one of the most distinctive features and styles of hip hop culture. Rappers utilize the rhythm, lyrics, and their vocal tone to express themselves, and the best rappers are known for their “flow” – the way their words run together smoothly without the performer stumbling over them or becoming tongue tied. Rappers use their voice as an instrument, and often vary the sound of their voice, using course shouts or smooth flourishes depending on the needs of the performance. What all this means is that the secret to good rap is in more than just the music. Great rap performers barrow poetic techniques like: Internal rhyme, which is a rhyme that happens within a single line or verse, or between internal phrases, rather than at the line endings. Meter, which represents the basic rhythmic structure of a verse or the lines in a verse. Double entendres, which are figures of speech or a particular way of wording things that creates a double meaning. One of the meanings is usually obvious, while the secondary meaning often conveys a message that would be too socially awkward, sexually suggestive, or offensive to say directly. With this emphasis on wordplay and message crafting, it’s no wonder rap fans hang on every word and try to analyze the meaning eve as they bounce to the beat! Have you always wanted to join in on the beat? Do your kids show an interest in learning to play music? Either way, there’s a place for you at The Music Studio! Our professional instructors offer a wide range of musical programs for all ages. So whether you’re looking for a new instructor, hoping to pick up where you left off, or are on the hunt for someone to help get you or your little ones started, we’ve got a program for you! Check out all our classes, lessons, and programs, all now available online as well, and sign up today! It’s never too early or too late to start a life filled with music! So, what is hip hop music? Hip hop is more than music. It’s a culture that was cultivated within inner cities of the United States but has become a worldwide powerhouse, influencing modern music and generations to come. In this guide, we’ll cover everything you ever wanted to know about the history, genre, and culture of hip hop music. From the instruments to the lyrics, we’ll look into what hip hop music is. Are you looking for a hip hop music definition? Hip hop is a musical genre from the inner cities of the United States. In the 1970s in New York City, African-Americans, Jamaicans, and Latinos combined rhythmic drum beats, DJing, and rapping to create a new and unique musical genre. Rappers usually provide the vocals in hip hop songs. These musicians use a rhythmic vocal technique over the music of a song. Instead of instruments, the backing music tracks come from a DJ playing records and performing turntablist techniques. Hip hop songs combine a variety of other genres, such as R&B, funk, disco, and dub, and can even sometimes include spoken word. Hip hop music has unique characteristics that differentiate it from pop, R&B, and rock music. While some hip hop songs will have singing and backing vocals, the MC is the lead vocalist on a hip hop track. The MC uses a rhyming vocal technique called rapping instead of singing. Rap has since splintered into many different subgenres and styles since the early years of hip hop. The DJ is just as important to a hip hop song as the MC. DJs originally used two vinyl turntables and a mixer to loop records and extend the length of the break inside a track. This birthed turntablism, and DJs quickly learned how to use a turntable as a musical instrument. DJs began scratching records to create brand new sounds that revolutionized modern music. Thanks to the original DJs, the looping of key samples of a track is now a key component of countless modern pop and hip hop songs. Compared to a drum kit, drum machines were relatively inexpensive during the early years of hip hop. This made them an ideal alternative for inner-city kids who wanted to make music. The sound of the original Roland TR-808 is now iconic thanks to the rap pioneers of the 1980s. Other drum machines that impacted hip hop production included the Roland TR-909, E-MU SP-1200, and Akai MPC. The lack of instruments didn’t stop hip hop’s earliest musicians. All you needed to make a hip hop track was a turntable, a classic record, and a sampler. These young pioneers revolutionized the music industry by sampling the best parts of their parent record collection and creating new music with the samples. No musical genre was safe from sampling as aspiring DJs found grooves in old funk, soul, rock, and jazz records. Some of the most sampled artists of all time include James Brown, The Winstons, and Lyn Collins. Many hip hop musicians didn’t have the money to afford a drum machine or a DJ setup. Musicians learned how to mimic the sounds of the most popular drum machines with their mouths. Beatboxers used varying techniques to simulate an entire drum kit by using their vocal cords. Hip hop is an incredibly diverse musical genre. While it is a younger musical style, it quickly grew into a worldwide powerhouse. Below we’ve highlighted nine examples of hip hop music — you will find music from the last 40 years of hip hop evolution here. Arguably the first hip hop track to reach pop audiences, “Rapper’s Delight” was released in 1979 by The Sugar Hill Gang. The song uses Chic’s addictive hook from “Good Times” to keep the listener dancing and mesmerized throughout the song. Clocking in at over 14 minutes, the original 12” record provided every member of The Sugarhill Gang plenty of time to showcase their MCing skills. It wasn’t until the 1980s that hip hop began to get noticed by mainstream and pop radio. Thanks to MTV, RUN DMC’s video for “Walk This Way” opened the floodgates for rap artists and musicians. Sampling Aerosmith’s “Walk This Way”, the song crossed over and saw rock and hip hop fans lining up at record stores to buy a copy. The song also revitalized Aerosmith’s career, which faltered in the early 80s. Not to be outdone by men, “Push It”was one of the first major all-female hip hop tracks to break through to the mainstream. Salt and Peppa as MCs, with their DJ Spinderella, showed that women can produce popular hip hop music, as well. “Push It” offers a seductive dance song that is upbeat and fun. While suggestive, Peppa insists that it is not a sexual song and the phrase “push it” could mean anything. In the late 90s, Dr. Dre and west coast rap dominated the hip hop industry. “The Next Episode” was one of Dr. Dre’s biggest hits and solidified Snoop Dogg as a major player in the hip hop industry. Known as one the greatest hip hop producers of all time, Dr. Dre used David McCallum’s track, “The Edge”, perfectly for “The Next Episode”. Bad Boy Records, which the Notorious B.I.G. was a part of, dominated East Coast hip hop. Thanks to his lyrical genius, he used a smooth and seductive rap style to dominate the charts in the 90s. “Juicy” is no exception. The song is a history of his life and how much he has gained as a rapper. Backing samples — provided by Spoonie Gee and The Rubber Band — add to the seductive sound of this track. Often heralded as the greatest rapper of all time,“Lose Yourself” might be Eminem’s magnum opus. Featured in the movie 8 Mile, the song parallels Eminem’s struggle to make it as a rapper. “Lose Yourself” is an anthem for anyone who’s wanted to give up but couldn’t — emphasizing the idea that no matter how hard things may be, people can work as hard as they can to have the opportunities to succeed in life. Kanye West masterfully samples Daft Punk in his release “Stronger”. The samples and rap blur the lines between French house, EDM, and hip hop flawlessly. West used the lyrics of “Stronger” to vent out his frustrations and to show that you need to stay strong to survive adversity. This is best displayed in the refrain as West paraphrases Friedrich Nietzche. Pushing the Emo Rap genre forward, Lil Uzi Vert hit the charts with his song “XO Tour Lif3”. The song uses a combination of airy elements and lo-beats to produce its distinct backing music. Throughout the song, Vert looks back at the sadness in his life, including suicidal thoughts, drug addiction, and failed relationships. Inspired by a trip to South Africa, “Alright” is a story about hardship. After seeing how hard the struggle is there, it inspired him to write this record. Lamar’s line “everything will be alright” is a proclamation to anyone who’s working through a tough moment in their life. The song uses jazz-influenced samples similar to other popular artists such as A Tribe Called Quest and The Roots. Combined with a few tonal changes, “Alright” is a unique and masterful example of hip hop music. Over the past 50 years, countless musicians shaped the hip hop community and its music. Below are five of the most respected rappers in the industry. Each of these musicians had a major impact on subsequent hip hop musicians and every modern rapper or producer. Born Christopher Wallace, The Notorious B.I.G. had a monumental impact on hip hop music. As the focal point of the east coast rap scene during the golden age of rap, Biggie Smalls made gangsta rap sexy and seductive. Working along with Bad Boy Records, Biggie revolutionized the NYC rap scene and gangster rap. His tracks used seductive samples that helped blur the line between R&B and gangster rap. Classic tracks like “Juicy” and “Big Poppa”stood the test of time and are still regularly played for fans of hip hop music from around the world. Unfortunately, Biggie’s life abruptly ended at the age of 24 after a drive-by shooting in 1997. Eminem is one of the most successful and critically acclaimed rappers of all time. He’s also been known to smash racial barriers in the hip hop industry. His global success is also second to none, selling over 220 million records. His first major release, The Slim Shady LP, showed his lyrical skills and rhyming technique. Since then, Eminem grew into one of the most respected lyricists of our time and often tops many “Best Rapper of All Time” lists. Tupac found commercial and critical success after his move to the west coast. Here joined the West Coast Hip Hop scene and pushed gangster rap to the forefront of pop music. Shakur was also known for producing conscious rap songs during his career. A prolific artist, Tupac starred in several films in the 90s, including Juice and Poetic Justice. Unfortunately, Shakur’s life and his feud with East Coast Hip Hop ended his life early. And just like Notorious B.I.G., Shakur was murdered in a drive-by shooting in 1996. One of the most prolific female rappers, Missy Elliot showed that women can be an important part of the hip-hop industry. As a singer, songwriter, and producer, Elliot dominated the hip hop charts in the late 90s and 2000s. Known as the Queen of Rap, Missy sold over 30 million records and won 4 Grammy Awards. She’s also the first female rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Kendrick Lamar burst onto the hip hop scene with his debut album, Good Kid, M.A.A.D City, in 2012. Since then, he is often heralded as one of the most influential artists of his generation. One of the most awarded hip-hop artists of all time, Lamar won 13 Grammy Awards and a Pulitzer Prize. Lamar’s diverse musical style helps him stand out in today’s flooded hip hop markets. While you’ll notice the West Coast influence in his work, Lamar incorporates so many different genres that it can be hard to pin down his style. You can expect jazzy tunes, soul, spoken word, danceable tracks, and more while listening to a Kendrick Lamar album. Where did it all begin? Hip hop is a relatively new music genre compared to rock, pop, country, and disco. Let’s learn more about the history and origins of hip hop music. NYC and its melting pot community sparked the revolution that we know as hip hop. DJs like Kool Herc, Disco Wiz, and Grandmaster Flash hosted block parties in the Bronx throughout the 70s. Here, DJs played a mix of disco, funk, Jamaican dub, and soul records. They used two record players and a mixer to extend the break of the record. All the while, MCs would rap over DJs. Hip hop was an underground artform until 1979 when the Sugarhill Gang released their single, “Rapper’s Delight”. This was the first hip hop single to see commercial and crossover success. Thanks to its inspiring sampling of Chic and the clever rapping of the Gang, “Rapper’s Delight” became an overnight classic hip hop song. The early 80s gave hip hop home in nightclubs around the country. The electronic sound and samples on hip hop tracks were a perfect match for late-night parties in NYC, LA, and other cities. The earliest old-school hip hop tracks have their roots in

disco and often sampled the most popular disco songs of the era. By the mid-80s, artists began to expand and diversify their sounds. Pioneers like Afrika Bambaataa and Marly Marl improved hip hop production techniques and began using classic drum machines and samplers to create the beats for the biggest tunes of the era. Rappers also upped their game during the 80s. From Rakim to KRS-One, rap became poetry. These artists revolutionized rap, flow, and technique, creating a huge impact on every rapper who followed. The mid-1980s changed everything for hip hop. During this time, hip hop artists like RUN DMC, LL Cool J, Public Enemy, and the Beastie Boys broke through the charts and into mainstream pop culture. Many of the biggest tracks and albums of the decade can be traced back to one producer — Rick Rubin. Rubin made a monumental impact on hip hop music during the 80s. Along with Russel Simmons, their label Def Jam Recordings got hip hop music played everywhere. MTV started airing videos during this time, as well. With little play on public radio, Def Jam was happy to provide the start-up with new videos. Thanks to MTV play and their mainstream appeal, The Beastie Boys were the first rap artist to have a number 1 hit in the Billboard charts. Hip hop was finally ready to grow in the late 80s. During the golden age of hip hop, the genre grew by leaps and bounds. Artists took liberties and diversified their sounds and tracks. This experimenting gave birth to many of today's subgenres of hip hop. Here, you saw artists like A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Gang Starr, and Public Enemy rise to prominence. The songs had intricate lyrics fused into a variety of musical themes. Hip hop finally received critical praise during this time, as well. Public Enemy's album, It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back, is lauded as one of the greatest albums of all time. As the 90s grew closer, gangster rap burst onto the scene. 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Hip hop musicians dominate the charts now, and artists like Kendrick Lamar, Kanye West, and Jay-Z sell millions of records. Pop stars started to take notice and often incorporated hip hop elements and raps into their songs to appeal to larger audiences during this time. Recently, trap and mumble rap have dominated the scene. Artists like Lil Nas X, Future, and Juice Wrld appeal to a new generation of hip hop fanatics. While the genre is controversial with older rappers, these new artists are pushing music and hip hop into new directions. Pop artists like Katy Perry, The Weeknd, and Beyonce have been quick to add trap and mumble tracks to their albums. Many trap and mumble rap artists found success through streaming services. Artists during the 2000s began releasing their music directly online. YouTube, Soundcloud, and Spotify helped artists like Lil Xan, Lil Pump, and XXXTentacion gain superstar status without a major record label deal. 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Hip hop songs combine a variety of other genres, such as R&B, funk, disco, and dub, and can even sometimes include spoken word. Hip hop music has unique characteristics that differentiate it from pop, R&B, and rock music. While some hip hop songs will have singing and backing vocals, the MC is the lead vocalist on a hip hop track. The MC uses a rhyming vocal technique called rapping instead of singing. Rap has since splintered into many different subgenres and styles since the early years of hip hop. The DJ is just as important to a hip hop song as the MC. DJs originally used two vinyl turntables and a mixer to loop records and extend the length of the break inside a track. This birthed turntablism, and DJs quickly learned how to use a turntable as a musical instrument. DJs began scratching records to create brand new sounds that revolutionized modern music. Thanks to the original DJs, the looping of key samples of a track is now a key component of countless modern pop and hip hop songs. Compared to a drum kit, drum machines were relatively inexpensive during the early years of hip hop. This made them an ideal alternative for inner-city kids who wanted to make music. The sound of the original Roland TR-808 is now iconic thanks to the rap pioneers of the 1980s. Other drum machines that impacted hip hop production included the Roland TR-909, E-MU SP-1200, and Akai MPC. The lack of instruments didn't stop hip hop's earliest musicians. All you needed to make a hip hop track was a turntable, a classic record, and a sampler. These young pioneers revolutionized the music industry by sampling the best parts of their parent record collection and creating new music with the samples. No musical genre was safe from sampling as aspiring DJs found grooves in old funk, soul, rock, and jazz records. Some of the most sampled artists of all time include James Brown, The Winstons, and Lyn Collins. Many hip hop musicians didn't have the money to afford a drum machine or a DJ setup. Musicians learned how to mimic the sounds of the most popular drum machines with their mouths. Beatboxers used varying techniques to simulate an entire drum kit by using their vocal cords. Hip hop is an incredibly diverse musical genre. While it is a younger musical style, it quickly grew into a worldwide powerhouse. Below we've highlighted nine examples of hip hop music — you will find music from the last 40 years of hip hop evolution here. Arguably the first hip hop track to reach pop audiences, "Rapper's Delight" was released in 1979 by The Sugar Hill Gang. The song uses Chic's addictive hook from "Good Times" to keep the listener dancing and mesmerized throughout the song. Clocking in at over 14 minutes, the original 12" record provided every member of The Sugarhill Gang plenty of time to showcase their MCing skills. It wasn't until the 1980s that hip hop began to get noticed by mainstream and pop radio. Thanks to MTV, RUN DMC's video for "Walk This Way" opened the floodgates for rap artists and musicians. Sampling Aerosmith's "Walk This Way", the song crossed over and saw rock and hip hop fans lining up at record stores to buy a copy. The song also revitalized Aerosmith's career, which faltered in the early 80s. Not to be outdone by men, "Push It"was one of the first major all-female hip hop tracks to break through to the mainstream. Salt and Peppa as MCs, with their DJ Spinderella, showed that women can produce popular hip hop music, as well. "Push It" offers a seductive dance song that is upbeat and fun. While suggestive, Peppa insists that it is not a sexual song and the phrase "push it" could mean anything. In the late 90s, Dr. Dre and west coast rap dominated the hip hop industry. "The Next Episode" was one of Dr. Dre's biggest hits and solidified Snoop Dogg as a major player in the hip hop industry. Known as one the greatest hip hop producers of all time, Dr. Dre used David McCallum's track, "The Edge", perfectly for "The Next Episode". Bad Boy Records, which the Notorious B.I.G. was a part of, dominated East Coast hip hop. Thanks to his lyrical genius, he used a smooth and seductive rap style to dominate the charts in the 90s. "Juicy" is no exception. The song is a history of his life and how much he has gained as a rapper. Backing samples — provided by Spoonie Gee and The Rubber Band — add to the seductive sound of this track. Often heralded as the greatest rapper of all time,"Lose Yourself" might be Eminem's magnum opus. Featured in the movie 8 Mile, the song parallels Eminem's struggle to make it as a rapper. "Lose Yourself" is an anthem for anyone who's wanted to give up but couldn't — emphasizing the idea that no matter how hard things may be, people can work as hard as they can to have the opportunities to succeed in life. Kanye West masterfully samples Daft Punk in his release "Stronger". The samples and rap blur the lines between French house, EDM, and hip hop flawlessly. West used the lyrics of "Stronger" to vent out his frustrations and to show that you need to stay strong to survive adversity. This is best displayed in the refrain as West paraphrases Friedrich Nietzche. Pushing the Emo Rap genre forward, Lil Uzi Vert hit the charts with his song "XO Tour Lif3". The song uses a combination of airy elements and lo-beats to produce its distinct backing music. Throughout the song, Vert looks back at the sadness in his life, including suicidal thoughts, drug addiction, and failed relationships. Inspired by a trip to South Africa, "Alright" is a story about hardship. After seeing how hard the struggle is there, it inspired him to write this record. Lamar's line "everything will be alright" is a proclamation to anyone who's working through a tough moment in their life. The song uses jazz-influenced samples similar to other popular artists such as A Tribe Called Quest and The Roots. Combined with a few tonal changes, "Alright" is a unique and masterful example of hip hop music. Over the past 50 years, countless musicians shaped the hip hop community and its music. Below are five of the most respected rappers in the industry. Each of these musicians had a major impact on subsequent hip hop musicians and every modern rapper or producer. Born Christopher Wallace, The Notorious B.I.G. had a monumental impact on hip hop music. As the focal point of the east coast rap scene during the golden age of rap, Biggie Smalls made gangsta rap sexy and seductive. Working along with Bad Boy Records, Biggie revolutionized the NYC rap scene and gangster rap. His tracks used seductive samples that helped blur the line between R&B and gangster rap. Classic tracks like "Juicy" and "Big Poppa"stood the test of time and are still regularly played for fans of hip hop music from around the world. Unfortunately, Biggie's life abruptly ended at the age of 24 after a drive-by shooting in 1997. Eminem is one of the most successful and critically acclaimed rappers of all time. He's also been known to smash racial barriers in the hip hop industry. His global success is also second to none, selling over 220 million records. His first major release, The Slim Shady LP, showed his lyrical skills and rhyming technique. Since then, Eminem grew into one of the most respected lyricists of our time and often tops many "Best Rapper of All Time" lists. Tupac found commercial and critical success after his move to the west coast. Here joined the West Coast Hip Hop scene and pushed gangster rap to the forefront of pop music. Shakur was also known for producing conscious rap songs during his career. A prolific artist, Tupac starred in several films in the 90s, including Juice and Poetic Justice. Unfortunately, Shakur's life and his feud with East Coast Hip Hop ended his life early. And just like Notorious B.I.G., Shakur was murdered in a drive-by shooting in 1996. One of the most prolific female rappers, Missy Elliot showed that women can be an important part of the hip-hop industry. As a singer, songwriter, and producer, Elliot dominated the hip hop charts in the late 90s and 2000s. Known as the Queen of Rap, Missy sold over 30 million records and won 4 Grammy Awards. She's also the first female rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Kendrick Lamar burst onto the hip hop scene with his debut album, Good Kid, M.A.A.D City, in 2012. Since then, he is often heralded as one of the most influential artists of his generation. One of the most awarded hip-hop artists of all time, Lamar won 13 Grammy Awards and a Pulitzer Prize. Lamar's diverse musical style helps him stand out in today's flooded hip hop markets. While you'll notice the West Coast influence in his work, Lamar incorporates so many different genres that it can be hard to pin down his style. You can expect jazzy tunes, soul, spoken word, danceable tracks, and more while listening to a Kendrick Lamar album. Where did it all begin? Hip hop is a relatively new music genre compared to rock, pop, country, and disco. Let's learn more about the history and origins of hip hop music. NYC and its melting pot community sparked the revolution that we know as hip hop. DJs like Kool Herc, Disco Wiz, and Grandmaster Flash hosted block parties in the Bronx throughout the 70s. Here, DJs played a mix of disco, funk, Jamaican dub, and soul records. They used two record players and a mixer to extend the break of the record. All the while, MCs would rap over DJs. Hip hop was an underground artform until 1979 when the Sugarhill Gang released their single, "Rapper's Delight". This was the first hip hop single to see commercial and crossover success. Thanks to its inspiring sampling of Chic and the clever rapping of the Gang, "Rapper's Delight" became an overnight classic hip hop song. The early 80s gave hip hop home in nightclubs around the country. The electronic sound and samples on hip hop tracks were a perfect match for late-night parties in NYC, LA, and other cities. The earliest old-school hip hop tracks have their roots in disco and often sampled the most popular disco songs of the era. By the mid-80s, artists began to expand and diversify their sounds. Pioneers like Afrika Bambaataa and Marly Marl improved hip hop production techniques and began using classic drum machines and samplers to create the beats for the biggest tunes of the era. Rappers also upped their game during the 80s. From Rakim to KRS-One, rap became poetry. These artists revolutionized rap, flow, and technique, creating a huge impact on every rapper who followed. The mid-1980s changed everything for hip hop. During this time, hip hop artists like RUN DMC, LL Cool J, Public Enemy, and the Beastie Boys broke through the charts and into mainstream pop culture. Many of the biggest tracks and albums of the decade can be traced back to one producer — Rick Rubin. Rubin made a monumental impact on hip hop music during the 80s. Along with Russel Simmons, their label Def Jam Recordings got hip hop music played everywhere. MTV started airing videos during this time, as well. With little play on public radio, Def Jam was happy to provide the start-up with new videos. Thanks to MTV play and their mainstream appeal, The Beastie Boys were the first rap artist to have a number 1 hit in the Billboard charts. Hip hop was finally ready to grow in the late 80s. During the golden age of hip hop, the genre grew by leaps and bounds. Artists took liberties and diversified their sounds and tracks. This experimenting gave birth to many of today's subgenres of hip hop. Here, you saw artists like A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Gang Starr, and Public Enemy rise to prominence. The songs had intricate lyrics fused into a variety of musical themes. Hip hop finally received critical praise during this time, as well. Public Enemy's album, It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back, is lauded as one of the greatest albums of all time. As the 90s grew closer, gangster rap burst onto the scene. Within NYC and LA, an East Coast – West Coast feud emerged. On the west coast, NWA released Straight Outta Compton, and it changed music forever. The protest album lit a spark, and hip hop was never the same again. After NWA, we saw superstars like Tupac, Snoop Dogg, and Dr. Dre dominate the hip hop scene. NYC and the rest of the east coast were busy, as well, during the golden age. Albums from the Wu-Tang Clan, the Fugees, NAS, and The Notorious B.I.G. were necessary to listen to for many hip hop fans. During this time, hip hop expanded its reach outside of New York and California. Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, and Detroit eventually began to see success in the hip hop world. By the late 90s, hip-hop musicians saw massive crossover success. Led by Jay-Z, Puff Daddy, Timbaland, and Lil' Wayne, rap and hip hop became commercially accepted. By 2000, hip hop began to dominate the airwaves of pop radio. Hip hop musicians dominate the charts now, and artists like Kendrick Lamar, Kanye West, and Jay-Z sell millions of records. Pop stars started to take notice and often incorporated hip hop elements and raps into their songs to appeal to larger audiences during this time. Recently, trap and mumble rap have dominated the scene. Artists like Lil Nas X, Future, and Juice Wrld appeal to a new generation of hip hop fanatics. While the genre is controversial with older rappers, these new artists are pushing music and hip hop into new directions. Pop artists like Katy Perry, The Weeknd, and Beyonce have been quick to add trap and mumble tracks to their albums. Many trap and mumble rap artists found success through streaming services. Artists during the 2000s began releasing their music directly online. YouTube, Soundcloud, and Spotify helped artists like Lil Xan, Lil Pump, and XXXTentacion gain superstar status without a major record label deal. Since its start in the Bronx, hip hop has splintered into a wide range of genres. It is popular worldwide, allowing countless musicians to add their unique style and elements to the genre. A quick review of a list of hip hop genres will show that there are hundreds of sub-genres to listen to. What started as a local underground music scene quickly grew into a worldwide powerhouse by the 2000s. Where will the sound go from here? While old school and gangster rap will always have a special place in hip hop, today's artists are branching out into new sounds. Trap, emo rap, and mumble rap are incredibly popular currently. Hip hop musicians are also embracing EDM sounds, vaporwave, lo-fi sounds, and country music. The Weeknd's latest release, Dawn FM, takes advantage of vaporwave, synth-wave, and new wave musical stylings. Alternative hip hop artists like Atmosphere, Aesop Rock, and Run the Jewels are also pushing hip hop into new directions and revolutionizing lyrical techniques. On the worldwide front, grime music is growing in popularity in the UK, and Asia has seen an explosion of hip hop artists. As you can see, hip hop artists continue to break boundaries and transform the sound of the genre. No musical style is off-limits for modern hip hop musicians. From its beginnings in NYC block parties to becoming the most influential musical genre, hip hop has a long history. The genre has gone through growing pains and come out on top. Hip hop continues and will continue to evolve and thrive with today's young musicians and shows no signs of slowing down.P.S. Remember though, none of what you've learned will matter if you don't know how to get your music out there and earn from it. Want to learn how to do that? Then get our free '5 Steps To Profitable Youtube Music Career' ebook emailed directly to you! If you're wondering what music is used for hip hop, then you've come to the right place. In this blog post, we'll go over some of the most popular genres of music used in hip hop, so you can get a better understanding of the soundscape of the genre. Music in hip hop: an overview Hip hop music is a style of music that developed in the United States in the 1970s. It is characterized by a heavy use of sampled beats and lyrics that are oftencontentious or comedic. Hip hop music has been used as a source of entertainment, social commentary, and political protest throughout its history. There is no one type of music that is used for hip hop; instead, a variety of musical genres are often sampled or interpolated into hip hop tracks. These genres can include, but are not limited to, jazz, soul, rock, reggae, and disco. In recent years, electronic music has also been incorporated into hip hop. The origins of hip hop music Hip hop music originated in the 1970s in the Bronx, New York City. It is a style of music that is based on African American vernacular music, such as blues, jazz, and soul. Hip hop music is typically characterized by rap lyrics delivered over a beat. The different styles of hip hop music Hip hop music is often categorized by style. The four primary styles of hip hop are old school, East Coast, West Coast, and Southern. Each style has its own unique characteristics. Old school hip hop is the style that originated in the 1970s. East Coast hip hop is characterized by its use of samples from soul and funk music. West Coast hip hop is known for its laid-back sound and focus on groove. Southern hip hop is characterized by its use of samples from blues and country music. The use of music in hip hop culture Music has always been an important part of hip hop culture. From early beginnings in the Bronx, to the present day, music has provided a backdrop for what is now considered one of the most influential cultural movements of the 20th and 21st centuries. There is no one single type of music used in hip hop – instead, a wide range of genres and styles are often incorporated into the mix. This can include anything from classic soul and R&B tracks, to contemporary pop hits, to old-school throwbacks. In recent years, we've even seen the rise of trap music as a popular sub-genre within hip hop. One thing that all types of hip hop music have in common is a strong beats-per-minute (BPM) rate; typically between 60 and 120 BPM. This helps to create an energetic and upbeat atmosphere that is perfect for dancing and party atmospheres. The role of music in hip hop dance While hip hop dance is often associated with a certain type of music, the reality is that any genre of music can be used for hip hop dancing. The most important element of hip hop music, from a dance perspective, is the beat. Hip hop dancers typically look for songs with a strong, consistent beat that they can move their bodies to. That being said, there are certain genres of music that are more commonly used for hip hop dancing. These include rap, R&B, and house music. Hip hop dancers may also use pop and rock songs, as long as the song has a strong beat. In recent years, some hip hop dancers have even started to use EDM and electronic dance music in their routines. ultimately, the type of music used for hip hop dancing is up to the dancer. Some dancers prefer to stick to traditional hip hop genres like rap and R&B, while others are open to experimenting with different types of music. The influence of music in hip hop fashion The music of hip hop has played a significant role in the fashion of hip hop. In the early days of hip hop, many artists wore whatever they felt comfortable in, whether it be an oversized shirt with baggy jeans or a tracksuit. As the genre progressed, however, certain musical groups and artists began to adopt and popularize certain styles of dress. For example, the group N.W.A. was known for wearing work boots,plain white t-shirts, and jeans with suspenders; alternatively, the Wu-Tang Clan popularized loose-fitting tracksuits and sneakers. While some might see these fashion choices as simply following trends, others believe that these choices were made in order to create a visual aesthetic that represented their music. In other words, by dressing a certain way, artists were able to convey the messages conveyed in their songs through their appearance. In recent years, hip hop fashion has become more mainstream, with brands like Nike and Adidas releasing lines of clothing inspired by streetwear. At the same time, however, some people have critiqued this trend, arguing that it has led to the commercialization of an originally underground style of music and fashion. In the late 1970s, hip hop graffiti became its own distinct art form with its own unique style and characteristics. While New York City was the birthplace of hip hop, the genre quickly spread to other cities across the United States. As the popularity of hip hop increased, so did the number of graffiti artists. Today, there are Graffiti artists all over the world who use different mediums to create their work. While spray paint is still the most popular medium for Graffiti art, other mediums such as markers, chalk, and even digital art are also being used by artists to create their work. The place of music in hip hop has always been important. In the early days of hip hop, music was used as a way to XLR8R inspire and motivate graffiti artists to continue painting despite police crackdowns and public opposition. In recent years, music has been used as a way to spread awareness about social and political issues. For example, Kendrick Lamar's song "Alright" became an anthem for the Black Lives Matter movement. The impact of music in hip hop on society Just as each genre of music has its own unique history, stories, and sounds, each one also has its own impact on society. This is especially true for hip hop, a genre that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s and has since gone on to influence nearly every aspect of modern pop culture. From fashion to film to politics, hip hop has had a hand in shaping the world as we know it today. But what about the music itself? What impact does it have on society? For better or for worse, hip hop has always been a controversial genre. Its roots in the inner city neighborhoods of New York City were steeped in violence, crime, and drugs. As such, early hip hop music was often seen as a reflection of these realities. In many ways, it was. But it was also much more than that. Hip hop was also a way for young people to express themselves creatively and connect with their community. It was a way to tell their stories and give voice to their experiences. In this way, hip hop served as both a positive force and a negative force in society. On the one hand, it helped give rise to a new form of self-expression that could be used for good; on the other hand, its lyrical content often glorified violence and drug use. Today, hip hop is still one of the most popular genres of music in the world. And while its impact on society is still being debated, there is no denying that it has left an indelible mark on our culture. The future of hip hop music The future of hip hop music is often characterized by its innovative and experimental nature. As the genre continues to evolve, new artists are constantly pushing the boundaries of what is considered hip hop. This can be seen in the way that many newer artists are incorporating elements of other genres into their music, such as trap and R&B. Additionally, new subgenres of hip hop are constantly emerging, such as cloud rap and drill. As the genre continues to evolve, it is likely that we will see even more new and exciting changes in the future. The significance of music in the hip hop industry Music has always been an important part of hip hop, with DJs and MCs using it to create their own unique sound. In the early days of hip hop, music was used to provide a backdrop for parties and gatherings. It was also used as a way to express the frustrations and anger of inner-city youths. As hip hop evolved, the music became more complex and sophisticated, with producers and rappers using it to create entire albums and soundtracks. Today, music is still an important part of hip hop, with many artists using it to convey their own messages and stories. Hip hop is now a global phenomenon, with artists from all over the world using it to express themselves. Music is an essential part of hip hop culture, and it will continue to be so for many years to come. Hip hop is an often misunderstood genre of music. To the uninitiated, it may seem like a bunch of people talking over a beat. But there's so much more to hip hop than that. Hip hop is a complex cultural movement that encompasses four key elements: MCing, DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti art. In this blog post, we're going to explore each of these elements in greater detail and explain how they came to be integral parts of hip hop culture. The Elements of Hip Hop Hip hop is a musical genre and art form originating in the United States in the 1970s. Four elements characterize it: MCing (rapping), DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti writing. All four elements of hip hop are interconnected and essential to the genre. Without one element, hip hop would not be what it is today. Breakdancing In the 1970s, a new style of dance emerged from the streets of New York City. Breakdancing, also known as B-boying or breaking, is a street dance characterized by explosive moves and acrobatic tricks. Break dancers often compete in battles, showing off their skills to outdo their opponents. The dance is usually performed to hip hop music but can be done to any music with a heavy beat. Mcing In hip hop culture, an MC, or emcee, is a rapper, rhymer, or storyteller who performs vocal vocals in front of an audience. The term "MC" can also refer to someone who talks over music without necessarily rhyming or rapping. While the role of the MC has changed over the years, the basics remain the same: to get the crowd hyped and to keep them entertained. In order to do this, an MC needs to have a quick wit, sharp wordplay, and an ability to freestyle (improvise rhymes on the spot). Graffiti Graffiti has been a part of Hip Hop culture since the very beginning. It is one of the elements that make Hip Hop unique and is often used as a way to express oneself. Today, graffiti is still an important part of Hip Hop culture. Many artists use graffiti to express their creativity and talent. And it's not just limited to walls or buildings anymore – you can find graffiti on cars, trains, and even people's bodies! DJing DJing is one of the four pillars of hip hop culture, along with MCing, breakdancing, and graffiti art. A DJ spins records and uses turntables to create music for dancers and listeners to enjoy. Today, DJing is an essential part of hip hop culture all over the world. DJs are often the stars of hip hop parties and concerts, and their skills are highly respected within the hip hop community. If you're interested in becoming a DJ, there are many resources out there to help you get started. In conclusion, hip hop is a complex and ever-evolving art form that encompasses many different elements. From breakdancing and graffiti to rap and DJing, there are endless ways to express yourself within hip hop culture. Whether you're a fan of old-school hip hop or the latest trap music, there's something for everyone to enjoy within this genre. So go out and explore all that hip hop has to offer – you might just find your new favorite pastime. Rhythmic music accompanied by rap This article is about the musical genre. For its cultural origins, see Hip-hop culture. For other uses, see Hip-hop (disambiguation). "Rap music" redirects here. For the form of vocal delivery associated with hip-hop music, see Rapping. For the Killer Mike album, see R.A.P. Music. Hip-hopStylistic originsDisco, Funk, Jazz, Rhythm and blues, Scat singing, Soul, Spoken word, Talking blues, Performance poetryCultural originsEarly 1970s in The Bronx, New York City, U.S.Typical instrumentsVoice (Rapping, Singing), Turntable, Mixer, Drum machine, Sampler, Sequencer, Synthesizer, KeyboardDerivative formsBreakbeat, Grime, Nu metal, Reggaeton, et al.Other topics Old-school hip-hop New-school hip-hop Golden age hip-hop 2025 in hip-hop Hip-hop or hip hop (originally disco rap) is a popular music genre that emerged in the early 1970s from the African-American community of New York City. The style is characterized by its synthesis of a wide range of musical techniques. Hip-hop includes rapping often enough that the terms can be used synonymously. However, "hip-hop" more properly denotes an entire subculture. Other key markers of the genre are the disc jockey, turntablism, scratching, beatboxing, and instrumental tracks. Cultural interchange has always been central to the hip-hop genre. It simultaneously borrows from its social environment while commenting on it. The hip-hop genre and culture emerged from block parties in ethnic minority neighborhoods of New York City, particularly Bronx. DJs began expanding the instrumental breaks of popular records when they noticed how excited it would make the crowds. The extended instrumental breaks provided a platform for break dancers and rappers. These breakbeats enabled the subsequent evolution of the hip-hop style. Many of the records used were disco due to its popularity at the time. This disco-inflected music is known as old-school hip-hop. The genre became more stylistically diverse in the 1980s as electro music started to inform new-school hip-hop. The transition between the mid-1980s and 1990s became known as hip-hop's Golden age as the genre started to earn wide critical acclaim and generate massive sales. The popularity of hip-hop music expanded throughout the late 1990s and into the 21st century, where it became a worldwide phenomenon. Most countries have local variations on the style. By 2017, hip-hop had become the bestselling genre of popular music. "Hip-hop" has been in use since the 17th century to mean a succession of hops.[1][2] In George Villiers' 1671 play The Rehearsal, Prince Volscius exits a scene awkwardly with one boot on and the other off. The director of the scene exclaims, "to go off hip hop, hip hop, upon this occasion, is a thousand times better than any conclusion in the world".[3] A common variation on "hip hop" is "hippity hop", which was in wide usage by the 19th century. It appears in works like a poem from 1882 where four children sing, "Hippity hop to the candy Shop!"[4] It was a common refrain in skipping games.[5] Many dance steps include a hop. By the 18th century, "hop" began to be used interchangeably with "dance" as both a noun and a verb.[6] Keef Cowboy (top right) with Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five in 1982An early usage of "hip hop" in recorded popular music is found in The Dovells' 1963 dance song "You Can't Sit Down", "...you gotta slop, bop, flip flop, hip hop, never stop".[7] A decade later, Disco disc jockeys would pepper their sets with exhortations to the crowd, which is why the emerging style was originally known as "disco rap". One of DJ Hollywood's chants was "hip hop de hippy hop the body rock".[8]:183f Lovebug Starsky recalls originating the phrase when he messed up the change between records, "I picked up the mic and just started saying 'a hip hop, hip hop, de hibbyhibbyhibbyhibby hop'".[9] He was claiming credit for inventing the name by 1979.[10] In another version of Starsky's tale, he coined "hip-hop" with Keef Cowboy from Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five as they traded jibes at a friend who was going into the Army.[11] Kidd Creole recalls the scene without Lovebug present, "Cowboy was on the mic playin around doing that Army cadence: Hip/Hop/Hip/Hop...Disco was king at the time, and the Disco crowd referred to us as those 'Hip Hoppers', but they used it as a derogatory term. But Cowboy was the first one I heard do that to music, as part of his crowd response."[12][13] The phrase was in common usage by the time The Sugarhill Gang recorded "Rapper's Delight" in 1979.[14] The chorus begins, "I said a hip-hop, the hippie, the hippie/To the hip, hip-hop and you don't stop the rockin'".[15] By the early 1980s, hip-hop's definition had expanded into "the all inclusive tag for the rapping, breaking, graffiti-writing, crew fashion wearing street sub-culture".[16] Afrika Bambaataa was instrumental in turning the term into a positive force through his Universal Zulu Nation.[17]:44f Their social movement was anti-drug and anti-violence.[18][19]:33 As rappers began to dominate hip-hop, the terms became synonymous. However, hip-hop's definition has always applied to its entire culture.[20][21] Its four principal elements include rapping, DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti art.[22][23][24]:90 Knowledge is sometimes described as a fifth element, underscoring its role in shaping the values and promoting empowerment and consciousness-raising through music.[25] KRS-One identified additional elements: self-expression, street fashion, street language, street knowledge, and street entrepreneurialism. He also recognized girls' Double Dutch jump rope as a key stylistic component of breakdancing.[26][27]:87,113 In addition to borrowing from the culture, hip-hop simultaneously comments on it. From its roots in the Bronx to its current global reach, hip-hop has served as a voice for the disenfranchised, shedding light on issues such as racial inequality, poverty, and police brutality.[28] Set of Technics 1200 turntables with a Vestax PMC-06 Pro A mixerHip-hop's initial medium was the turntable. Vinyl records were the primary source for DJs who reworked songs into new material for dancing. The process echoed the appropriation of styles that created jazz decades earlier. The genres hip-hop initially assimilated were wide-ranging, but its primary sources were disco and funk records. Nowhere was this cross-pollination of musics better typified than in the Caribbean island of Jamaica, where AM radio signals from Miami, Florida, were audible. In the late 1950s, the U.S. stations played much more invigorating rhythm and blues music than the staid BBC which was syndicated by the island's only radio channel, Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation.[29]:99 American DJs like Jocko Henderson and Jockey Jack introduced R&B records and jive talking to the island. Local DJs soon began setting up sound systems for outdoor parties.[30]:39f,119ff A vibrant music scene emerged. The jive of American DJs transmuted into toasts in Jamaican Patois.[31] Jive talk popularized black-appeal stations in the post-war era. Its double entendres were a godsend to radio, re-invigorating ratings at flagging outlets. It emerged from traditions like call and response, signifyin', the dozens, capping, and jazz poetry.[32][33] The transition from oral tradition to the commercial airwaves was exemplified by WDIA disc jockeys like Nat D. and Rufus Thomas. Their on-air jive was honed during their hosting duties at the Palace Theatre's Amateur Night on Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee.[34] D.J's like Chicago's Al Benson (WJJD), Austin's Doctor Hep Cat (KVET), and Atlanta's Jockey Jack (WERD) spoke the same rhyming, cadence-laden rap style.