

Rap