[35] They might introduce a great musician like, "Here is a guy that will move you in from the outskirts of town because he breathes natural gas...so droop to listening to a real gone cat whose loaded his knowledge box in the house of the righteous, and can lo blow."[36] Many white DJ's like John R Richbourg on Nashville's WLAC emulated the southern 'mushmouth' and jive talk, and switched out swing music for blues and bebop.[37][38] The jive-talking rappers of 1950s radio inspired musical comedians like Rudy Ray Moore, Pigmeat Markham, and Blowfly, along with soul singer James Brown. They have been called "godfathers" of hip-hop music.[30]:249 Muhammad Ali, a major influence on hip-hopThe rhythmic speech of rap is an ancient practice, first codified by the Greeks. In 20th-century Western music, it was a widely used practice in everything from sprechstimme to the talking blues. The roots of rapping in African-American music are easily traced to the griots in West African culture.[39][40] Bo Diddley made several influential talking records, and the gospel group The Jubalaires' 1946 song "Noah" is frequently seen as a forerunner of rap.[41][17]:8 Other notable talking records were Muhammad Ali's I Am the Greatest (1963) and Pigmeat Markham's "Here Comes the Judge" (1968).[42][43] Ali's patter was an enormous influence on hip-hop. He was known as a "rhyming trickster" due to the funky delivery of his boasts, trash talk, and indelible phrases.[44] Many of his monologues were freestyle improvisations which would become a vital skill Old-school hip-hop rappers.[45] In New York City, spoken-word poetry by artists like The Last Poets, Jalal Mansur Nuriddin, and Gil Scott-Heron had a significant impact on the post-civil rights era. They helped establish the cultural environment in which hip-hop music was created.[46][47] During these proto-rap years in America, Jamaican music regularly featured talking records like U-Roy and Peter Tosh's "Righteous Ruler" and King Stitt's "Fire Corner" in 1969.[30]:126 Jamaican DJs were also heavily remixing recorded music to generate new sounds. Duke Reid would preside over his sound system, tweaking knobs until the record he was playing became unrecognizable. In the studio, artists like King Tubby would strip the vocals out of records to create a new version.[29]:99f The public appetite for these remixes became so strong that singles were released with the original on one side and the "version" on the other.[48][49] The eclectic stew of production techniques came to be known as dub music, and it is the strongest artistic precedent for hip-hop.[50][30]:132 By the 1970s, The Bronx had been cut in half by the Cross Bronx Expressway.[19]:2ff The construction accelerated "white flight" from the neighborhood and concentrated lower income African American, Latin American, and Caribbean residents in the southern half of the borough.[51]:27f This massive, multi-ethnic, working class community is where hip-hop was born.[52][53] The traditions of these ethnicities all informed the emerging genre.[54][55][24]:90 As all music does, hip-hop reflected the social, economic, and political realities of its creators, who were sometimes disenfranchised and marginalized.[56][57][58] The dominant genre of the time was disco. Even black radio stations were playing hit disco records as they targeted larger suburban audiences. The way Europe stripped the blackness out of funk and disco and streamlined it became a target for parody in the black community. George Clinton mercilessly lampooned it as "The Placebo Syndrome" in his P-Funk mythology.[59]:155ff Even though disco birthed hip-hop, much of the genre's early spirit was a rebellion against its parent.[60] Hip-hop first had to inherit the rich trove of studio and DJ techniques that disco innovated.[30]:139 DJ Kool Herc in 1999 It became trendy for dancers to use the instrumental break in a song to show off their best moves. Some would even forego dancing until the break in a record came on.[30]:225f The practice became known as "breakdancing", and it increased demand for breaks that DJs would soon supply.[61] These dancers became known as "B-birls" and "-boys". "B" could be short for "break", "beat", "battle", or "Bronx" depending on who was using it.[62] One of the most popular clubs was the Plaza Tunnel in the basement of the Concourse Plaza Hotel where DJ John Brown held sway. To keep people moving, he would mix a wide range of records like Jimmy Castor Bunch's "It's Just Begun", The Isley Brothers' "Get Into Something", Earth, Wind & Fire's "Moment of Truth", Rare Earth's "Get Ready", Redbone's "Maggie", and Chicago's "I'm a Man".[51]:38 Breakdancers prized originality. They created signature moves that other breakers would only imitate in order to outdo them.[63] The emphasis on creativity extended to DJs who would battle each other. They would even replicate the Jamaican practice of removing record labels to keep their breaks a secret from other DJs.[17]:16 Many early hip-hop DJs were immigrants from the Caribbean.[64][65] The techniques they used to generate new material from existing vinyl records was familiar to Jamaican dub music.[66][29]:100 Hip-hop began to develop its own moral code that prized truth and ingenuity over limpid mimicry.[27]:692, 742 DJs found certain breaks to be extremely popular from records like Baby Huey's "Listen To Me", James Brown's "Give It Up or Turnit a Loose", Dennis Coffey's "Son of Scorpio", Cymande's "Bra", Dynamic Corvettes' "Funky Music Is the Thing", Jeannie Reynolds' "Fruit Song", as well as the Incredible Bongo Band's "Apache" and "Bongo Rock".[67][30]:226f DJ Kool Herc figured out a way to prolong these breaks by crossfading between two copies of the same record. Herc's initial claim to fame was his sound system which featured a McIntosh Laboratory amplifier and two columns of Shure speakers. He dubbed it "The Herculords", and it earned him a massive following.[19]:33 Two DJs work the turntables and mixer His method of playing breaks was extremely crude, however. Herc would just estimate where the break was as he tried to extend it. Often, he would have to talk over the transition as the breaks did not match up.[30]:227 It was DJs like Grand Wizzard Theodore, Jazzy Jay, and Grandmaster Flash who perfected the trick. They developed a technique known as needle dropping by precisely cuing up the breaks in headphones in order to create a perfect transition between the two phonographs.[21][19]:36 As the first break finished, they would crossfade to the second turntable which was cued up at the beginning of the break. While the second record played, they would spin the first record backwards to the beginning of the break and crossfade into it when the second break was over. This method allowed a break to be prolonged indefinitely. These extended breaks became known as a "breakbeat".[17]:15 When a playing record is reversed, the sound is distorted. The effect became trendy and eventually evolved into the hip-hop technique known as "scratching".[68] Outside of the dance clubs, the biggest incubator of hip-hop was the block party. DJs would hook their sound systems up to the street lights.[69] One prominent host of these parties in the early 1970s was Disco King Mario.[70][71]:6 As a leader of the Black Spades from the Bronxdale Houses, Mario relied on the gang to protect his events.[72][73] 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx, site of Cindy Campbell's partyKool Herc first began extending breaks at a back-to-school rent party his sister Cindy Campbell hosted in the recreation room of their building at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue on the southwest side of the Bronx.[74] The date of the party, August 11, 1973, has been aggressively marketed as the "Birth of Hip-Hop".[75][76] The Campbells emigrated from Jamaica when Herc was 12. Initially, Herc denied any connection between the Jamaican music scene and his work.[19]:45 Later in life, he embraced the parallels.[77][51]:35 Kool Herc's style attracted a following that outgrew the rec room, and he joined the thriving block party scene.[78] These parties were an outlet for teenagers, where "instead of getting into trouble on the streets, teens now had a place to expend their pent-up energy." Tony Tone, a member of the Cold Crush Brothers, stated that "hip hop saved a lot of lives".[79] For inner-city youth, participating in hip-hop culture became a way of dealing with the hardships of life as minorities within America, and an outlet to deal with the risk of violence and the rise of gang culture. MC Kid Lucky mentions that "people used to break-dance against each other instead of fighting".[80][81] A typical hip-hop event was a triple bill featuring the DJ, MC, and breakdancers. Graffiti artists would decorate the stage and design flyers and posters.[82]:35 Much of the graffiti, rapping, and b-boying at these parties were artistic variations on the one-upmanship of street gangs. Sensing that gang members' often violent urges could be turned into creative ones, Afrika Bambaataa founded the Zulu Nation, a loose confederation of street-dance crews, graffiti artists, and rap musicians. Rock Steady Crew were a group of breakdancers which included members from Puerto Rico.[51]:143 During the New York City blackout of 1977, DJ equipment was heavily looted due to the popularity of the emerging genre. Kool Herc recalls, "The next day there were a thousand new D.J.'s."[83] By 1978, Billboard magazine was taking notice of the popularity of "B-beats" in the Bronx.[67][84]:2 Main article: Rapping Hip-Hop evolved without rap as a requirement of the genre, but the two terms became functionally synonymous.[85] Hip-hop DJs continued the disco DJ practice of intermittently rapping with the crowd. As their duties became more complex, a Master of ceremonies (MC) was often present to introduce the DJ and hype the crowd.[86] Kool Herc found Jamaican toasts did not resonate with dancers. He and Coke La Rock developed an influential rapping style over their funk breaks. MCs relied on call and response chants and eventually developed more sophisticated routines. As with other practitioners of hip-hop, MCs strove to set themselves apart with their creativity and competitiveness.[87][33] Just as many of the best breakdancers were women, the birth of hip-hop included female rappers like the Funky 4 + 1's MC Sha-Rock. Sugar Hill Records signed The Sequence, a trio that included Angie Stone. Their single "Funk You Up" was the first hip-hop hit by an all-female group.[17]:28[88][89] Often these were collaborations between former gangs, such as Afrikaa Bambaataa's Universal Zulu Nation—now an international organization. Melle Mel, a rapper with the Furious Five is often credited with being the first rap lyricist to call himself an "MC".[90] Although there were some early MCs that recorded solo projects of note, such as DJ Hollywood, Kurtis Blow, and Spoonie Gee, the frequency of solo artists did not increase until later with the rise of soloists with stage presence and drama, such as LL Cool J. Most early hip-hop was dominated by groups where collaboration between the members was integral to the show.[91] The first hip-hop artist to appear on national television were the group Funky 4 + 1, who appeared on Saturday Night Live in 1981.[92] Hip-hop was a live music genre for its first several years. By 1977, bootleg tapes made from the soundboards of hip-hop DJs were being circulated beyond New York City. The first dub recording, also known as a "mixed plate", was released by DJ Disco Wiz and Grandmaster Caz.[93] The Sugarhill Gang, 2016In March 1979, Fatback Band released "You're My Candy Sweet" as a single. The B-side was called "King Tim III (Personality Jock)", and it is generally considered the first commercially released rap song.[94][95]:81 Three months later, Chic released "Good Times". It became a #1 single on August 18. The track quickly became a favorite for rappers. As it climbed the pop charts on August 2, Sylvia Robinson, the singer and owner of Sugar Hill Records, hired a band to recreate "Good Times" in the studio. Looking to cash in on the hip-hop trend, Robinson assembled The Sugarhill Gang to rap over the instrumental.[24]:132 They recycled phrases from other rappers like The Cold Crush Brothers.[95]:81 It was a Top 40 single, and what had become passé in the Bronx exploded in popularity around the country. The arrival of mainstream hip-hop recordings has been described as "The First Death of Hip-Hop".[24]:127ff One of the composers of "Good Times", Nile Rodgers had been exposed to hip-hop in 1978 when Debbie Harry and Chris Stein from Blondie took him to a show.[96] Rodgers and his co-writer Bernard Edwards sued Sugar Hill Records for copyright infringement and won songwriting credit on "Rapper's Delight".[97] In 1971, one city councilman had dubbed Philadelphia "The Graffiti Capital of the World".[98] It was one of the first hip-hop centers outside of New York, and by 1979, hip-hop recordings such as Jocko Henderson's "Rhythm Talk" and Lady B's "To the Beat, Y'all" were emerging from the city.[99] Mercury Records was the first major label to sign a rapper. In 1979, they released Kurtis Blow's "Christmas Rappin'" which sold 400,000 copies.[59]:191 The song peaked at #30 on the UK charts on December 15 that year and went on to become a holiday classic.[100] Main article: Old-school hip-hop The period from 1973 to 1983 is referred to as "old-school hip-hop".[101] The genre exploded in popularity. Kurtis Blow's "The Breaks" (1980) was the first hip-hop single certified gold.[102][59]:191 The Roland TR-808 Rhythm ComposerAs hip-hop became mainstream, it also grew vastly eclectic. Part of this evolution was enabled by technology. The 1980s saw the miniaturization of recording technology, making samplers, synthesizers, and drum machines affordable. Devices like the Akai MPC 2000, Linn 9000, and Roland TR-808 drum machine became beloved tools for hip-hop creators.[103] In 1980, the Roland Corporation launched the TR-808 Rhythm Composer. It was one of the earliest programmable drum machines, with which users could create their own rhythms rather than having to use preset patterns. Though it was a commercial failure, over the course of the decade the 808 attracted a cult following among underground musicians for its affordability on the used market, ease of use, and idiosyncratic sounds, particularly its deep, "booming" bass drum.[104][105][106] Popularized by hits like Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing", it became a cornerstone of the emerging electronic, dance, and hip-hop genres.[107] The 808 was eventually used on more hit records than any other drum machine. Its popularity with hip-hop in particular has made it one of the most influential inventions in popular music, comparable to the Fender Stratocaster's influence on rock.[108] Further information: List of hip-hop genres Grandmaster Flash Grandmaster Flash's "The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash on the Wheels of Steel" (1981) typified the diversification of hip-hop in the new decade. The single consists entirely of sampled tracks.[109] Hip-hop and electronic dance music were fused in songs like Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force's "Planet Rock" (1982). Bambaataa was inspired by Ryuichi Sakamoto's "Riot in Lagos".[110] He incorporated elements from Kraftwerk's "Trans-Europe Express" and "Numbers". "Planet Rock" helped spawn electro music, which included songs like Planet Patrol's "Play at Your Own Risk" (1982), and C Bank's "One More Shot" (1982).[111] This fusion would often overlap with Afrofuturism in songs like "Nunk" and "Light Years Away" by Warp 9.[112][113] Electro helped spread hip-hop beyond America, when UK DJs like Greg Wilson started spinning records like "Planet Rock", Extra T's "ET Boogie", and Man Parrish's "Hip Hop, Be Bop (Don't Stop)".[114] As rap matured, metaphorical lyrics about a wider range of subjects moved the style beyond the boasts and chants of old school. The influential single "The Message" (1982) by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, with its focus on the misery in housing projects, was a pioneering force for politically conscious rap.[115] Hip-hop continued in the tradition of rock and roll by outraging conservatives who feared romanticizing violence and law-breaking.[116] Independent record labels like Tommy Boy, Prism Records and Profile Records became successful in the early 1980s, releasing records at a furious pace in response to the demand generated by local radio stations and club DJs. Producers like Arthur Baker, John Robie, Lotti Golden and Richard Scher pushed the genre in new directions.[117] Some rappers eventually became mainstream pop performers. The 1981 songs "Rapture" by Blondie and "Christmas Wrapping" by the new wave band the Waitresses were among the first pop songs to use rap.[118][119] Breakdancing remained the vanguard of hip-hop worldwide. Breakdance crews like Black Noise and Prophets of Da City in South Africa helped spread the genre.[120]:58ff They recognized the connections in the African diaspora between practices like breakdancing and capoeira.[121] Musician and presenter Sidney became France's first black TV presenter with his 1984 show H.I.P. H.O.P. on TF1. Radio Nova helped launch other French hip-hop stars including Dee Nasty. Along with his radio show, his Rapattitude compilations and 1984 album Paname City Rappin' popularized hip-hop in the country.[120]:5–8 Hip-hop reached Japan by 1982 when DJs Hiroshi Fujiwara started playing it in dance clubs.[122] Main article: New-school hip-hop Run-DMC: Joseph "Run" Simmons, Jason "Jam Master Jay" Mizell, and Darryl "D.M.C." McDaniels (from left)The second wave of hip-hop began around 1983–4 and became known as new school. The taunting and boasting of old-school hip-hop got more aggressive in the 1980s. New York artists like Run-DMC and LL Cool J typified new school. Drum machine minimalism was typical for the new school, a stark opposition to old school's funk and disco breaks.[95]:151 New-school artists also made shorter, radio-friendly songs and more cohesive LP albums that became fixtures of mainstream music. Run-DMC's third album Raising Hell was the first in the genre to be certified platinum on July 15, 1986.[123] It also featured the massive hit collaboration with Aerosmith on "Walk This Way". The same year, rap notched its first No. 1 album with Beastie Boys' Licensed to Ill.[124] Rap was getting so marketable that it was being used in national advertising. Sprite hired Kurtis Blow to appear in one of their commercials in 1986. Other soft drink companies would soon follow.[125] Marley Marl New school rappers often established themselves by simultaneously honoring and battling their old school forbearers. LL Cool J relished sparring with Kool Moe Dee. The feud boosted sales for both artists. The cover of Kool Moe Dee's 1987 album, How Ya Like Me Now, featured LL Cool J's Kangol hat under the wheel of Moe Dee's Jeep Wrangler.[126] LL's response was the vicious B-side "Jack the Ripper".[127] Samplers like the AKAI S900 and E-mu SP-1200 empowered creativity through greater processing power.[128] Breakbeats were no longer reliant on a DJ and two turntables. They could be made in seconds with a sampler.[112]:192 Marley Marl used samples in combination with drum machines to create more variegated grooves.[129][112]:151 DJ Jazzy JeffCypress Hill was formed in 1988 in the suburb of South Gate outside Los Angeles. Brothers Senen Reyes and Ulpiano Sergio (Mellow Man Ace) moved from Havana, Cuba to South Gate with their family in 1971.[130] They teamed up with Lawrence Muggerud (DJ Muggs) and Louis Freese (B-Real), a Mexican/Cuban-American native of Los Angeles. After the departure of "Ace" to begin his solo career, the group adopted the name of Cypress Hill named after a street running through a neighborhood nearby in South Los Angeles.[131] In 1989, 19-year-old Queen Latifah released her debut album All Hail the Queen.[132] That same year, the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences decided to create a Grammy Award for Best Rap Performance. The inaugural statue was given in 1989 to DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince for "Parents Just Don't Understand".[133] Main article: Golden age hip-hop KRS-One The period after hip-hop became mainstream in 1986 until the middle of the 1990s is considered its "golden age".[134][135] The era is marked by increased diversity and innovation and the vast expansion of hip-hop's influence.[136][137] Rolling Stone described the fecund era as one where "it seemed that every new single reinvented the genre".[138] There were strong themes of Afrocentrism and political militancy in golden age hip-hop lyrics.[84]:162f The music was experimental and the sampling drew on eclectic sources. There was often a strong jazz influence in the music. Notable golden age artists include Public Enemy, KRS-One, Boogie Down Productions, Eric B. & Rakim, Brand Nubian, De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, Gang Starr, Big Daddy Kane, Digable Planets, and the Jungle Brothers.[139][140] Albums became an important artistic marker during this period. 1987 alone produced landmark albums like Boogie Down Productions' Criminal Minded, Public Enemy's Yo! Bum Rush the Show, and Eric B. & Rakim's Paid in Full. The sustained artistic statement of an album became the genre's measuring stick.[141] Main article: Gangsta rap Gangsta rap is a subgenre of hip-hop that reflects the violent environment of inner-city American black youths.[142] Gangsta rap commingled stories of crime and street life with political and social commentary.[143] In 1985, Schoolly D released "P.S.K. What Does It Mean?", which is often regarded as the first gangsta rap song. His lyrics reflected the street vernacular, including the word "nigga". Ice-T's "jaw dropped" when he first heard the song, and it inspired his 1986 track "6 in the Mornin'".[144] Boogie Down Productions Criminal Minded (1987) set a precedent by featuring guns on its cover. On their 1988 follow-up By All Means Necessary, KRS-One is holding an uzi, but the album also sees the emergence of his anti-violence persona "The Teacher".[145] FBI letter to Priority Records about N.W.A.N.W.A is the group most frequently associated with gangsta rap. Their lyrics were incessantly profane and more violent, sexually explicit, and openly confrontational than their peers. These lyrics were placed over rough, rock guitar-driven beats, contributing to the music's hard-edged feel. Their blockbuster 1989 album Straight Outta Compton established Los Angeles as a legitimate rival to hip-hop's capital New York City. It also sparked the first major controversy regarding hip-hop lyrics, largely due to the song "Fuck tha Police". FBI Assistant Director Milt Ahlerich wrote a letter to Priority Records lamenting the album's "discouraging and degrading" impact on law enforcement.[146][147] Ice-T encountered censorship even during his live performances, much like Jim Morrison.[148] In reaction to Parents Music Resource Center's new "Parental Advisory" stickers, he rapped, "that sticker makes 'em sell gold."[149] His 1992 heavy metal song "Cop Killer" prompted so much backlash that Time Warner Music balked at releasing his next hip-hop album Home Invasion.[150] Both Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton criticized gangsta rap. Sister Souljah argued, "The reason why rap is under attack is because it exposes all the contradictions of American culture ...What started out as an underground art form has become a vehicle to expose a lot of critical issues that are not usually discussed in...a political system that never intends to deal with inner city urban chaos".[151] Flavor Flav of Public Enemy performing in 1991 1990 was "the year that rap exploded". Public Enemy released Fear of a Black Planet, which was a critical and commercial hit.[152] The Los Angeles Times declared, "an explosion of energy and imagination in the late 1980s leaves rap today as arguably the most vital new street-oriented sound in pop since the birth of rock in the 1950s".[153] Time concurred, "Rap is the rock 'n' roll of the day. Rock 'n' roll was about attitude, rebellion, a big beat, sex and, sometimes, social comment." Rap had the best-selling single of the previous year, Tone Lōc's "Wild Thing". By February 1990, nearly a third of the songs on the Billboard Hot 100 were hip-hop.[154] MC Hammer's third album, Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em, was a monster smash. It hit #1 on the album chart. Its lead single, "U Can't Touch This", became a global phenomenon after it was released in May 1990. It reached the Top Ten in the U.S. and #1 in several countries. MC Hammer was one of the first rappers to become a household name. Please Hammer, Don't Hurt 'Em was the first hip-hop album certified diamond by the RIAA for sales of over ten million.[155] By 1996, it sold 18 million units.[156][157] In November, Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby" became the first hip-hop single to hit #1 on the Billboard charts.[158] Dr. Dre's The Chronic was released in 1992, establishing the G-funk style and going triple platinum.[21] Snoop Dogg's 1993 album Doggystyle helped the subgenre continue to dominate the charts, but black radio stations kept hip-hop at a distance. Russell Simmons felt, "Black radio hated rap from the start and there's still a lot of resistance to it".[153] Despite the lack of support from some black radio stations, hip-hop became a best-selling music genre in the mid-1990s and the top selling music genre by 1999 with 81 million CDs sold.[159][160][161] By the late 1990s hip-hop was artistically dominated by the Wu-Tang Clan, Diddy and the Fugees.[21] The Beastie Boys continued their success throughout the decade crossing color lines and gaining respect from many different artists. Record labels based out of Atlanta, St. Louis, and New Orleans also gained fame for their local scenes. The midwest rap scene was known for fast vocal styles from artists such as Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, Tech N9ne, and Twista. Rapper Scarface from Geto BoysSouthern rap became popular in the early 1990s.[162] The first Southern rappers to gain national attention were the Geto Boys out of Houston, Texas.[163] Southern rap's roots can be traced to the success of Geto Boy's early albums. The group's strongest member was Scarface who later went solo.[164] Atlanta hip-hop artists were key in further expanding rap music and bringing southern hip-hop into the mainstream. Releases such as Arrested Development's 3 Years, 5 Months and 2 Days in the Life Of... (1992), Goodie Mob's Soul Food (1995), and Outkast's ATLiens (1996) were all critically acclaimed. When Outkast won the Best New Rap Group at the 1995 Source Awards, it signaled a power shift in Atlanta's direction.[165] During the golden age, elements of hip-hop continued to be assimilated into other genres of popular music. The first waves of rap rock, rapcore, and rap metal went mainstream. Run-DMC, the Beastie Boys, and Rage Against the Machine were among the most well-known bands in these fields.[166] In Hawaii, bands like Sudden Rush created the na mele paleoleo style which fused hip-hop with Hawaiian language and sovereignty issues.[167] Main articles: East Coast hip-hop, West Coast hip-hop, and East Coast–West Coast hip-hop rivalry Wu-Tang Clan at the Virgin Festival in 2007In the early 1990s, east coast hip-hop was dominated by the Native Tongues posse, which was loosely composed of De La Soul, Prince Paul, A Tribe Called Quest, the Jungle Brothers, 3rd Bass, Main Source, and Black Sheep and KMD. Although originally a "daisy age" conception stressing the positive aspects of life, darker material soon crept in.[84]:143 In 1993, Wu-Tang Clan's Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers) pioneered a hardcore rap response to the west coast's gangsta.[102]:330f New York hip-hop experienced a renaissance the following year with the release of two landmark albums: Nas' Illmatic and Notorious B.I.G.'s Ready to Die.[168] The 10-member Wu-Tang Clan also started creating a hip-hop universe of solo albums that served as advertisements for each other. Some of the standout titles were Raekwon's Only Built 4 Cuban Linx..., Ghostface Killah's Ironman, and GZA's Liquid Swords. RZA had a hand in producing most of their efforts, and his style became massively influential.[169] Prominent producers during this period were DJ Premier (Gang Starr, Jeru the Damaja), Pete Rock (CL Smooth), Buckwild, Large Professor, Diamond D, and Q-Tip. Nas' Illmatic, O.C.'s Word...Life, and Jay-Z's Reasonable Doubt all relied on this talent pool.[170] Tribute to Tupac ShakurA lazy media narrative emerged that rappers on the coasts were feuding with each other. As Kool Moe Dee and LL Cool J had previously found, playing into a rivalry was good for sales. It became fashionable to emphasize the east coast versus west Coast beef, but it did not remain a lyrical battle.[171] On November 30, 1994, in New York City, Tupac Shakur was shot five times. He blamed the attack on a cohort that included Sean Combs and the Notorious B.I.G..[172] Tupac left Interscope Records for Suge Knight and Dr. Dre's Death Row Records on the west coast. Tupac's February 1996 debut for the label, All Eyez on Me, was promoted by relentlessly highlighting his grievances with east coast personalities. The ploy was successful and led to monster sales.[173] On September 7, 1996, Tupac was killed in Las Vegas. On March 9, 1997, the Notorious B.I.G. was killed in Los Angeles. Though the coastal feud involved dozens of people in countless imbroglios, the twin tragedies of Tupac and Biggie are at the core of the episode. Their deaths are used as markers for the end of the golden age of hip-hop.[135] Birdman Now a mainstream genre and dominating the charts, hip-hop became commercially oriented in the late 1990s. The musical approach was typified by Sean Combs who ruled the 1997 charts by repurposing old hits into new ones. Diana Ross' "I'm Coming Out" became "Mo Money Mo Problems". Herb Alpert's "Rise" became "Hypnotize". The Police's #1 hit "Every Breath You Take" became "I'll Be Missing You". The shiny suits he and his protege Mase wore became a punchline for the period.[174] The same year, Will Smith's single "Gettin' Jiggy wit It" gave a catchier name for the era.[175] In New Orleans, two upstart labels came to prominence. Master P built No Limit Records into a multimillion-dollar enterprise.[176] Cash Money Records supercharged its sales by signing a distribution deal with Universal in 1998. Their roster included Birdman, Lil Wayne, B.G., and Juvenile.[177] In 1999, the slick consumerism of the jiggy era was indelibly rechristened by B.G. in his song "Bling Bling". The slang immediately resonated, and the "bling" label stuck.[178] Eminem Dr. Dre began 1999 by producing Eminem's debut The Slim Shady LP which went quadruple platinum.[179] In November, he released his 6x platinum album 2001. Dre also produced Eminem's second album and 50 Cent's Get Rich or Die Tryin', which debuted in 2003 at number one on the U.S. Billboard 200 charts.[180] During the bling era, it became commonplace to pair an R&B singer with a rapper. Either the rapper would appear in a remix of the singer's hit, or the singer would perform the hook on a rapper's song. Pairings included Ashanti and Ja Rule, Beyonce and Jay-Z, and Mariah Carey alongside a steady stream of rappers like Mystikal, Cam'ron, and Busta Rhymes.[181] Jay-Z became culturally dominant with his record label, clothing line, and various business interests. His albums consistently charted #1, and with the release of The Blueprint 3 in 2009, he broke Elvis Presley's record for most number one albums by a solo artist.[182] Main articles: Alternative hip-hop, Glitch hop, Wonky (music), Crunk, and snap music Kanye WestAlternative hip-hop artists such as MF Doom, the Roots, Dilated Peoples, Gnarls Barkley, Mos Def, and Aesop Rock began to achieve significant recognition.[183][184] Other alternative artists like Outkast, Kanye West, and Gnarls Barkley also began to earn mainstream sales.[185] Outkast's 2003 album Speakerboxxx/The Love Below won Grammy Award for Album of the Year at the 46th Annual Grammy Awards and has been certified 13x platinum.[186] When Kanye West's Graduation and 50 Cent's Curtis were both released on September 11, 2007, West's idiosyncratic album sold quicker.[187] West's next album, 808s & Heartbreak, was even quirkier and established a rush towards more creative hip-hop productions.[188] West borrowed the Auto-Tune vocal effect that rapper T-Pain had popularized.[189] T-Pain cites new jack swing producer Teddy Riley and funk artist

Roger Troutman's use of the talk box as inspirations for his use of the technique.[190] Even Jay-Z began talking wistfully about making an alternative album.[191] The alternative hip-hop movement was not limited only to the United States, as rappers such as Somali-Canadian poet K'naan, Japanese rapper Shing02, and Sri Lankan British artist M.I.A. achieved considerable worldwide recognition. In 2009, Time magazine placed M.I.A in the Time 100 list of "World's Most Influential people" for having "global influence across many genres."[192] Global-themed movements have also sprung out of the international hip-hop scene with microgenres like "Islamic Eco-Rap" addressing issues of worldwide importance through traditionally disenfranchised voices.[193] Lil JonGlitch hop is a fusion genre of hip-hop and glitch music that originated in the early to mid-2000s in the United States and Europe. Musically, it is based on irregular, chaotic breakbeats, glitchy basslines and other typical sound effects used in glitch music, like skips. Glitch hop artists include Prefuse 73, Dabrye and Flying Lotus.[194] Wonky is a subgenre of hip-hop that originated around 2008. It differs from glitch hop with more melodic material and unstable synths. Scottish artists like Hudson Mohawke and Rustie are prominent in the genre.[195] The subgenre known as crunk exploded in the 2000s when songs by Lil Jon and Ying Yang Twins became huge hits.[196] It originated in Tennessee in the southern United States in the 1990s, influenced by Miami bass.[197] Crunk is almost exclusively "party music", favoring call and response hip-hop slogans in lieu of more substantive approaches.[198] A variant of crunk known as snap music emerged in Atlanta in the 1990s.[199] The dawn of social media in 2003 spread the genre as artists like Soulja Boy started uploading their music directly to sites like YouTube and MySpace.[200] Flo RidaSocial media led to the decline of fans purchasing physical media like CDs and vinyl. Starting in 2005, hip-hop sales plummeted, prompting concerns that the genre might be dying.[201] While all music sales declined, hip-hop's losses were greater, totaling a 21% decrease from 2005 to 2006.[202] 2006 was the first time in five years that the top ten albums did not include hip-hop.[203] Peer-to-peer file sharing also wreaked havoc with record sales.[204] Digital downloads returned singles to the forefront of music sales.[205] Downloads of individual tracks from Flo Rida's 2009 album R.O.O.T.S. totaled in the millions, while the album itself did not even go gold.[206] Despite the fall in record sales throughout the music industry, hip-hop artists still regularly topped the Billboard 200 charts.[207] In 2009, Rick Ross, Black Eyed Peas, and Fabolous all had No. 1 albums.[208][209][210] Eminem's album Relapse was one of the fastest selling albums of 2009.[211] The internet corroded music sales but democratized distribution. Audiences started to find artists directly through music blogs and social media.[212] Emerging artists like Wale, Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole, Lupe Fiasco, the Cool Kids, Jay Electronica, and B.o.B also possessed a sensitivity and vulnerability that was taboo in the bling era.[213][214][215] Main articles: Trap music, Mumble rap, and Emo rap Lil Nas XTrap music became a mainstream sensation in the 2000s, and started topping the charts in the 2010s.[216][217][218][219] It is typified by double or triple-time sub-divided hi-hats, heavy kick drums from the Roland TR-808 drum machine, layered synthesizers and an overall dark, ominous or bleak atmosphere.[220] Major trap artists include Lil Nas X, Waka Flocka Flame, Future, Chief Keef, Migos, Young Thug, Travis Scott, and Fetty Wap.[221] Major trap producers included Metro Boomin, Pi'erre Bourne, London on da Track, and Mike Will Made-It.[222][223][224][225] Trap has been dismissed as "mumble rap" because of its often garbled diction.[226] Snoop Dogg noted that he could not tell artists apart, and Black Thought lamented trap's lack of lyricism.[227][228] Atlanta hip-hop dominated the charts during the 2010s.[229] On July 17, 2017, Forbes reported that hip-hop/R&B had usurped rock as the most consumed musical genre, becoming the most popular genre in music for the first time in U.S. history.[230] Doja CatIn 2021, Pop Smoke's posthumous album popularized Brooklyn drill.[231] The 2020s decade began with Roddy Ricch as the first rapper to have a Billboard Hot 100 number-one entry.[232] Streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music became the dominant music distributors in the 2010s.[233] The 2017 Grammy Award for Best Rap Album went to a streaming album for the first time, Chance the Rapper's Coloring Book.[234] Artists like Kanye West and Drake started to eschew physical releases as well.[235][236] Many hip-hop artists relied on SoundCloud to freely distribute their music without a record label. Post Malone, Lil Uzi Vert, XXXTentacion and many others started their careers on SoundCloud.[237] In 2021, the most streamed rappers were Doja Cat and Lil Nas X.[238] The most streamed rap album of all time on Spotify is XXXTentacion's second album, ? (2018).[239] Black TheamaHip-hop spread from the Bronx to the world. It is constantly being reinvented in nearly every country on the planet.[240] The one thing virtually all hip-hop artists worldwide have in common is that they acknowledge their debt to the Black and Latino people in New York who launched the global movement.[241] In many Latin American countries, as in the U.S., hip-hop has been a tool with which marginalized people can articulate their struggle. Cuban hip-hop grew steadily during the Special Period that came with the fall of the Soviet Union.[242] Brazilian hip-hop is heavily associated with racial and economic issues in the country, where a lot of Afro-Brazilians live in economically disadvantaged favelas.[243] Puerto Rican reggaeton evolved from several genres, particularly Jamaican Dancehall and hip-hop.[244]:94f Venezuelan rappers generally modeled their music after gangsta rap, embracing and attempting to redefine negative stereotypes about poor and black youth as dangerous and materialistic and incorporating socially conscious critique of Venezuela's criminalization of young, poor, Afro-descended people into their music.[245] BlockfestHaitian hip-hop developed in the early 1980s. Master Dji and his songs "Vakans" and "Politik Pa m" popularized the style. What later became known as "Rap Kreyòl" grew in popularity in the late 1990s with King Posse and Original Rap Stuff. Due to cheaper recording technology and flows of equipment to Haiti, more Rap Kreyòl is growing.[244]:253 French hip-hop also developed in the 1980s.[246] The annual Blockfest in Tampere, Finland is the largest hip-hop music event in the Nordic countries.[247] YoungstaCPTNigerian hip-hop gained popularity in the 80s, 90s and 2000s through artists like The Remedies, JJC Skillz, M.I Abaga and Sound Sultan, encompassing the incorporation of local languages and traditional hip-hop beats.[248][249][250] In the 2010s and 2020s it developed further with rappers like Naeto C, Reminisce, Olamide, Phyno, Blaqbonez and Odumodublvck.[251][252][253][254] South African hip-hop overlaps with kwaito, a music genre that emphasizes African culture and social issues. Rappers such as Pope Troy have harnessed the use of socio-economic issues plaguing the political spheres of South Africa and hip-hop as a whole whilst balancing his lingual approach in order to communicate with the masses about the technical aspects that are creating the issues,[255] South African hip-hop has evolved into a prominent presence in mainstream South African music. Between the 1990s and 2010s, it had transcended its origins as a form of political expression in Cape Town to produce artists like HHP, Riky Rick and AKA. Prominent South African rappers include Stogie T, Reason, Da L.E.S, Cassper Nyovest, Emtee, Fifi Cooper, A-Reece, Shane Eagle, Nasty C, K.O, YoungstaCPT and Big Zulu.[256][257] In the 2010s, hip-hop became popular in Canada particularly in Toronto, which has a large Afro-Caribbean and African population. The city expressed a new sub-genre called Toronto sound. After Drake achieved mainstream success, the Toronto sound began with works by producers T-Minus and Boi-1da.[258] Music portalUnited States portalHip hop portal Hip-hop and social injustice LGBTQ representation in hip-hop The Holy Book of Hip Hop List of hip-hop festivals List of hip-hop genres List of hip-hop musicians List of murdered hip-hop musicians Misogyny in rap music Music of the United States Video vixen ^ "Hip-hop, Adv.", Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. December 2024. ^ A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, vol. 5, H to K. Edited by James A.H. Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901. 296. ^ Villiers, George. The Rehearsal. London: Thomas Dring, 1630. 30. ^ Cummings, Elizabeth. "Spring Weather", Wide Awake, vol. 16. Boston: D. Lothrop & Company, 1883. 388–9 ^ Douglas, Norman. London Street Games. St. Catherine Press, 1916. 51, 76–7. ^ "Hop, N. (2)", Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford UP, September 2024. ^ The Dovells, "You Can't Sit Down". 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Retrieved from " 2American rapper and actor (born 1975) For other uses, see 50 Cent (disambiguation). 50 Cent50 Cent in 2024BornCurtis James Jackson III (1975-07-06) July 6, 1975 (age 49)Queens, New York, U.S.Occupations Rapper songwriter actor television producer record executive record producer businessman Years active1996 (1996)–present[1]OrganizationG-Unity FoundationWorks Albums singles group records clothing books multimedia videography Television 50 Central 50 Cent: The Money and the Power For Life Power The Oath[2] Children2AwardsFull listMusical careerGenresHip hopLabels Caroline Capitol G-Unit Shady Aftermath Interscope Universal Columbia Trackmasters JMJ Formerly ofG-UnitWebsite50cent.com Signature Curtis James Jackson III (born July 6, 1975),[3] known professionally as 50 Cent,[n 1] is an American rapper, actor, and television producer. Born in Queens, a borough of New York City, Jackson began pursuing a musical career in 1996. In 1999–2000, he recorded his debut album Power of the Dollar for Columbia Records; however, he was struck by nine bullets during a shooting in May 2000, causing its release to be cancelled and Jackson to be dropped from the label. His 2002 mixtape, Guess Who's Back?, was discovered by Detroit rapper Eminem, who signed Jackson to his label Shady Records, an imprint of Dr. Dre's Aftermath Entertainment and Interscope Records that same year.[5][6] His debut studio album, Get Rich or Die Tryin' (2003), was released to critical acclaim and commercial success. Peaking atop the Billboard 200, it spawned the Billboard Hot 100-number one singles "In da Club" and "21 Questions" (featuring Nate Dogg), and received nonuple platinum certification by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). That same year, he launched the record label G-Unit Records, namesake of a hip hop group he formed two years prior; the label's initial signees were its members, fellow East Coast rappers Lloyd Banks and Tony Yayo. His second album, The Massacre (2005), was met with similar success and supported by his third number-one single, "Candy Shop" (featuring Olivia). He adopted a lighter, further commercially oriented approach for his third and fourth albums, Curtis (2007) and Before I Self Destruct (2009)—both were met with critical and commercial declines—and aimed for a return to his roots with his fifth album, Animal Ambition (2014), which was met with mixed reviews. He has since focused on his career in television and media, having executive-produced and starred in the television series Power (2014–2020), as well as its numerous spin-offs under his company G-Unit Films and Television Inc.[7] Jackson has sold over 30 million albums worldwide and earned several accolades, including a Grammy Award, a Primetime Emmy Award, thirteen Billboard Music Awards, six World Music Awards, three American Music Awards and four BET Awards.[8] In his acting career, Jackson first starred in the semi-autobiographical film Get Rich or Die Tryin' (2005), which was critically panned. He was also cast in the war film Home of the Brave (2006), and the crime thriller Righteous Kill (2008). Billboard ranked Jackson as 17th on their "50 Greatest Rappers" list in 2023,[9] and named him the sixth top artist of the 2000s decade.[10] Rolling Stone ranked Get Rich or Die Tryin' and "In da Club" in its lists of the "100 Best Albums of the 2000s" and "100 Best Songs of the 2000s" at numbers 37 and 13, respectively.[11][12] Jackson was born in Queens, New York City, and raised in the South Jamaica neighborhood[3] by his mother Sabrina. Sabrina, a drug dealer, raised Jackson until she died in a fire when Jackson was eight years old.[13][14] Jackson revealed in an interview that his mother was a lesbian.[15][16] After his mother's death and his father's departure, Jackson was raised by his grandparents.[17] He began boxing at about age 11, and when he was 14, a neighbor opened a boxing gym for local youth. "When I wasn't killing time in school, I was sparring in the gym or selling crack on the strip," Jackson remembered.[18] He sold crack during primary school.[19] "I was competitive in the ring and hip-hop is competitive too ... I think rappers condition themselves like boxers, so they all kind of feel like they're the champ."[20] At age 12, Jackson began dealing narcotics when his grandparents thought he was in after-school programs,[21] and brought guns and drug money to school. In the tenth grade, he was caught by metal detectors at Andrew Jackson High School: "I was embarrassed that I got arrested like that ... After I got arrested I stopped hiding it. I was telling my grandmother [openly], 'I sell drugs.'"[22] On June 29, 1994, Jackson was arrested for selling four vials of cocaine to an undercover police officer. He was arrested again three weeks later, when police searched his home and found heroin, ten ounces of crack cocaine, and a starting pistol. Although Jackson was sentenced to three to nine years in prison, he served six months in a boot camp and earned his GED. He has said that he did not use cocaine himself.[17][23][24] Jackson adopted the nickname "50 Cent" as a metaphor for change.[25] The name was inspired by Kelvin Martin, a 1980s Brooklyn robber known as "50 Cent"; Jackson chose it "because it says everything I want it to say. I'm the same kind of person 50 Cent was. I provide for myself by any means."[26] Jackson began rapping in a friend's basement, where he used turntables to record over instrumentals.[27] In 1996, a friend introduced him to Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC, who was establishing Jam Master Jay Records. Jay taught him how to count bars, write choruses, structure songs, and make records.[28][29] In 1997, A&R of Def Jam Irv Gotti turned down demo tapes from Jackson after Jam Master Jay had shown the songs for a potential record deal with the reason for decline being a style too similar to Jay-Z.[30] Jackson's first appearance was on "React" with Onyx, for their 1998 album Shut 'Em Down, which Gotti was the A&R for. He credited Jam Master Jay for improving his ability to write hooks,[20] and Jay produced Jackson's first (unreleased) album.[14] In 1999, after Jackson left Jam Master Jay, the platinum-selling producers Trackmasters signed him to Columbia Records. They sent him to an upstate New York studio, where he produced 36 songs in two weeks;[13] 18 were included on his 2000 album, Power of the Dollar.[31] Jackson founded Hollow Point Entertainment with former G-Unit member Bang 'Em Smurf.[32][33] Jackson's popularity began to grow after the successful, controversial underground single "How to Rob", which he wrote in a half-hour car ride to a studio.[25][34] The track comically describes how he would rob famous artists. Jackson explained the song's rationale: "There's a hundred artists on that label, you gotta separate yourself from that group and make yourself relevant."[25] Rappers Jay-Z, Kurupt, Sticky Fingaz, Big Pun, Wyclef Jean, and the Wu-Tang Clan responded to the track,[34] and Nas invited Jackson to join him on his Nastradamus tour.[35] Although "How to Rob" was intended to be released with "Thug Love" (with Destiny's Child), two days before he was scheduled to film the "Thug Love" music video, Jackson was shot and hospitalized.[36] On May 24, 2000, Jackson was attacked by a gunman outside his grandmother's former home in South Jamaica. After getting into a friend's car, he was asked to return to the house to get some jewelry; his son was in the house, and his grandmother was in the front yard.[citation needed] Jackson returned to the back seat of the car, and another car pulled up nearby; an assailant walked up and fired nine shots at close range with a 9mm handgun. Jackson was shot in the hand, arm, hip, both legs, chest, and left cheek.[14][22][37] His facial wound resulted in a swollen tongue, the loss of a wisdom tooth and a slightly slurred voice;[22][35][38] his friend was wounded in the hand. They were driven to a hospital, where Jackson spent 13 days. The alleged attacker, Darryl "Homicide" Baum, Mike Tyson's close friend and bodyguard,[39] was killed three weeks later.[40] Jackson recalled the shooting: "It happens so fast that you don't even get a chance to shoot back .... I was scared the whole time ... I was looking in the rear-view mirror like, 'Oh shit, somebody shot me in the face! It burns, burns, burns.'"[22] In his autobiography, From Pieces to Weight: Once upon a Time in Southside Queens, he wrote: "After I got shot nine times at close range and didn't die, I started to think that I must have a purpose in life ... How much more damage could that shell have done? Give me an inch in this direction or that one, and I'm gone."[17] Jackson used a walker for six weeks and fully recovered after five months. When he left the hospital, he stayed in the Poconos with his girlfriend and son, and his workout regime helped him develop a muscular physique.[14][22][41] In the hospital, Jackson signed a publishing deal with Columbia Records before he was dropped from the label and blacklisted by the recording industry because of his song, "Ghetto Qu'ran". Unable to work in a U.S. studio, he went to Canada.[42][43] With business partner Sha Money XL, Jackson recorded over thirty songs for mixtapes to build a reputation. In a HitQuarters interview, Marc Labelle of Shady Records A&R said that Jackson used the mixtape circuit to his advantage: "He took all the hottest beats from every artist and flipped them with better hooks. They then got into all the markets on the mixtapes and all the mixtape DJs were messing with them."[44] Jackson's popularity increased, and in 2002 he released the mixtape Guess Who's Back?. He then released 50 Cent Is the Future backed by G-Unit, a mixtape revisiting material by Jay-Z and Raphael Saadiq.[31] "One of the things that excited me about Tupac was even if he was rhymin' the simplest words in the world, you felt like he meant it and it came from his heart. That's the thing with 50. That same aura. That's been missing since we lost Pac and Biggie. The authenticity, the realness behind it." —Eminem about signing 50 Cent[45] In 2002, Eminem heard Jackson's Guess Who's Back? album, received from Jackson's attorney (who was working with Eminem's manager, Paul Rosenberg).[36] Impressed, Eminem invited Jackson to fly to Los Angeles and introduced him to Dr. Dre.[14][28][36] After signing a $1 million record deal,[28] Jackson released No Mercy, No Fear. The mixtape featured one new track, "Wanksta", which appeared on Eminem's 8 Mile soundtrack.[31] Jackson was also signed by Violator Management and Sha Money XL's Money Management Group.[citation needed] 50 Cent released his debut album, Get Rich or Die Tryin' (described by AllMusic as "probably the most hyped debut album by a rap artist in about a decade"), in February 2003.[46] Rolling Stone noted its "dark synth grooves, buzzy keyboards and a persistently funky bounce", with Jackson complementing the production in "an unflappable, laid-back flow".[47] It debuted at number one on the Billboard 200, selling 872,000 copies in its first four days.[48] The lead single, "In da Club" (noted by The Source for its "blaring horns, funky organs, guitar riffs and sparse hand claps"),[49] set a Billboard record as the most listened-to song in radio history within a week.[50]50 Cent in 2006 Interscope began funding and distributing for Jackson's label, G-Unit Records, in 2003.[51] He signed Lloyd Banks, Tony Yayo and Young Buck as members of G-Unit, and The Game was later signed in a joint venture with Dr. Dre's Aftermath Entertainment. G-Unit Records replaced Jackson's previous imprint, Rotten Apple Entertainment.[52] 50 Cent executive produced Lloyd Banks's June 2004 debut studio album, The Hunger for More, which achieved Platinum status in America. 50 Cent also contributed vocals to Lloyd Banks's hit single, "On Fire". In March 2005, 50 Cent's second commercial album, The Massacre, sold 1.14 million copies in its first four days (the highest in an abbreviated sales cycle[48]) and was number one on the Billboard 200 for six weeks.[53] He was the first solo artist with three singles in the Billboard top five in the same week with "Candy Shop", "Disco Inferno" and "How We Do".[54] According to Rolling Stone, "50's secret weapon is his singing voice - the deceptively amateur-sounding tenor croon that he deploys on almost every chorus".[55] 50 Cent's video game, 50 Cent: Bulletproof was released in November 2005. 50 Cent portrays himself and provides his likeness and voice in the video game, with the video game also featuring music from his first two studio albums. Olivia, Lloyd Banks, Young Buck, and 50 Cent (left to right) in Bangkok, February 2006After The Game's departure Jackson signed Olivia and rap veterans Mobb Deep to G-Unit Records, with Spider Loc, M.O.P., 40 Glocc and Young Hot Rod later joining the label, who all eventually departed the label.[56][57] Jackson expressed an interest in working with rappers other than G-Unit, such as Lil' Scrappy of BME, LL Cool J of Def Jam, Mase of Bad Boy and Freeway of Roc-A-Fella, and recorded with several.[58] In September 2007, 50 Cent released his third album, Curtis, which was inspired by his life before Get Rich or Die Tryin'.[59] It debuted at number two on the Billboard 200, selling 691,000 copies during its first week.[60] It sold behind Kanye West's Graduation, released the same day; the outcome of this highly-publicized sales battle between Jackson and West has been accredited to the commercial decline of the gangsta rap and "bling era" style that previously dominated mainstream hip-hop.[61] On September 10, 2008, episode of Total Request Live, Jackson said his fourth studio album, Before I Self Destruct, would be "done and released in November". He released "Ok, You're Right", produced by Dr. Dre for Before I Self Destruct, on May 18, 2009, and was scheduled to appear in a fall 2009 episode of VH1's Behind the Music. On September 3, 2009, Jackson posted a video[62] for the Soundkillers' Phoenix-[63] produced track, "Flight 187", introducing his mixtape and book (The 50th Law). The song, with lyrics inspiring speculation about tension between Jackson and Jay-Z, was a bonus track on the iTunes version of Before I Self Destruct.[64] Before I Self Destruct was released on November 9, 2009, and debuted at number 5 on the Billboard 200, giving 50 Cent his fourth consecutive top 5 album in the U.S.[65] In a Contactmusic.com interview, Jackson said he was working on a Eurodance album, Black Magic, inspired by European nightclubs: "First they played hip-hop which suddenly changed to uptempo songs, known as Eurodance".[66] He later said he had changed his next album to The Return of the Heartless Monster after writing different material when he returned home from the Invitation Tour in 2010, shelving Black Magic.[67][68] On September 3, Jackson supported Eminem on his and Jay-Z's The Home & Home Tour, performing "Crack A Bottle" with Eminem and Dr. Dre amid rumors of tension between Jackson and Dre.[69][70] He "recorded 20 songs to a whole different album concept" before putting them aside,[71] wanting his new album to have the "aggression" of Get Rich or Die Tryin'.[72][73] Jackson tweeted that the album was "80 percent done" and fans could expect it in the summer of 2011. It was ultimately delayed a year due to disagreements with Interscope Records, with Jackson saying that he would release it in November 2011[74] with a different title than Black Magic.[74] Eminem would appear on the album, and Jackson said he was working with new producers such as Boi-1da and Alex da Kid.[75] Cardiak, who produced Lloyd Banks' "Start It Up", confirmed that he produced a song for the upcoming album.[76] 50 Cent performing in 2011 Jackson released a song, "Outlaw", from his fifth album on the Internet on June 16, 2011.[77] The single, produced by Cardiak, was released on iTunes on July 19[78] (although Jackson tweeted that it was not the album's first single).[79] The rapper planned to write a semi-autobiographical young-adult novel about bullying, different from his previous books which focused on his life and the rules of power. According to the book's publisher, the first-person novel (about a 13-year-old schoolyard bully "who finds redemption as he faces what he's done")[80] was scheduled for publication in January 2012. In a series of tweets, Jackson said that the delay of his fifth album was due to disagreements with Interscope Records,[74] later suggesting that it would be released in November 2011 with his headphone line (SMS by 50).[74] He speculated to MTV News about not renewing his five-album contract with Interscope: "I don't know ... It will all be clear in the negotiations following me turning this actual album in. And, of course, the performance and how they actually treat the work will determine whether you still want to stay in that position or not."[81] On June 20, 2011, Jackson announced the release of Before I Self Destruct II after his fifth album.[82] Although he planned to shoot a music video for the fifth album's lead single, "I'm On It", on June 26[83] the video was never filmed.[84] Jackson told Shade45, "I did four songs in Detroit with Eminem. I did two with Just Blaze, a Boi-1da joint, and I did something with Alex da Kid. We made two that are definite singles and the other two are the kinds of records that we been making, more aimed at my core audience, more aggressive, more of a different kind of energy to it."[85] He released "Street King Energy Track #7" in September 2011 to promote Street King, his charity-based energy drink.[86] An announcement that Jackson was shooting a music video for "Girls Go Wild", the fifth-album lead single featuring Jeremih, was made on September 28, 2011.[87][88] Jackson's fifth album, Street King Immortal, was initially scheduled for a summer 2012 release and postponed until November 13.[89][90] Disagreements with Interscope Records about its release and promotion led to its temporary cancellation. Its first promo single, "New Day" with Dr. Dre and Alicia Keys, was released on July 27. The song was produced by Dr. Dre, mixed by Eminem and written by 50 Cent, Alicia Keys, Royce da 5'9" and Dr. Dre. A solo version by Keys was leaked by her husband, Swizz Beatz. "My Life", the album's second promo single (with Eminem and Maroon 5 lead singer Adam Levine), was released on November 26, 2012. In January 2014, Jackson said he planned to release Animal Ambition in the first quarter of the year, followed by Street King Immortal.[91][92] On February 20, he left Shady Records, Aftermath Entertainment, and Interscope, signing with Caroline and Capitol Music Group.[93] According to Jackson, although he owed Interscope another album, he was released from his contract because of his friendship with Eminem and Dr. Dre: "I'm a special case and situation. It's also because of the leverage of having the strong relationships with Eminem and Dr. Dre. They don't want me to be uncomfortable. They value our friendship to the point that they would never want [to jeopardize] it over that little bit of money."[94] That day, he announced that Animal Ambition would be released on June 3[95] and released its first track. The song, "Funeral", was released with a video on Forbes.com. Produced by Jake One, it is a continuation of "50 Bars" from a previous album; two more tracks were scheduled for release on March 18.[96] At South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, Jackson performed "Hold On" from the new album.[97] That song and "Don't Worry 'Bout It" were released with accompanying videos on March 18.[98] According to Jackson, prosperity would be a theme of the album: "This project, I had to search for a concept, a really good concept, in my perspective, and that was prosperity. I outlined all the things that would be a part of prosperity, positive and negative [for Animal Ambition]."[99] Animal Ambition debuted at number four on the U.S. Billboard 200, giving 50 Cent his fifth consecutive top five album in the country, while also debuting at number one on Billboard's Independent Albums chart.[100] 50 Cent in 2017 On May 14, 2015, Jackson revealed in an interview that the first single from Street King Immortal, would be previewed Memorial Day weekend and would likely be released in June.[101] Jackson released "Get Low" on May 20, 2015, as the intended first single from his sixth studio album, Street King Immortal. The song, produced by Remo the Hitmaker, features vocals from fellow American rappers 2 Chainz and T.I., as well as American singer Jeremih.[102] He announced bankruptcy on July 13, 2015.[103] On March 31, 2017, Interscope Records released 50 Cent's final album for the label, a greatest hits album titled Best Of. In 2020, Jackson stepped in as executive producer for late rapper Pop Smoke's debut album, Shoot for the Stars, Aim for the Moon, having been one of the rapper's biggest inspirations. The album was released on July 3, 2020 to nationwide commercial acclaim.[104] Jackson curated the album, desiring to finish it after Pop had died. He contacted many of the artists involved, and also features on one of the album tracks, "The Woo". The Woo also features vocals from fellow American rapper Roddy Ricch.[105][106] In 2020, it was reported that Jackson was producing two television series for Starz, an anthology about hip hop and a biographical drama about sports agent Nicole Lynn.[107] In 2021, he became one of the headliners of the music festival Golden Sand in Riviera Maya.[108] In a July 2021 interview with The Independent, 50 Cent confirmed that he had officially decided to shelve his Street King Immortal album after it spent a decade in development hell. He even confirmed that he planned to release a completely new project.[109] In May 2021, Curtis Jackson moved to Houston. This was thought to be for lower taxes, no income tax, and for the rapper scene, as well as other ventures such as writing new screenplays. Also, Jackson, Horizon United Group, and Houston Independent School District began a partnership on a project that would help high school students learn the business skills that define successful entrepreneurship.[110] While living in Houston, Curtis Jackson was in the process of writing screenplays for new crime shows.[111] In August 2021, he was confirmed to be starring in the upcoming Expend4bles film; it was released on September 22, 2023.[112] The film was a critical and commercial failure, grossing $51 million against a $100 million production budget.[113] In September 2021, Starz began airing BMF, a biographical series based on true events, depicting two brothers in Detroit (Demetrius "Big Meech" and Terry "Southwest T" Flenory, co-founders of the Black Mafia Family) who ran a drug trafficking and money laundering operation from the mid-1980s until 2005. Jackson is the executive producer of the show. He also performed the show's theme song, "Wish Me Luck", alongside Charlie Wilson, Moneybagg Yo and Snoop Dogg.[114] On February 13, 2022, 50 Cent was a surprise performer in the Super Bowl LVI halftime show,[115] receiving a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Variety Special (Live) in September for the performance.[116] From December 2024 to January 2025, Jackson embarked on his Las Vegas residency, 50 Cent: In da Club, which was announced the prior October.[117] He also announced plans to executive-produce a documentary for Netflix, which would center on the sexual misconduct allegations against hip-hop entrepreneur Sean Combs. It is yet to be released.[118] In January 2025, Den of Thieves 2: Pantera was released as a sequel to the 2018 film. Jackson, who previously starred in the 2018 predecessor, executively produced the sequel alongside former co-star O'Shea Jackson Jr., who reprised his role.[119] Jackson cites Boogie Down Productions, Big Daddy Kane, The Juice Crew, EPMD and KRS-One as his rapping influences, while citing LL Cool J as an inspiration behind his writing of "21 Questions".[120][121] Jackson also states that he drew influences from Nas, Rakim and The Notorious B.I.G. while working on Animal Ambition.[122] Jackson has had a highly successful business career. He is financially invested in a highly diversified variety of industries. Jackson is now involved in artist and talent management, record, television, and film production, footwear, apparel, fragrances, liquor, video games, mobile apps, book publishing, headphones, along with health drinks and dietary supplements.[123][124] His broad business and investment portfolio contains investments in a variety of sectors including real estate, financial market investments, mining, boxing promotion, vodka, fragrances, consumer electronics and fashion.[125] He established his own record label G-Unit Records in 2003 following his mainstream success.[126] In November 2003, he signed a five-year deal with Reebok to distribute a G-Unit Sneakers line for his G-Unit Clothing Company.[127][128] In an interview, Jackson said his businesses had a habit of doing well as he saw all of his ventures both past and present as revolving around his alter ego.[129][130] Jackson has also started a book publishing imprint, G-Unit Books on January 4, 2007, at the Time Warner Building in New York.[131] He has written a number of books including a memoir, From Pieces To Weight in 2005 where it sold 73,000 copies in hardcover and 14,000 copies in paperback; a crime novel and a book with Robert Greene titled The 50th Law, an urban take on The 48 Laws of Power.[132] In November 2011, Jackson released 50 Cent's Playground, a young adult fiction novel about a bullied, violent boy and his gay mother.[133] One of Jackson's first business ventures was a partnership with Glacéau to create an enhanced water drink called Formula 50. In October 2004, Jackson became a beverage investor when he was given a minority share in the company in exchange for becoming a spokesperson after learning that he was a fan of the beverage. The health conscious Jackson noted that he first learned of the product while at a gym in Los Angeles, and stated that "they do such a good job making water taste good". After becoming a minority shareholder and celebrity spokesperson, Jackson worked with the company to create a new grape flavored "Formula 50" variant of VitaminWater and mentioned the drinks in various songs and interviews. In 2007, Coca-Cola purchased Glacéau for $4.1 billion and, according to Forbes, Jackson, who was a minority shareholder, earned $100 million from the deal after taxes.[134] Though he no longer has an equity stake in the company, Jackson continues[when?] to act as a spokesperson for VitaminWater, supporting the product including singing about it at the BET Awards and expressing his excitement over the company's continuing to allow his input on products.[135] He joined Right Guard to introduce a body spray (Pure 50 RGX) and endorsed Magic Stick condoms,[136] planning to donate part of their proceeds to increasing HIV awareness.[137] Jackson signed a multi-year deal with Steiner Sports to sell his memorabilia,[138] and announced plans for a dietary-supplement company in conjunction with his film Spectacular Regret in August 2007.[139][140] 50 Cent with Val Kilmer at the 2009 American Music Awards Jackson has founded two film production companies: G-Unit Films in 2003 and Cheetah Vision in 2008.[141][142] Cheetah Vision produces low budget action thrillers for foreign film markets across the world.[132][143] When G-Unit Films folded, he focused on Cheetah Vision and the company obtained $200 million in funding in 2010.[144][145] In 2010, Jackson revived G-Unit Films, renaming the company to G-Unit Film and Television, Inc.[146] The company had joint ventures with Will Packer's production company, Will Packer Productions, and Universal Television. In over 18 months, Jackson sold projects to six different television networks. Among them was the Courtney A. Kemp-created Power, a crime drama in which he not only co-stars as Kanan Stark, but also serves as an executive producer. Power debuted on Starz on June 7, 2014 and ended on February 9, 2020 after six seasons.[147][148][149] He signed a two-year contract with representation from the Agency for the Performing Arts. Ratings have been a success for Starz, with the second season premiere being the highest with 1.43 million viewers.[150][151][152][153] Jackson is also the executive producer of three of the series' spin-offs, Power Book II: Ghost, Power Book III: Raising Kanan and Power Book IV: Force. Offices for G-Unit Film and Television (also known as G-Unit Studios) are headquartered in Shreveport, Louisiana as part of a 45-year lease agreement with the state.[154][155] In 2002, Jackson filed an application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office to register the term "50 Cent" as a trademark for clothing, sound recordings, and live performances. The application was published in 2003, and registration issued in 2004.[156] He has since filed for additional trademark registrations. In July 2011, Jackson launched a philanthropic initiative to provide food for one billion starving people in Africa by 2016, joining Pure Growth Partners to introduce Street King.[157] A portion of the proceeds from each Street King purchase would be used to provide a daily meal to an underprivileged child. The partnership coincides with Jackson's goal to feed a billion people in Africa during the next five years. "50 Cent and I share a common vision: to address the world's problems through smart and sustainable business models," said Chris Clarke, founder and CEO of Pure Growth Partners. "With the rampant starvation in Africa and hunger afflicting children worldwide, we need socially responsible businesses that affect real change now more than ever." Jackson said, "I'm inspired by Clarke's vision and innovative approaches to tackling serious issues. It's our mission with Street King to really change children's lives around the world."[158][159] In 2011, he founded SMS Audio, a consumer-electronics company selling Street by 50 headphones, pledging to donate a portion of their sales to charity.[160] In April 2015, SMS announced new co-branding deals with Reebok and Marvel. It added those to existing partnerships with Walt Disney Parks, Lucasfilm's Star Wars, and Intel.[161][162][163] In 2014, Jackson became a minority shareholder in Effen Vodka, a brand of vodka produced in the Netherlands, when he invested undisclosed amount in the company, Sire Spirits, LLC.[164][165] He endorsed the product via his live concert performances and social media. The rapper was asked to take part in two promotional bottle signings, one in Oak Creek and another in Sun Prairie. Jackson made an appearance at Liquor Warehouse in Syracuse, New York on April 25, 2015, where he reportedly sold 1,400 bottles (277 gallons) of Jackson's signature liquor brand. Liquor Warehouse's owner, George Angeloro, reportedly stocked 300 cases (1,800 bottles or 357 gallons) of Effen Vodka, which sells for $30 a bottle, prior to the event.[166][167] In December 2014, Jackson signed a $78 million deal with FRIGO Revolution Wear, a luxury underwear brand. The joint venture is partnered between Jackson, basketball player Carmelo Anthony, baseball player Derek Jeter and Mathias Ingvarsson, the former president of mattress company Tempur-Pedic. Jackson became the chief fashion designer for the brands single pair of Frigo boxers.[168][169] In April 2015, Jackson mulled investing in Jamaica, exploring foreign investment opportunities on the island when he met with some local officials and had ongoing discussions on investment opportunities in the Montego Bay resort area.[170] Over the years, Jackson invested his earnings from music and celebrity endorsements in an array of privately controlled companies, real estate, and stocks and bonds.[132] A portion of his investments lost value during the 2008 financial crisis.[143] In December 2008, he told the Canadian press that he had been affected by the recession, losing several million dollars in the stock market. Unable to sell his Connecticut mansion, Jackson postponed Before I Self-Destruct due to the severity of the economic downturn.[171] His Farmington mansion located on 50 Poplar Hill Drive that he tried to sell for years filed for bankruptcy in Connecticut in 2015 listed an asking price for that property in 2012 at $10 million but was valued at $8.3 million in 2015. He first tried to sell the house in 2007 for $18.5 million, and dropped the price several times in the next five years, when it was on and off the market.[172] In January 2011, Jackson reportedly made $10 million after using Twitter to promote a marketing company which he was part shareholder of. His endorsements company G Unit Brands Inc. revealed through a public SEC filing controls 12.9 per cent of H&H Imports, which is a parent company of TV Goods – the firm responsible for marketing his range of headphones, Sleek by 50 Cent. Jackson bought stock in the company on November 30, 2010, a week after it offered buyers 180 million shares at 17 cents each. Jackson later made a stock recommendation on Twitter, causing its share value to rise from four cents to nearly 50 cents each, closing on Monday at 39 cents. Jackson was later investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission for breaching securities laws following his tweet which may have constituted allegations of insider trading via his pump and dump stock investment strategy.[173][174][175] In 2013, Jackson became a minority investor in Hang w/, a live video broadcasting mobile app used by dozens of celebrities to broadcast their daily activities and chat with fans. The app was downloaded more than 1 million times since its launch in March 2013 and had more than 1 million users as of February 2015[update]. Other minority celebrity investors include former NFL player Terrell Owens and record producer Timbaland.[176][177][178][179] In 2008, Jackson visited a platinum, palladium and iridium mine shaft in South Africa, and met with South African billionaire Patrice Motsepe in talks of purchasing an equity stake in the mine.[132] After his meeting with Motsepe, Jackson considered purchasing equity in the mine and launching his own line of 50 Cent branded platinum.[180][181] On July 21, 2012, Jackson became a licensed boxing promoter when he formed his new company, TMT (The Money Team). Licensed to promote in New York, he was in the process of being licensed in Nevada (where most major fights are held in the U.S.). A former amateur boxer, Jackson signed gold medalist and former featherweight champion Yuriorkis Gamboa and middleweight Olympic medalist Andre Dirrell.[182] On July 29, 2012, he and the boxer Floyd Mayweather Jr. signed IBF featherweight champion Billy Dib. They unveiled plans to challenge the box-office dominance of mixed martial arts and change the landscape of boxing with TMT Promotions.[183] Boxer Zab Judah also expressed interest in making a deal with Jackson.[184] In December 2012, Mayweather and Jackson parted company, with Jackson taking over the promotion company and founding SMS Promotions[185] with Gamboa, Dirrell, Dib, James Kirkland, Luis

Olivares and Donte Strayhorn in his stable. On July 13, 2015, Jackson filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Connecticut with a debt of $32,509,549.91.[186][187][188] On July 17, 2015, the Court issued an order allowing a creditor to proceed with the punitive damages phase of a trial against Jackson in a New York state court, in connection with the alleged release of a private video.[189] His assets were listed as between $10 million and $50 million in his bankruptcy petition, though he testified under oath that he is worth $4.4 million.[190] He said that he had between $10 million and $50 million in debt, and the same amount in assets. Later in the week, Jackson's bankruptcy lawyers elucidated through the court documents that legal fees and judgments exceeding $20 million over the past year were the primary cause of the filing.[191] His filings listed 32 entities that he had a stake in. The bankruptcy came days after a jury ordered him to pay $5 million to rapper Rick Ross's ex-girlfriend Lastonia Leviston for invading her privacy by posting online a sex tape of her and another man.[192] In addition, Jackson lost a dispute over a failed business deal involving his Sleek headphones, where Jackson invested more than $2 million.[193] An ex-partner accused Jackson of later stealing the design of the "Sleek by 50" headphones, prompting a judge to award the partner more than $17.2 million.[194][195] His Connecticut bankruptcy filing stated that he owned seven cars valued at more than $500,000, including a 2010 Rolls-Royce and a 1966 Chevrolet Coupe.[196] His expenses of $108,000 a month included $5,000 for gardening. He reported a monthly income of $185,000, mainly from royalties and income from his external businesses and investments. The court filing said he also owed money to his stylist, his barber, and his fitness coach.[197][198] Other details in the bankruptcy documents included information about two deals that sold the right to collect royalties of on-air play of his music. Half the rights to his portfolio were sold to the British independent music publishing company Kobalt Music Group for $3 million and the other half for another $3 million with the sales of his albums allowing Jackson to own 100 percent of the rights to the master recordings while paying only for distribution.[199] Zeisler & Zeisler, a Bridgeport law firm, represented 50 Cent in the bankruptcy, which later resulted in Jackson filing a $75 million lawsuit against his own lawyers.[200] He stated that his lawyers did a terrible job of representing him, specifically citing the fallout of his failed venture with Sleek Audio headphones. He accused Garvey Schubert Barer, a Wall Street law firm, of failing to "employ the requisite knowledge and skill necessary to confront the circumstances of the case".[201][202][203][204][205][193][206] G-Unity Foundation Inc. – Founder SMS Audio[207] – CEO, founder SK Energy[208][209] – Founder SMS Promotions[210] – CEO, founder Sire Spirits[211] – Owner Effen Vodka[165] – Former minority shareholder 50 Cent has said his life philosophy, following his shooting, is "When your time comes, you go. I think that comes from God."[212] Despite having numerous songs that reference drug and alcohol usage and his ownership of Branson Cognac, Jackson remains a teetotaler, citing a bad experience with alcohol as his main reason.[213][214] Forbes noted Jackson's wealth in 2007, ranking him second behind Jay-Z in the rap industry.[215] He lived in a Farmington, Connecticut, mansion formerly owned by ex-boxer Mike Tyson.[216] Jackson listed the mansion for sale in 2007 at $18.5 million to move closer to his son (who lived on Long Island at the time).[217] In 2019, the mansion was sold for $2.9 million, with $1 million being donated to tax-deducted charities.[218][219][220] The mayor of Bridgeport, Connecticut, declared October 12, 2007 "50 Cent Curtis Jackson Day", honoring the rapper with a proclamation and a key to the city.[221] One of Jackson's New York homes, purchased in January 2007 for $2.4 million and the center of a lawsuit between Jackson and Shaniqua Tompkins, caught fire on May 31, 2008, while he was filming in Louisiana.[222] On October 13, 1996, Jackson's girlfriend, Shaniqua Tompkins, gave birth to son Marquise.[223] Tompkins later sued Jackson for $50 million in 2009, saying he promised to take care of her for life. The suit, with 15 causes of action, was dismissed by a judge who called it "an unfortunate tale of a love relationship gone sour".[224][225] The two have bickered for years, and have even taken their feud to social media many times.[226][227] Marquise's birth changed Jackson's outlook on life: "When my son came into my life, my priorities changed, because I wanted to have the relationship with him that I didn't have with my father."[228] He credited his son for inspiring his career and being the "motivation to go in a different direction".[229] Despite this, the two have endured a fractured relationship that began when Jackson and Tompkins separated in 2008.[230] Their feud has been taken to social media numerous times, including in 2020 when Jackson disclosed that he "used to" love his son.[231] Jackson has a tattoo "Marquise" with an axe on his right biceps ("The axe is 'cause I'm a warrior. I don't want him to be one, though"),[43] and has "50", "Southside" and "Cold World" on his back: "I'm a product of that environment. It's on my back, though, so it's all behind me".[43] In 2003, Jackson briefly dated actress Vivica A. Fox. He broke up with her eight months later.[232] Jackson dated model Daphne Joy and had his second son, Sire Jackson, with her, on September 1, 2012.[233][234][235] At the age of two years, Sire modeled for Kidz Safe, a headphone brand for kids, earning $700,000 through his contract.[236] In 2024, on a post on Instagram to promote his Cognac brand, Jackson stated that he had been practicing celibacy. Jackson stated: "My new idea is so big, I don't have time to be distracted I'm practicing abstinence, I have been meditating and focusing on my goals."[237] Jackson further clarified his stance during an appearance on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, stating, "Listen, when you calm down you can focus....I've been good to me."[238] In the same interview, Jackson also opened up about his decision to not marry, stating that, "I'm safe. I'm not a happy hostage. I'm here. I'm free. I made some mistakes, just not that one....I want someone I can love in my life too, just not right now, I'm fine."[239] In 2005, Jackson supported President George W. Bush after rapper Kanye West criticized Bush for a slow response to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.[240] If his felony convictions did not prevent him from voting, he said that he would have voted for the president.[241] Jackson later said that Bush "has less compassion than the average human. By all means, I don't aspire to be like George Bush."[242] In September 2007, he told Time that although he would not endorse a candidate in 2008, he "liked Hillary [Clinton]".[243] Six months later, the rapper told MTV News that he had switched his support to Barack Obama after hearing him speak, but had lost interest in politics.[244][245] Asked his opinion of President Obama's May 9, 2012, endorsement of gay marriage, Jackson said, "I'm for it ... I've encouraged same-sex activities. I've engaged in fetish areas a couple times."[246] He had been criticized for anti-gay comments in the past.[247][248][249] Jackson endorsed Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the run-up for the 2016 U.S. presidential election.[250] He rejected an offer of $500,000 from the Trump campaign to make an appearance on the candidate's behalf.[251] However, he endorsed Donald Trump in 2020, due to his dislike of Joe Biden's tax plans.[252] A week later, he retracted his endorsement, saying on Twitter "Fuck Donald Trump, I never liked him",[253] and endorsed Biden.[254] On June 29, 1994, Jackson was arrested for selling four vials of cocaine to an undercover police officer. He was arrested again three weeks later, when police searched his home and found heroin, ten ounces of crack cocaine and a starter's pistol. Although Jackson was sentenced to three to nine years in prison, he served six months in a boot camp (where he earned his high-school equivalency diploma). According to him, he did not use cocaine.[17][24][255] Jackson and four members of his entourage were arrested shortly before 2 a.m. on December 31, 2002, when police found a .25-caliber handgun and a .45-caliber pistol in a parked car (which they searched due to its tinted windows) outside a Manhattan nightclub. The rapper was charged with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon.[256] Jackson was sentenced to two years' probation on July 22, 2005, for a May 2004 incident, when he was charged with three counts of assault and battery after jumping into an audience when he was hit by a water bottle. Jackson filed a lawsuit against an advertising company, Traffix of Pearl River, New York, on July 21, 2007, for using his image in a promotion he said threatened his safety. He was alerted by a staff member to an Internet advertisement on a Myspace page. According to court documents, the advertisement had a cartoon image of the rapper with "Shoot the rapper and you will win $5000 or five ring tones guaranteed". Although the ad did not use his name, the image allegedly resembled him and suggested that he endorsed the product. The lawsuit, calling the ad a "vile, tasteless and despicable" use of Jackson's image which "quite literally call[ed] for violence against him", sought unspecified punitive damages and a permanent injunction against the use of his image without permission.[257][258] In 2008, Jackson sued Taco Bell over an ad campaign that used his name without permission, in which it invited him to change his name for one day from 50 Cent to 79 Cent, 89 Cent, or 99 Cent, in line with pricing for some of its items, and they would donate $10,000 to the charity of his choice. The case was settled out of court in his favor in November 2009.[259][260][261] While walking through Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in May 2016, Jackson harassed and insulted a janitor at the airport, accusing him of being under the influence. The janitor was a hearing-impaired, autistic teenager named Andrew Farrell. The parents of the janitor had seen the viral video as disrespect and wanted to sue Jackson for his action against their child. The lawsuit was originally over one million dollars, but the parents settled for a $100,000 donation to Autism Speaks and his apology.[262][263][264][265][266] In 2016, a judge declared that Brandon Parrott gave Dr. Dre and 50 Cent the rights to "Bamba" for the song "P.I.M.P."[267] One of his New York homes, purchased for $2.4 million in January 2007 and the center of a lawsuit between Jackson and Shaniqua Tompkins, caught fire on May 30, 2008, while he was filming in Louisiana.[222] On August 5, 2013, Jackson pleaded not guilty to one count of domestic violence and four counts of vandalism in a Los Angeles County court. If convicted of all charges, he faced up to five years in prison and a $46,000 fine. Model-actress Daphne Joy accused Jackson of kicking her and ransacking her bedroom during an argument at her condominium in the Toluca Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles on June 23. He allegedly caused $7,100 in property damage, leaving the scene before police arrived.[268] Judge Ann Nevins has ordered Jackson back to court because of Instagram messages he made over several months.[269] She said Jackson was not fully clear about his funds and indicated posts of the rapper showing stacks of his money. In March 2016, Jackson claimed that he would no longer use Instagram, electing instead to have his profile page operated by someone else.[270] In June 2018, after former linebacker and actor Terry Crews gave a speech before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary in which he described being groped by a Hollywood agent in 2016, Jackson posted a photo on Instagram of a shirtless muscular Crews with the caption: "I got raped. My wife just watched."[271][272][273] After receiving backlash, Jackson deleted the post and wrote on Twitter: "People are so sensitive."[274][275] In a July 2018 appearance on The View, Jackson stated that he would "never make fun of any sexual assault victim", adding: "I wasn't looking at Terry Crews that way, at that point. I'm looking at the Hulk. The guy is this big, that's being taken advantage of."[276] In 2020, Jackson was a subject of controversy for his involvement in a viral video of him giving money to a Burger King restaurant in New York City on behalf of a local scammer who was later arrested and charged for Bitcoin scamming and for assaulting and kidnapping his victims on April 24, 2021.[277][278][279] Before he signed with Interscope Records, Jackson engaged in a public dispute with rapper Ja Rule and his label, Murder Inc. Records, saying that a friend robbed jewelry from Ja Rule and the latter accused him of orchestrating the robbery.[280] Ja Rule said that the conflict stemmed from a Queens video shoot, when Jackson did not like seeing him "getting so much love" from the neighborhood.[281] At The Hit Factory in New York in March 2000, Jackson had an altercation with Murder Inc. associates and received three stitches for a stab wound.[280][282] Rapper Black Child claimed responsibility for the stabbing, saying that he acted in self-defense when he thought someone reached for a gun.[283] An affidavit by an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agent suggested ties between Murder Inc. and Kenneth "Supreme" McGriff, a New York drug lord suspected of involvement in the murder of Jam Master Jay and Jackson's shooting. An excerpt read: The investigation has uncovered a conspiracy involving McGriff and others to murder a rap artist who has released songs containing lyrics regarding McGriff's criminal activities. The rap artist was shot in 2000, survived and thereafter refused to cooperate with law enforcement regarding the shooting. Messages transmitted over the Murder Inc. pager indicate that McGriff is involved in an ongoing plot to kill this rap artist, and that he communicates with Murder Inc. employees concerning the target.[42] The end of the Jackson-Ja Rule feud was confirmed in May 2011. According to Ja Rule, "I'm cool. We ain't beefing no more. We'll never collaborate. That's just what it is. You don't have to be at war with somebody, but it's also kind of like U.S. and another country that they may not get along with. We don't gotta go to war, but we're not friends either. But we can coincide inside of a world. He's doing him, and he's not thinking about me, and I'm doing me and I'm not thinking about him."[284] On August 7, 2015, the feud between the two rappers later reignited when Ja Rule gave a feedback to a social follower via Twitter over a similar feud between Meek Mill and Drake. Enraged, Jackson later responded with photos and comments via Instagram, only siding with Drake.[285] The feud resurfaced three years later on January 19, 2018, when Ja Rule took to Twitter, calling out 50 Cent on social media.[286] In October 2018, Jackson pranked Ja Rule by purchasing 200 discounted front-row tickets for an upcoming show of his in Arlington, Texas for a total of US$3,000 via Groupon, with Jackson later confirming on social media that he bought the tickets with the express intention of forcing Ja Rule to perform in front of rows of empty seats.[287] In 1999, with the release of the single "How to Rob", 50 Cent attacked his rap peers, including Jay-Z, who responded to the provocation with the single "It's Hot (Some Like It Hot)" in which he raps "Go against Jigga yo ass is dense/I'm about a dollar – what the f*ck is 50 Cents?".[288] In a 2009 interview with Rolling Stone, 50 Cent accused Jay-Z and his record company Roc-A-Fella Records of being unfair to Beanie Sigel because "[Jay-Z] didn't have their interests in mind, he was just doing what he had to do for himself." The rapper also stated that "I don't know him personally, [...] I tried to collaborate with him on the Freeway project ... What I did was Freeway went out and found his publishing deal, and we started the album. [...] when it came time to put the record out, he didn't want to shoot his video. He has a god complex."[289] 50 Cent also accused Jay-Z of changing in attitude and image since marrying Beyoncé. In 2017, 50 Cent described Jay-Z's thirteenth studio album 4:44 as "golf course music" in a Instagram post, elaborating: "I listened to Jay sh*t, that 4:44. [...] [It] was too smart. I felt like I was supposed to be wearing like glasses and shit and like a tie, a fucking sweater around my waist. It was like Ivy League. They don't wanna hear that shit. [...] They just wanna have a good time. You know what I'm saying? You can't be the best rapper at 47 because the new n****s is here. They coming with new [music] going on."[290] In an interview on the Conan Show, 50 Cent spoke about the album, saying: "Hip-hop culture's connected to youth culture. The kids gonna bring new innovative stuff. He just had the maturity bleed off into the material. [...] But the kids, I don't see them actually listening to it".[291][292] In an interview in 2022, 50 Cent reported that in a meeting between him and the couple in Los Angeles, the two rappers were having a heated argument. Beyoncé, seeing them, jumped from a ledge to come to her husband's defense. 50 Cent compared the singer to her sister Solange when she hit Jay-Z in the elevator, describing them as "two gangstas".[293][294] In an interview for XXL Mag in 2023, 50 Cent claimed that Jay-Z's Grammy wins were due to his marriage to Beyoncé: "Even Jay-Z's career, you can look at that and say the association to Beyoncé is when he started to receive the 16, 17 Grammys, since he's been with Beyoncé. And you go, prior to that [he had] one. That came with the association."[295] 50 Cent also pointed out that the couple's eldest child Blue Ivy Carter won a Grammy even though she does not sing or rap, accusing award ceremonies of giving accolades to the couple just to ensure their attendance during the show.[296][297] The rapper also reported that his non-win at the Grammys was due to his music being "a little bit abrasive to conservatives; [...] It didn't matter to me in that time period. Don't give me the trophy. They didn't give me Best New Artist and I sold 13 million records", while the Carter-Knowles family is more politically agreeable to the music industry.[298] In connection to his feud with Ja Rule, 50 Cent also took aim at fellow New York rapper Fat Joe, a high-profile collaborator of Ja Rule's.[299][300] The feud took aim at Fat Joe following his 2002 track "What's Luv?" featuring Ja Rule and Ashanti. Fat Joe had also continued his collaboration with Murder Inc. on his 2004 track "New York" featuring Jadakiss, prompting a diss track aimed at Fat Joe from 50 Cent on his 2005 album The Massacre entitled "Piggy Bank". Fat Joe later responded with the track "My Fofo" on his album All or Nothing released later that same year. Tensions boiled over during the 2005 MTV Video Music Awards when Fat Joe presented the award for best Hip Hop Video, in which he told the audience "I feel so safe tonight with all this police protection courtesy of G-Unit". 50 Cent later retaliated with a profanity-laden diatribe following his performance of the song "So Seductive" with fellow G-Unit artist Tony Yayo, exclaiming "Fat Joe's a pussy man! [...] Pussy Boy, Nigga What?!". The feud later affected Fat Joe financially as he sought to secure a $20 million contract endorsing Air Jordan sneakers in early 2005, Michael Jordan himself later cancelled the contract following the VMA incident as he was in fear of conflict with 50 Cent or any other affiliates.[301] Following this; little action was taken on either side as the feud seemed to calm down by 2011. Murder Inc. executive Irv Gotti later expressed anger at Fat Joe following his proposal to quell their longstanding feud with G-Unit in 2010.[302] In 2012, 50 Cent approached Fat Joe in talks of ending the feud following the two agreeing to perform at a memorial ceremony for then-recently deceased music executive Chris Lighty.[303] Despite the prior history between the two, 50 Cent and Fat Joe became close friends and business associates shortly thereafter despite Fat Joe's lengthy connections with Ja Rule.[304][305] Although Jackson was close to The Game before the latter released his debut album, The Documentary, they grew apart. After The Documentary's release, Jackson felt that The Game was disloyal for saying that he did not want to participate in G-Unit's feuds with other rappers (such as Nas, Jadakiss and Fat Joe) and his desire to work with artists with which G-Unit was feuding. He said that he wrote six songs for the album and did not receive proper credit, which The Game denied.[306] 50 Cent at a 2007 concert Jackson later dismissed The Game from G-Unit on Hot 97. After the announcement, The Game (a guest earlier in the evening) tried to enter the building with his entourage. After they were denied entry, one of his associates was shot in the leg in a confrontation with a group of men leaving the building.[307][308] When the situation escalated, the rappers held a joint press conference announcing their reconciliation,[309] and fans were uncertain if the rappers had staged a publicity stunt to boost sales of their recently released albums.[310] After the situation cooled,[311] G-Unit criticized The Game's street credibility and announced that they would not appear on his albums. During a Summer Jam performance The Game announced a boycott of G-Unit, which he called "G-Unot".[312] After the Summer Jam performance The Game recorded "300 Bars and Runnin'", an extended "diss" of G-Unit and Roc-A-Fella Records, for the mixtape You Know What It Is Vol. 3. Jackson responded with his "Piggy Bank" music video, with The Game as Mr. Potato Head and parodies of other rivals.[313] They have continued attacking each other, with The Game releasing two more mixtapes: Ghost Unit and a mixtape-DVD, Stop Snitchin, Stop Lyin. Jackson superimposed The Game's head on the body of a male stripper for the cover of the Hate It or Love It (G-Unit Radio Part 21) mixtape in response to The Game's pictures of G-Unit dressed as the Village People.[314] The Game, under contract to Aftermath Entertainment, signed with Geffen Records to terminate his contractual obligations with G-Unit (although it is claimed that Jackson pressured Dr. Dre to fire him).[315] G-Unit member Spider Loc has insulted The Game in songs, and the latter released "240 Bars (Spider Joke)" and "100 Bars (The Funeral)" attacking G-Unit and Loc. Jackson's response was "Not Rich, Still Lyin'", mocking The Game.[316] Lloyd Banks replied to the Game on a Rap City freestyle-booth segment, followed by a Game "diss" song ("SoundScan") ridiculing the 13-position drop of Banks' album Rotten Apple on the Billboard 200 chart and its disappointing second-week sales. Banks replied on his mixtape Mo' Money In The Bank Pt. 5: Gang Green Season Continues with "Showtime (The Game's Over)", said that Jackson wrote half of The Documentary and ridiculed The Game's suicidal thoughts.[citation needed] In October 2006, The Game made a peace overture (which was not immediately answered) to Jackson, [317] but two days later he said on Power 106 that the peace offer was valid for only one day.[318] In several songs on Doctor's Advocate, he implied that the feud was over. He said in July 2009 that the feud had ended with help from Michael Jackson and Diddy,[319] and apologized for his actions.[320] According to Tony Yayo, neither Jackson nor G-Unit accepted his apology[321] and The Game has resumed his calls for a "G-Unot" boycott at concerts. Jackson released "So Disrespectful" on Before I Self Destruct, targeting Jay-Z, The Game and Young Buck.[322] The Game responded with "Shake", poking fun at the music video for Jackson's "Candy Shop". On January 2, 2015, The Game claimed that he and 50 were "sworn enemies", promising never to reconcile with him anymore,[323] but on August 1, 2016, they ended their twelve-year feud when the two were in the Ace of Diamonds strip club and The Game said "I love 50, man. What happened, that shit was 12 years ago."[324] In January 2022, the feud reiterated after 50 critiqued Game's Drink Champs interview with N.O.R.E., where he claimed that 50's former competitor Kanye West did "more for me in two weeks than [Dr.] Dre did for me throughout my entire career".[325] The Game responded, commenting that he enclosed the entirety of G-Unit as a group and clothing brand "in a casket", also expressing his likeliness in the Power television trilogy, but warning 50 to "leave [the past] alone or else... I'm outside #Numinati".[326] Then, two months later, in March, 50 Cent published a video via Instagram of Game being shunned by former Interscope Records CEO Jimmy Iovine at a basketball game, poking fun of it while also commenting "50 wrote ya hits". The Game once again flamed 50 after the claims were brought back up and also bragged to "get [50's] girlfriend out of my DM's".[327][328] This was believed to have been a consequential result of Game claiming on Drink Champs to be "the best and a better rapper" than Eminem, with whom 50 still remains close friends.[329][330] Additionally, Game's manager, Wack 100, has subliminally called out or questioned 50 Cent's credibility, over the rapper's surprise appearance at the Super Bowl LVI halftime show and ghostwriting allegations.[331][332][333][334] Jackson's issues with former The Diplomats member Cam'ron began in 2007, when they had a live argument on The Angie Martinez Show on Hot 97 radio. Jackson commented that he felt that the music division of Koch Entertainment (known today as MNRK Music Group) was a "graveyard", meaning major record labels would not work with their artists.[335] Cam'ron then ridiculed the record sales of G-Unit members Lloyd Banks and Mobb Deep by pointing out that Dipset member Jim Jones outsold both of their albums despite not being signed to a major label, and also went on to clarify that his group, The Diplomats, had a distribution deal from several labels.[335] Both rappers released diss songs with videos on YouTube. Jackson released "Funeral Music", and suggested in the song that Cam'ron is no longer able to lead The Diplomats and that Jim Jones should take his place. Cam'ron responded with "Curtis" and "Curtis Pt. II", in which he makes fun of not only Jackson's first name, but also his appearance, calling him "a gorilla, with rabbit teeth". Jackson responded by releasing "Hold On" with Young Buck. Since 2009, the feud slowly died down, and they eventually reconciled in 2016.[336] Although Rick Ross began a feud with Jackson over an alleged incident at the 2008 BET Hip Hop Awards, Jackson told news sources he did not remember seeing Ross there.[337] Later that month Ross' "Mafia Music" was leaked on the Internet, with lyrics apparently disparaging Jackson. Several days later, Jackson released "Officer Ricky (Go Head, Try Me)" in response to "Mafia Music". The following day, Ross appeared on Shade 45 (Eminem's Sirius channel) and told Jackson to come up with something better in 24 hours. Before leaving for Venezuela, Jackson uploaded a video ("Warning Shot") and the first of a series of "Officer Ricky" cartoons. In early February he uploaded a YouTube video in which he interviewed "Tia", the mother of one of Ross' children; according to her, Ross is in reality a correctional officer.[338] On February 5, 2009, The Game phoned Seattle radio station KUBE. Asked about the dispute between Jackson and Ross, he sided with Jackson and offered to mediate: "Rick Ross, holla at your boy, man" and "50 eating you, boy."[339] On his album Deeper Than Rap, Ross refers to Jackson in "In Cold Blood" and Jackson's mock funeral is part of the song's video. When the song was released, Ross said that he ended Jackson's career.[340] "Rick Ross is Albert From CB4. You ever seen the movie? He's Albert," Jackson replied in an interview. "It never gets worse than this. You get a guy that was a correctional officer come out and base his entire career on writing material from a drug dealer's perspective such as "Freeway" Ricky Ross."[341] Their feud rekindled at the 2012 BET Hip Hop Awards, where Jackson and G-Unit members Kidd Kidd, Mike Knox, Tony Yayo were seen on video attacking Gunplay (a member of Ross' Maybach Music Group). Gunplay's Maybach Music diamond necklace was stolen during the brawl, and several days later Jackson appeared at a Washington, D.C. bowling alley wearing Gunplay's chain.[342] On January 30, 2013, Jackson tweeted that Ross' attempted drive-by shooting on his birthday three days earlier was "staged".[343] Main article: List of awards and nominations received by 50 Cent Main articles: 50 Cent albums discography and 50 Cent singles discography See also: G-Unit discography Studio albums Get Rich or Die Tryin' (2003) The Massacre (2005) Curtis (2007) Before I Self Destruct (2009) Animal Ambition (2014) Collaborative albums Beg for Mercy (with G-Unit) (2003) T·O·S (Terminate on Sight) (with G-Unit) (2008) See also: 50 Cent videography Year Title Role Notes 2005 Get Rich or Die Tryin' Marcus "Young Caesar" Greer 2006 Jack's Law Black Home of the Brave Spc. Jamal Aiken 2008 Righteous Kill Marcus "Spider" Smith 2009 Streets of Blood Det. Stan Johnson Video Dead Man Running Thigo Before I Self Destruct Clarence Jenkins Video 2010 Twelve Lionel 13 Jimmy Caught in the Crossfire Tino Gun Rich Morning Glory Himself 2011 All Things Fall Apart Deon Barnes Blood Out Detective Hardwick Video Setup Sonny 2012 Freelancers Det. Jonas "Malo" Maldonado Fire with Fire Lamar How to Make Money Selling Drugs Himself 2013 The Frozen Ground Pimp Clate Johnson Escape Plan Hush Last Vegas Himself 2014 Vengeance Black The Prince The Pharmacy [344] 2015 Spy Himself Southpaw Jordan Mains 2016 Popstar: Never Stop Never Stopping Himself 2018 Den of Thieves Levi Enson Levoux Escape Plan 2: Hades Hush 2019 Escape Plan: The Extractors Hush 2023 Expend4bles Easy Day [345] 2024 Boneyard Chief Carter [346] 2025 Skillhouse Year Title Role Notes 2003 Chappelle's Show Himself Episode: "The Best of Chappelle's Show Volume 1 Mixtape" 2003–05 Saturday Night Live Himself/Musical Guest Recurring Guest 2003–06 Top of the Pops Himself/Musical Guest Recurring Guest 2005–08 Access Granted Himself Recurring Guest 2005 The Life & Rhymes of... Himself Episode: "50 Cent" The Simpsons Himself (voice) Episode: "Pranksta Rap" 2006 Flavor of Love Himself Episode: "Famous Friends and Strangeness" 2007 America's Next Top Model Himself Episode: "The Girl Who Gets Thrown in the Pool" Diary Himself Episode: "Diary of 50 Cent" MTV Cribs Himself Episode: "50 Cent" 2008–09 50 Cent: The Money and the Power Himself/Host Main Host 2009 Entourage Himself Episode: "One Car, Two Car, Red Car, Blue Car" Party Monsters Cabo Himself Episode: "50 Cent" 2010 Pop Profiles Himself Episode: "50 Cent" 2011 Funk Flex Full Throttle Himself Episode: "Episode #2.1" The X Factor Himself Episode: "Live Season Finale, Part 2 of 2" 2012 Dream Machines Himself Episode: "50 Cent's Jet Car Part 1 & 2" The Finder Big Glade Episode: "Life After Death" 2013 MTV Cribs Himself Episode: "Retro Cribs" Robot Chicken Gun/Himself (voice) Episode: "Eaten by Cats" 2014 Dream School Himself Recurring Guest: Season 2 2014–20 Power[347] Kanan Stark Recurring Cast: Season 1–2, Main Cast: Season 3–6 2015 Ridiculousness Himself Episode: "50 Cent" 2016 Patti LaBelle's Place Himself Episode: "50 Cent and Naturi Naughton" 2017 Unsung Himself Episode: "Fat Joe" & "James Brown" Martha & Snoop's Potluck Dinner Party Himself Episode: "Makin' That Dough" 50 Central Himself Main Cast 2020 For Life Cassius Dawkins Recurring Cast: Season 1, Guest: Season 2 2021 Hip Hop Uncovered Himself (voice) Episode: "Victory Lap" 2021–22 Power Book II: Ghost Kanan Stark Recurring Cast: Season 2 2022 Supreme Team Himself Episode: "Truth & Consequences" Year Title Role Notes 2005 50 Cent: Bulletproof Himself Voice and likeness 2009 50 Cent: Blood on the Sand Himself Voice and likeness Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 Navy SEAL[348][349] Voice only Jackson's stage name is lent to the female character, Isuzu Sento, in the Japanese light novel/manga/anime series, Amagi Brilliant Park.[350]

^ Sometimes abbreviated Fiddy, reflecting his own AAVE pronunciation of "50". On Late Night with Seth Meyers, he advised "white people who are trying to be cool" to pronounce "50" as "fifty" rather than "fiddy".[4]

^ Jason Birchmeier. "50 Cent". AllMusic. Archived from the original on July 1, 2019. Retrieved November 22, 2019. ^ "50 Cent-produced TV series "The Oath" trailer debut". Billboard. Archived from the original on April 23, 2018. Retrieved March 17, 2018. ^ a b Birchmeier, Jason. "50 Cent Biography". AllMusic. Archived from the original on June 5, 2016. Retrieved June 26, 2016. ^ A Public Service Announcement from Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson. Late Night with Seth Meyers. 2015 – via YouTube. ^ "Why 50 Cent Is One Of The Greatest Of All Time". www.hotnewhiphop.com. March 28, 2018. Retrieved September 28, 2020. ^ "50 Cent". Biography. Retrieved September 28, 2020. ^ "Starz announces it extended Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson's exclusive premium overall deal". August 1, 2016. Archived from the original on October 18, 2016. Retrieved October 17, 2016. ^ "Five Reasons Before I Self Destruct Flopped". Vibe. November 26, 2009. Archived from the original on October 17, 2015. 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View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500)Crowded House (links | edit) Dr. Dre (links | edit) Fleetwood Mac (links | edit) Gangsta rap (links | edit) Garth Brooks (links | edit) James Brown (links | edit) July 6 (links | edit) Marilyn Manson (band) (links | edit) Mariah Carey (links | edit) N.W.A (links | edit) Nirvana (band) (links | edit) New York Mets (links | edit) Rapping (links | edit) REO Speedwagon (links | edit) Simon & Garfunkel (links | edit) Santa Monica, California (links | edit) Spice Girls (links | edit) The Beatles (links | edit) The Sound of Music (links | edit) Tupac Shakur (links | edit) The Monkees (links | edit) Whitney Houston (links | edit) 2000s (links | edit) 1975 (links | edit) 2003 (links | edit) Saint Valentine's Day Massacre (links | edit) Dustin Hoffman (links | edit) Billy Joel (links | edit) Queens (links | edit) George Michael (links | edit) Sir Mix-a-Lot (links | edit) Henry Mancini (links | edit) Turkish hip-hop (links | edit) Val Kilmer (links | edit) Stage name (links | edit) Samuel L. Jackson (links | edit) Geffen Records (links | edit) Asia (band) (links | edit) Zagreb (links | edit) Fiona Apple (links | edit) Alicia Keys (links | edit) Janet Jackson (links | edit) Bruce Springsteen (links | edit) Alanis Morissette (links | edit) Bon Jovi (links | edit) The Eminem Show (links | edit) Bruce Willis (links | edit) Drive-by shooting (links | edit) Born in the U.S.A. (links | edit) Justin Timberlake (links | edit) View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500) Retrieved from " WhatLinksHere/50_Cent"

Hip-Hop music grew from a house- and block-party DJing fad into one of the biggest music genres in the past 50 years. A lot of people see Hip-Hop as clever rapping to rhythmic music, but the hard-core audience knows better than that. It's an honest depiction of personal feelings and ideas that are so easy to bond with. Hip-Hop is a culture in its own right. And it has developed steeply since its early days in the 1970s. It's also rife with contradictions that are sometimes ironic. The music genre that started in the Bronx soon became studded with billionaire stars showing off their bling. Local bands who claimed that Hip-Hop was exclusive to the inner streets of New York soon spread all around the world. And the tough music genre that bragged about its misogynistic slant eventually celebrated many women rappers! If you'd like to know what is Hip-Hop music, read on. This is the whole story. In a Nutshell, What is Hip-Hop Music? Hip-Hop is more of a culture than a music genre. It's a melange of rhythmic tunes and rhyming words that boomed in the 1970s and 80s. The most familiar aspect of Hip-Hop is rapping lyrics to a background of lively music. Other ingredients of it include street art, articulating personal pain, and heavy use of techno music. What are the Differences Between Hip-Hop and Rap? According to various Hip-Hop pioneers, even though both terms are used interchangeably, Rap is a very different culture from Hip-Hop. One artist has an opinion about the matter that many others agree with. KRS-One says "Rap is something you do, Hip-Hop is something you live." Hip-Hop purists believe that only those who have lived through the hardships of underground life can talk about it. Every aspect of Hip-Hop culture matters. Even the graffiti, the street dances, the poetic duels, the toasting, and the turntabling. To these folks, the main difference between Hip-Hop and Rap is the difference between an original and an offshoot. They might not speak badly about Rap, but they make a point of pointing out that Hip-Hop and Rap aren't mutually exclusive. Interestingly, these views aren't exclusive to old-school Hip-Hop icons or enthusiasts. Many new-age Hip-Hop performers and their followers share the same sentiment. And that's probably why the echoes of classic Hip-Hop are still heard even 50 years after the genre was created. Where Did the Name 'Hip-Hop' Come From? It's said that back in the 1950s, teen parties rife with fast beats and dancing were slightly ridiculed by grown-ups. The older generation seemed to call these jumping youngsters "hippity hops". That might've been an inspiration for what happens next. The more famous story of where the peculiar name 'Hip-Hop' came to be mentions a friendly banter that ended up with the conception of a genre label. Kevin Smith was a Bronx DJ and rapper who went by the name Lovebug Starski. He was playfully accosting a friend of his who had just been drafted and kept repeating the words hip-hop-hip-hop. That was his way of echoing the martial steps, but the incident didn't end with the shared laughs. Lovebug Starski seemed to like the way the words slid on his tongue, and he was seen using them at various parties later on. Besides the chants and the unforgettable catchphrases like "Make money money, make money money money," he would often energize the crowds by something like "I said a hip-hop, a hipp it, hippy-dippy, hip-hip-hop and you don't stop." There's more. Afrika Bambaataa, who's viewed as The Godfather of Hip-Hop, is also among the very first to use the term publicly in reference to this type of music. Right before the name Hip-Hop became a thing, this party DJing style was often described as Disco Rap. The term Hip-Hop became legit as it appeared in print for the very first time in 1979. It was in an interview with Bambaataa in The New Pittsburgh Courier, where the description was dropped quite casually. The matter solidified in a subsequent interview in The Village Voice in 1984. But this time, Bambaataa gave a much more detailed account of that emerging genre in an article titled "History of Hip-Hop". The Main Characteristics of Hip-Hop Hip-Hop is a derivative of 1970s Disco and Funk music, which were in turn offshoots of the larger genre R&B. The important aspects of Hip-Hop weren't the music style as much as its beat. So you'd also find Hip-Hop songs that are clearly affected by Jazz, Rock, or Soul. The unwavering traits of Hip-Hop were actually outside the scope of music. Here are some of them. Street Art and Graffiti Paintings Spraying large-sized murals around the subways and other public buildings started to be noticeable in the early 1970s. Among the pioneers of the movement was a young Greek immigrant who went by the name Taki 183. By 1975, several New York City kids from Queens, the Bronx, and Brooklyn colored whole areas with spray paints. They left designs of their nicknames, their favorite fictional characters, and anything that mattered to them. The authorities weren't pleased by what they saw as vandalism, while art galleries clamored to display the emerging art. More importantly, it became an essential backdrop to Hip-Hop block parties. Turn-Tabling The DJs who created the Hip-Hop style, like DJ Kool Herc, started out with the technique of running two turntables playing the same song. They discovered that the audiences were more into the beat parts of the song than the melodic parts. Using the turn-tabling techniques, they managed to extend the beat breaks to much longer segments. Moreover, they'd often talk over these breaks to enthuse the crowds even more. This was the earliest form of rapping. Hip-Hop is clearly part and parcel of that early turn-tabling discovery. Afrika Bambaataa, Grand Wizard Theodore, and Grandmaster Flash were instrumental in developing this style. Rapping, MCing, and Toasting The deepest roots of rapping can be found in African and Latin music, where the lyrics weren't always vocalized along with the tunes, but rather, talked over the music. The more recent versions of Rap can be spotted with the DJs, and later on, in street parties that turned into word duels. Gil Scott-Heron, Amiri Baraka, and various other Bronx poets came to prominence at the time. Their words were often heard in the recordings of George Clinton and Isaac Hayes. Plenty of the rhymed exchanges were outright insults, and these merged with the Jamaican form of rhythmic speech known as toasting. Rap might not have been a basic ingredient in early Hip-Hop songs, but it soon became an indispensable feature of the genre. B-Boing: The Dance, Attitude, and Style The bad-boy attitude of the Hip-Hop artists, along with their unique dress style, and dance moves are characteristics of Hip-Hop you can spot a mile away! This styling is among the main attractions that drew in huge amounts of Hip-Hop enthusiasts worldwide. It's also what helped media and fashion moguls like Puff Diddy and Jay-Z to build their empires. For these guys, it was never just about the songs. Old School Hip-Hop The exact origin story of how Hip-Hop came to be is a bit hard to find. There are a few versions of how and who and where. But the timing and the setting are often the same. The early 1970s in the Bronx is a total consensus. The Origins The more popular version of who was behind the creation of Hip-Hop attributes the honors to DJ Kool Herc, whose real name was Clive Campbell. It was a hot night in August of 1973. The place was a birthday party. It was held in the recreation room of an old apartment building in the Bronx. The exact location of that iconic place was 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, New York City. Back in the day, Kool Herc was an 18-year-old wannabe DJ. He was an immigrant who had left Jamaica – but not its beats. He paired the booming sound systems to his native Jamaican rhythm. And the inner-city parties were on fire with that new style. He played the two turntables like a pro, extended the parts where the beat rocked the most, and he talked over the music, giving life to the dancefloor. DJ Kool Herc toasted and spun, and without really noticing, he was laying the true foundations of Hip-Hop. The party on that August night in 1520 Sedgwick Avenue was filled to the brim with a hard-core Bronx crowd. They became totally hooked to the music and fell in love with the beat that woke up their senses in a way they'd never experienced before. From Block Parties to Label Records Hip-Hop became legit around 1979 with the release of Sugarhill Gang's song Rapper's Delight. It was part of an adventure taken on by the independent label Sugar Hill. Luckily, this emerging and slightly unfamiliar music genre topped the charts for a very long time. The stars of that trail-blazing album were non-other than Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, in addition to Kurtis Blow, and the Cold Crush Brothers. It's said that their Grandmaster Caz is actually the true creator of the lyrics that stood out in Rapper's Delight. New School Hip-Hop The next phase of Hip-Hop goes roughly from 1979 to 1993. The genre experienced some incredible changes during this period, but somehow, managed to maintain its soul and core values. Rap Meets Hard Rock R&B tunes were often merged with the Rap songs of Hip-Hop. But that wasn't written in stone, and it was only a matter of time before bands like Run-DMC broke the mold. Hard Rock was much too present in the song and much too loud, so talking over it wasn't easy. However, the new trend was more than successful, and the hard beats of Rock went well with the overcharged lyrics of Rap. The Beastie Boys were also among the bands that went all-in with the Punk, Funk, and Hard Rock beats. They were also the first all-white Hip-Hop band, which attracted a wider and more nuanced audience. Romanticizing Rap Not everything in the world needed to be a fight and a struggle, and with the emergence of many middle-class Hip-Hop bands, the earlier subjects of Bronx Rap became a little irrelevant. Matters of the heart and other emotional issues were bound to find a release at some point, and they did. Big time! LL Cool J is among the pioneers of romanticized Hip-Hop. He signed with Def Jam in 1984, and his first single, I Need a Beat, made a phenomenal 100,000 copies just weeks after its release. He followed that with I Need Love in 1987, and a piece of West Coast Rap which was Goin' Back to Cali in 1988. Lady Rappers Dana Elaine Owens, also known as Queen Latifa, took the rapping scene by storm in 1988. She was only 18 years old when she released her first single Wrath of My Madness. At the time, she was a college student at the Borough of Manhattan, but she managed to get a demo tape to the right people. And shortly afterward, she signed a deal with Tommy Boy Records. Her debut album All Hail the Queen came right after that, and from then on she never slowed down. She also made a stellar career in acting and won various awards along the way. One of Queen Latifa's biggest achievements is opening the door wide for the next generation of female rappers. Salt-N-Pepa was an all-girl rapper band that gained huge popularity in 1985. Their single Push It, which was released in 1987, hit number one in three countries and stayed in the top 10 around the globe for a while. Their album Hot, Cool & Vicious was just as phenomenal, and it quickly sold more than 1 million copies in the US. This energetic Hip-Hop girl band was the first to achieve gold and platinum status. Going Out of New York For more than two decades, Hip-Hop remained a phenomenon exclusive to New York. But that was bound to change. The earliest outsiders were DJ Jazzy Jeff and Will Smith, who came from Philadelphia and made big waves with their different styles and 'fresh' perspective. Next, came the provocative 2 Live Crew all the way from Miami, where the lyrics again reflected a very different mood that was received with open arms. M.C. Hammer emerged from California around the same time and pretty much rode the wave of Blue Skies Rap. The strongest out-of-New York Rap movement came in the 1990s from LA, and it was soon labeled as West Coast Rap. Its best players were Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Easy E., and N.W.A. Gangsta Rap Rap and Hip-Hop were always tied up to the underground world since the inception of the genre. And at some point, the rough side of this music style went all out with its affiliations. The audacious, rough, and totally forthright lyrics drew in a huge audience. Dr. Dre and Tupac Shakur were among the leaders of that direction. Most of the hits were suitably released by the label Death Row Records. This pretty much started the fiery feud between East Coast Rap and West Coast Rap. The Golden Age of Hip-Hop The late 1990s and early 2000s were by far the best years of Hip-Hop. The genre broke out of the confines of New York, the whole of the US, and into the richest cities of the world. The material aspects of bling Hip-Hop came into full focus with the popularity of MTV and digital media. The business of making Hip-Hop songs extended far beyond the music industry. The sales of new fashion, accessories, stylized luxury cars, liquor, and even electronics boomed with the release of each new hit. Stars like Puff Diddy, Eminem, and Lauryn Hill were brilliant at that time. The Hip-Hop Scene 50 Years After its Inception Today's Hip-Hop is definitely different from how things started 50 years ago. Alternative Hip-Hop, Trap music, and Mumble Rap are becoming mainstream nowadays. Various Hip-Hop stars who lived through the golden years of Rap expressed their feelings of unfamiliarity around these styles. The excessive use of autotuning, plus the hard-to-discern lyrics seem to turn off a lot of old-schoolers. However, the response from the turn-of-the-century younger audience says otherwise. Hip-Hop is prevalent today all over the map, and each country seems to add its special flavor to it. Hip-Hop is also successfully fused with almost every conceivable music genre. The results may not always be stunning, but the experimentation and versatility of Hip-Hop are still alive and well.

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Welcome to the world of hip-hop, a culture that has taken the world by storm with its infectious beats, powerful lyrics, and dynamic art forms. Hip-hop is more than just a genre of music; it's a movement, a lifestyle, and a means of expression that has influenced generations. In this exploration of hip-hop, we will journey through its core elements, uncovering the artistry and creativity that define this cultural phenomenon. The Five Elements of Hip-Hop At the heart of hip-hop lie five fundamental elements, each contributing to the rich tapestry of this culture. These elements encompass music, dance, and art, offering a comprehensive view of what makes hip-hop a global sensation. Let's dive into these elements, starting with the rhythmic world of music and beats. Music and Beats Hip-hop music is the backbone of this cultural revolution, and it wouldn't be what it is without the following three key elements: DJing and turntables, MCing and rapping, and beatboxing. DJing and Turntables When you think of hip-hop, you can't help but envision a DJ behind the turntables, spinning records and creating electrifying mixes that set the dance floor on fire. DJing is one of the pillars of hip-hop, and it all began with the legendary DJ Kool Herc in the South Bronx. These artists are not just selectors of music; they are musical architects, shaping the beats that make us move. DJing is a craft that involves skillful blending of tracks, scratching vinyl records, and reading the crowd's energy to keep the party alive. From the pioneers of the past to the turntablists of today, DJing continues to be a cornerstone of hip-hop's musical landscape. MCing and Rapping If DJing provides the beats, MCing and rapping deliver the message. MCs, short for "Master of Ceremonies," are the lyrical storytellers of hip-hop. They use their words and rhymes to convey stories, share experiences, and address social issues. Rapping is more than just spitting verses; it's a rhythmic and poetic art form that requires precision and flow. From the poetic genius of Tupac Shakur to the socially conscious rhymes of Kendrick Lamar, MCs have the power to provoke thought and ignite change through their lyrics. MCing and rapping are the voices of hip-hop, giving expression to the triumphs and struggles of the culture. Beatboxing In the world of hip-hop, innovation knows no bounds. Beatboxing, a unique vocal percussion art form, is a testament to this creativity. Beatboxers use their mouths, lips, tongue, and voice to create intricate beats and rhythms, mimicking the sounds of drum machines and instruments. Beatboxing adds a distinctive layer to hip-hop music, often serving as a foundation for MCs to showcase their lyrical prowess. It's a mesmerizing skill that has gained recognition and respect within the hip-hop community and beyond. Dance and Movement Dance and movement are an integral part of hip-hop culture, bringing rhythm and energy to the forefront of the art form. Within this realm, we have two distinctive styles: B-boying and breakdancing, and popping. B-Boying and Breakdancing When the beat drops, and the dance floor heats up, B-Boying and breakdancing take center stage. These energetic and acrobatic dance styles have their roots in the South Bronx, where young people found creative ways to express themselves and battle it out on the streets. B-boys and B-girls, as the dancers are often called, engage in dynamic moves, spins, and flips, often in the context of friendly dance battles. What makes B-boying and breakdancing remarkable is not just the athleticism and precision required but also the storytelling aspect. Dancers communicate narratives and emotions through their movements, making it a powerful and captivating form of expression. Popping While B-boying and breakdancing might get most of the attention, popping is another essential dance style within hip-hop culture. Popping involves the quick contraction and relaxation of muscles, creating a popping or jerking motion that syncs with the music's rhythm. Popping is all about precision and control, as dancers move their bodies with robotic and fluid motions. It's a mesmerizing style that adds diversity to the dance elements of hip-hop. Popping showcases the versatility and creativity that defines hip-hop's approach to movement. Graffiti Art Graffiti art is an eye-catching and provocative element of hip-hop culture that graces walls, trains, and various surfaces around the world. It's more than just colorful scribbles; it's a form of visual storytelling that conveys messages, political statements, and personal experiences. Style and Innovation Graffiti artists are not mere vandals; they are visual innovators who push the boundaries of creativity. They use vibrant colors, intricate designs, and distinct styles to leave their mark on the urban landscape. Graffiti art is often characterized by its bold and dynamic aesthetics, making it impossible to ignore. Graffiti artists challenge conventional notions of art by bringing it to the streets, where it can be seen by all. This style and innovation are what make graffiti art an essential element of hip-hop, showcasing the culture's rebellious spirit and thirst for self-expression. Attitude and Collaboration Graffiti art is not just about individual expression; it's also a collaborative effort. Crews of graffiti artists come together to create larger-than-life murals and pieces that reflect their shared vision and commitment to the culture. Collaboration is a hallmark of hip-hop, emphasizing the collective strength that drives the movement forward. The attitude of graffiti artists is one of resilience and determination. Despite facing legal challenges and societal stigma, they continue to paint their stories on the walls of cities worldwide. It's this combination of attitude and collaboration that defines the graffiti art element of hip-hop and adds depth to the culture's artistic landscape. Knowledge and Consciousness Hip-hop is not merely about entertainment; it's a platform for knowledge and consciousness. It serves as a powerful medium for conveying important messages, sparking conversations, and advocating for change. Within this element, we explore two crucial aspects: political influence and cultural movement. Political Influence Hip-hop has long been a megaphone for the marginalized and a catalyst for addressing pressing social and political issues. Through its lyrics, artists fearlessly confront topics such as racial inequality, poverty, police brutality, and systemic injustice. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, groups like Public Enemy and N.W.A. used their music to challenge the status quo and demand change. Their songs were anthems of resistance, rallying cries for communities that had long been ignored or oppressed. Hip-hop became a vehicle for political engagement, awakening a generation to the realities of the world around them. Cultural Movement Beyond its political influence, hip-hop has blossomed into a global cultural movement that transcends borders and unites people from diverse backgrounds. It's not just music and dance; it's a way of life—a mindset that promotes self-expression, resilience, and empowerment. In countries around the world, hip-hop has taken on new forms, incorporating local languages and traditions into its fabric. Artists from different corners of the globe have embraced hip-hop as a means to tell their stories and connect with others who share their struggles and aspirations. This cultural movement is a testament to hip-hop's ability to bridge divides and foster unity through a shared passion for creativity and self-expression. Hip-Hop Fashion and Lifestyle Hip-hop isn't just about what you hear and see; it's also about how you express yourself through fashion and lifestyle. Within this realm, we can trace hip-hop's evolution through two lenses: early influences and modern trends. Early Influences In the early days of hip-hop, fashion was as much a part of the culture as the music and dance. Artists like Run-D.M.C. popularized the iconic Adidas tracksuit and shell-toe sneakers, setting fashion trends that would endure for decades. Baggy pants, oversized t-shirts, and Kangol hats became staples of hip-hop style. These fashion choices were more than just about aesthetics; they were symbols of identity and belonging within the hip-hop community. Artists used their clothing as a form of self-expression, reflecting the realities of their lives and the spirit of their culture. Modern Trends As hip-hop culture continued to evolve, so did its fashion. Streetwear brands rose to prominence, with artists collaborating with designers to create unique and highly sought-after clothing lines. High-end designer brands also embraced hip-hop, blurring the lines between luxury and streetwear. The influence of hip-hop extended beyond clothing to hairstyles, accessories, and even tattoos. Modern hip-hop fashion is a reflection of individuality and creativity, with artists and fans alike using their style to make a statement. It's a dynamic aspect of hip-hop that continues to shape and be shaped by the culture. Influential Figures and Impact As we wrap up our exploration of hip-hop, it's essential to acknowledge the influential figures who have left an indelible mark on this cultural phenomenon. These figures, both past and present, have shaped the trajectory of hip-hop, ensuring its enduring impact on the world. Within this realm, we will focus on two categories: pioneers and contemporary artists. Pioneers Pioneers are the trailblazers who laid the foundation for hip-hop's global reach. They are the visionaries who transformed a local movement into a cultural juggernaut. Some of the most notable pioneers include: 1. DJ Kool Herc Often regarded as the father of hip-hop, DJ Kool Herc, born Clive Campbell, is credited with pioneering the art of DJing and turntablism. He kickstarted hip-hop's musical revolution by hosting legendary parties in the South Bronx, where he showcased his innovative techniques of extending and looping beats. Herc's influence on hip-hop's music cannot be overstated, as he introduced the world to the power of the DJ. 2. Afrika Bambaataa Afrika Bambaataa is another key figure in hip-hop's early days. He is not only known for his musical contributions but also for his role in founding the Universal Zulu Nation, a cultural and political movement that aimed to unite and empower marginalized communities through hip-hop. Bambaataa's commitment to social change and peace has left an enduring legacy. 3. Grandmaster Flash Grandmaster Flash, whose real name is Joseph Saddler, is a turntablism pioneer known for his innovative DJing techniques, including backspinning and scratching. His group, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, produced influential tracks like "The Message," which addressed pressing social issues and laid the groundwork for socially conscious hip-hop. Contemporary Artists While pioneers paved the way, contemporary artists carry the torch of hip-hop into the 21st century, evolving the culture and expanding its horizons. Here are a few notable contemporary artists who continue to shape the world of hip-hop: 1. Kendrick Lamar Kendrick Lamar has emerged as one of the most influential MCs of his generation. His thought-provoking lyrics and socially conscious themes have earned him critical acclaim and a dedicated fan base. Albums like "To Pimp a Butterfly" and "DAMN" tackle issues of race, identity, and inequality, solidifying Lamar's status as a modern hip-hop icon. 2. Cardi B Cardi B has broken barriers and redefined the role of women in hip-hop. Her unapologetic style and charismatic persona have made her a force to be reckoned with in the music industry. With chart-topping hits like "Bodak Yellow" and "WAP," Cardi B has become a symbol of empowerment for women in hip-hop. 3. Travis Scott Travis Scott's innovative approach to hip-hop has pushed the boundaries of the genre. Known for his genre-blending music and immersive live performances, Scott has created a unique sonic and visual experience that resonates with a wide audience. His album "ASTROWORLD" was a game-changer in contemporary hip-hop. These pioneers and contemporary artists represent just a fraction of the influential figures who have shaped hip-hop over the years. Their impact extends beyond the music itself, influencing fashion, art, and societal conversations. As hip-hop continues to evolve and adapt, it's artists like these who keep the culture alive and thriving, ensuring that hip-hop remains a powerful force for self-expression and social change.

Hip-hop emerged as a cultural movement in the 1970s, originating in the Bronx, New York City, and has since become a worldwide phenomenon. This multifaceted art form has profoundly impacted music, dance, visual arts, and fashion, contributing to a unique, vibrant culture that continues to evolve and influence today's society. The foundation of hip-hop lies in its four main elements, often referred to as its pillars: deejaying (turntabling), rapping (MCing or rhyming), graffiti painting (writing), and break dancing (B-boying). Deejaying, using turntables and DJ mixers to manipulate and create music, is a crucial aspect of hip-hop, responsible for the distinctive, energetic beats that serve as the backdrop for rappers' lyrical prowess. Rapping, a rhythmic vocal rhyming style, is the spoken word aspect of hip-hop and arguably its most identifiable feature. Graffiti painting, another vital component, serves as a visual representation of the culture, often employing stunning, colorful designs to express the artists' thoughts and emotions. Break dancing incorporates dynamic, acrobatic moves that showcase the physicality and athleticism of its performers, setting the stage for the expressive dance styles accompanying the music. Throughout the years, hip-hop has transcended its origins to become a powerful influence on modern culture and various aspects of society. The four pillars of hip-hop have established it as a unique form of artistic expression, showcasing the talents and creativity of individuals from all walks of life. As hip-hop grows and changes, its roots in these foundational elements ensure its enduring relevance and significance. Hip-hop originated in the predominantly African American South Bronx area of New York City in the late 1970s, originally at society's margins. The development of the movement led to the creation of four main elements, which are considered the pillars of hip-hop: deejaying (or "turntabling"), rapping (also known as "MCing" or "rhyming"), graffiti painting (also known as "graf" or "writing"), and break dancing (or "B-boying"). A key figure in the birth of hip-hop is DJ Kool Herc, who held his first block party in the Bronx in 1973. He was known for using two turntables and multiple copies of the same record to isolate and extend the instrumental breaks, allowing people to dance for longer periods and giving rise to breakdancers. Kool Herc's innovative techniques attracted other DJs and soon spread across the Bronx, developing new styles and sounds in the emerging genre. DJing and turntablism are essential components of hip-hop culture, playing a critical role in the creation and evolution of the genre. Early DJs, like Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash pioneered turntable techniques that allowed for the manipulation of sounds and breaks, paving the way for the introduction of emceeing. In particular, DJing in hip-hop made significant use of the following techniques: Beatmatching: DJs would match the beats of two records to create a seamless transition between songs. Scratching: Manipulation of vinyl records using quick hand movements to create sounds and effects. Crossfading: DJs would smoothly blend one song into another, often using a mixer with a crossfader to control the audio levels from each turntable. These techniques combined to create a unique sound and style within the hip-hop genre, eventually leading to the rise of talented MCs who built their raps around these beats, contributing to the full development of hip-hop as a distinct culture and musical art form. Rapping, also known as MCing or "rhyming", is the vocal component of hip-hop. It involves the rhythmic delivery of spoken words, often with complex rhyme schemes. Rappers tell stories, convey emotions, and share ideas through their lyrics, making it a crucial cultural expression element. The art of rapping has evolved, but its importance remains constant as a foundational aspect of hip-hop. DJing or "turntabling", is the musical backbone of hip-hop. The DJ's role is to provide beats and mix the instrumentals for the rapper's lyrics. DJs utilize record players, turntables, and mixers to manipulate sounds, blend tracks, and create unique rhythms that set the tone for the performance. Pioneers like DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash revolutionized this art form, and their techniques are still widely used today. Breakdancing, or "B-boying," is the physical expression of hip-hop culture. It encompasses a variety of dance styles and moves, such as acrobatics, intricate footwork, and stylish poses. Breakdancing originated in the streets, with dancers performing on cardboard or linoleum surfaces. These "break battles" showcased individual talent and creativity and fostered a sense of community among participants. Though the style has evolved since its early days, breakdancing remains a crucial element of hip-hop. Graffiti, also referred to as "writing" or "graf," is the visual component of hip-hop. It involves creating elaborate designs, usually with spray paint, on public spaces or surfaces like walls or subway cars. Graffiti artists use vibrant colors, bold lines, and intricate patterns to make their mark. Though often controversial due to its association with vandalism, graffiti is an essential means of self-expression and communication within the hip-hop community. The old-school hip-hop era began in the late 1970s and continued into the early 1980s. The emergence of beat-driven characterized it, party-oriented tracks focused on grooves and catchy hooks. DJ Kool Herc is often credited with extending beats using two turntables, leading to this rhythmic foundation. Some prominent old-school hip-hop artists include Sugarhill Gang, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, and Afrika Bambaataa. The golden age of hip-hop emerged in the mid-to-late 1980s and continued into the early 1990s. This era marked a significant shift in musical styles and themes, with artists exploring more complex lyricism, social consciousness, and diverse sounds. The golden age saw the rise of groups and artists like Run-DMC, Public Enemy, Eric B. & Rakim, and De La Soul, who significantly contributed to the development of the hip-hop genre. The 1990s and early 2000s were characterized by the rise of various sub-genres and styles within hip-hop. This era saw the emergence of: Gangsta Rap: A sub-genre popularized by artists like N.W.A., Tupac Shakur, and The Notorious B.I.G., focusing on controversial themes and gritty storytelling. Alternative Hip-Hop: Characterized by artists like A Tribe Called Quest and The Roots, who often incorporated jazz influences and emphasized positive, socially conscious messages. Southern Hip-Hop: Originating from the southern United States, this style highlighted regional sounds and artists, such as OutKast, Lil Wayne, and T.I. Today's hip-hop landscape is more diverse and multifaceted than ever. Contemporary hip-hop is marked by artists experimenting with different sounds, themes, and delivery styles. Some notable developments in the modern era include: Trap Music: A sub-genre developed in the southern U.S., characterized by aggressive 808-driven beats and gritty, often nihilistic lyrics. Notable artists include Migos, Future, and Cardi B. Emo Rap: A sub-genre that blends hip-hop with elements of emo and punk rock, often focused on introspection, mental health, and vulnerability. Artists like Juice WRLD, Lil Peep, and XXXTentacion have popularized this style. Lyrical Hip-Hop: A continued emphasis on complex lyricism and storytelling, represented by artists such as Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole, and Rapsody. As hip-hop continues to evolve and change, its various styles and sub-genres serve as a testament to its rich history and cultural impact. Hip-hop originated in the 1970s in New York and has since become a global phenomenon, influencing various aspects of society, such as fashion, social issues, and mainstream media adaptation. Hip-hop fashion has evolved throughout the decades, often reflecting the attitudes of the time and the culture's connection to various social issues. Early hip-hop fashion featured baggy clothing, tracksuits, and large gold jewelry. Today, streetwear brands and high-end designers have been influenced by the movement, incorporating sportswear elements, oversized silhouettes, and bold graphic prints. From its inception, hip-hop has served as a medium for artists to express their thoughts and experiences related to social issues, such as poverty, racism, and police brutality. The lyrics of many rap songs act as a form of social commentary, addressing inequalities and other systemic problems marginalized communities face. As a result, the genre has contributed to raising awareness and fostering understanding between diverse groups of people. Hip-hop has significantly impacted mainstream media, resulting in various adaptations of its art forms in the music, television, and film industries. The influence is evident in the resurgence of vinyl records, DJing equipment sales, and the incorporation of rap music into film soundtracks. Additionally, television shows and movies have begun to feature plots and characters inspired by the hip-hop scene, exposing the culture to broader audiences and solidifying its place in contemporary society. Hip-hop has produced numerous notable artists and innovators throughout its history, with each generation building upon the pioneers' accomplishments. Here, we highlight pioneers, influential producers, and impactful lyricists who have helped shape hip-hop as we know it today. In the early days of hip-hop, several artists emerged as trailblazers and set the stage for future generations. Among them were: DJ Kool Herc, often cited as the father of hip-hop, played a pivotal role in developing a distinct sound and technique of cutting breaks in his DJ sets in the Bronx. Afrika Bambaataa was a key figure in the evolution of hip-hop in the late 70s and early 80s, promoting the five pillars of hip-hop culture and launching the influential Universal Zulu Nation. Grandmaster Flash, an innovative DJ known for his groundbreaking scratching technique, played an essential role in shaping hip-hop music as part of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, and also introduced social commentary into the lyrical content. As hip-hop has evolved, various producers have pushed the boundaries for the genre and contributed unique elements to the sound: Dr. Dre, a founding member of N.W.A., has been a defining force in West Coast hip-hop, helping to popularize the Gangsta Rap genre and establish the G-funk sound of the 90s through his work with artists like Snoop Dogg and Tupac Shakur. J Dilla, an influential producer whose innovative sampling techniques and innovative sound have inspired a new generation of beatmakers. His collaborations with acts such as A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, and Erykah Badu have left a lasting impact on hip-hop. Kanye West, acclaimed as both a rapper and a producer, is known for blending various genres, such as soul, electronic, and gospel, into his production style, resulting in an ever-evolving sound that has influenced countless artists since his rise to fame. Hip-hop has been home to many gifted lyricists, storytellers, and wordsmiths who have made their mark on the genre through their technical prowess and emotionally resonant messages: Nas, often regarded as one of the all-time greats in hip-hop, is a poetic storyteller with introspective lyrics that reflect on his upbringing and the world around him. His classic debut album, Illmatic, remains a touchstone for aspiring lyricists. Lauryn Hill, a powerful voice in hip-hop both as a member of The Fugees and as a solo artist, has beautifully demonstrated her adept storytelling skills and ability to connect with listeners through her passionate, socially conscious lyrics. Kendrick Lamar, a modern-day icon in hip-hop, is known for his thought-provoking and introspective lyricism. His deeply personal and profound storytelling shines through on critically acclaimed albums like To Pimp a Butterfly and DAMN., exploring race, politics, and self-reflection themes. Hip-hop has four core elements, which are considered its pillars: Deejaying (turntabling), Rapping (MCing or rhyming), Graffiti painting (graf or writing), and Breakdancing (B-boying). Each of these elements contributes to the culture and unique style of hip-hop. The founding figures of hip-hop include DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash. DJ Kool Herc is credited for developing the breakbeat DJing style; Afrika Bambaataa helped define the cultural elements and promoted social awareness. Grandmaster Flash played a significant role in innovating DJ techniques and turntablism. Hip-hop originated in the early 1970s in the Bronx, New York City, as a cultural movement among African Americans and Latino youths. It began with block parties and neighborhood gatherings, where DJs played groove-based funk and soul music. Over time, the music evolved to incorporate other elements, such as rapping and breakdancing, leading to the development of the complete hip-hop culture. Hip-hop is culturally significant because it is a powerful platform for marginalized communities to express their struggles, aspirations, and achievements. It has been influential in promoting social and political awareness, fostering unity among diverse groups, and providing a means for people to connect with their roots and heritage. Additionally, it has influenced various art forms and revolutionized mainstream music, fashion, and entertainment industries. Some key hip-hop styles include Old School, Golden Age, Gangsta Rap, Alternative Hip-Hop, and Trap. Old School refers to the early days of hip-hop, characterized by simple beats and party-themed lyrics. The Golden Age (late 1980s to mid-1990s) showcased more complex lyricism and diverse sampling. Gangsta Rap focuses on themes of street life, crime, and violence. Alternative Hip-Hop incorporates varied influences, while Trap features aggressive lyrical content and heavy synthetic beats. Hip-hop has evolved from its humble beginnings to its current dominance in pop culture. Initially, it was primarily focused on party music and dancing. However, as it progressed into the Golden Age, it diversified stylistically and lyrically, addressing social and political issues. The rise of Gangsta Rap and commercialization shifted hip-hop towards materialism and party-centric themes. In recent years, its evolution has embraced various sub-genres and styles in mainstream and underground scenes, showcasing fresh lyrical themes and innovative production techniques.

Hip Hop's roots sink deep into the cultural history of Black and Latinx communities in the United States. Born from a desire to express, challenge, and communicate, it swiftly grew from neighborhood block parties into a global phenomenon. The genre's foundations rest upon five pillars: Emceeing, DJing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, and Knowledge. As we continue to celebrate Hip Hop's 50th anniversary, we're taking a look at the five core pillars of the genre that shape the culture we see today. A JZ Microphones GTR1 microphone, taken on July 20, 2015. (Photo by Joby Sessions/Guitarist Magazine/Future via Getty Images) The heartbeat of Hip Hop, emceeing is an art of "Rhythm And Poetry." Rappers started as crowd hype masters at parties, eventually evolving into lyrically adept poets. From the political wordplay of Public Enemy to the introspective storytelling of Kendrick Lamar, emceeing remains a powerful force in Hip Hop. Of course, as the culture shifts from one generation to the next, rap styles change with the times. These days, rappers are the primary faces of Hip Hop, but DJs play an intricate role in boosting the culture into a global phenomenon. American DJ Kool Herc (born Clive Campbell) performs with DJ Jerry Dee (left) at the '40th Anniversary of Hip-Hop Culture' concert at Central Park SummerStage, New York, New York, August 10, 2013. (Photo by Jack Vartoogian/Getty Images) DJing is the canvas upon which Hip Hop paints its vibrant stories. DJ Kool Herc, often dubbed "The Father of Hip Hop," revolutionized music mixing in the '70s, laying the groundwork for today's turntablism. The DJ's role isn't merely playing tracks - it's about curating a journey through beats and rhythms, as legends like Grandmaster Flash exemplify. ROME, ITALY - NOVEMBER 11: (EDITORIAL USE ONLY) In this handout image provided by Red Bull, Jong Ho "Leon" Kim of Korea performs as the other B-Boys watch on during a video production prior to this weekend's Red Bull BC One breakdancing world final, on November 11, 2015 in Rome, Italy. (Photo by Dean Treml/Red Bull via Getty Images) Breakdancing, or b-boying, combines acrobatics, dance, and raw street style into a kinetic showcase. It originated among the youth of the South Bronx, becoming Hip Hop's physical manifestation. From the Rock Steady Crew's theatrics to the contemporary prowess of the Jabbawockeez, breakdancing continues to mesmerize audiences. Artists often create music for the purpose of creating dance crazes, but at Hip Hop's inception, breakdancers were a highlight. Hip-hop fashion relating to graffiti art, New York, New York, June 28, 1975. (Photo by Allan Tannenbaum/Getty Images) Graffiti, once dismissed as mere vandalism, has emerged as a visually striking pillar of Hip Hop. Artists like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat used city walls as their canvas, echoing the genre's vibrant, subversive voice. Graffiti Art continues to push boundaries, immortalizing the essence of Hip Hop's resistance. You can still see its mark in neighborhoods around the world as artists take to the streets to shine a light on the culture. UNSPECIFIED - CIRCA 1980: Photo of KRS-One (Photo by David Corio/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images) Knowledge, the fifth element of Hip Hop, underpins the other four. It's about understanding the genre's history, culture, and social impact. KRS-One, an advocate for Knowledge as a Hip Hop pillar, asserts that it fosters wisdom and self-awareness among Hip Hop enthusiasts, making it as integral as the beats, rhymes, dances, and art. The five elements of Hip Hop are interlocked pieces in a dynamic cultural puzzle. From the streets of New York to the global stage, these pillars show Hip Hop's transformative power and enduring influence. Through them, Hip Hop continues to resonate, challenge, and inspire.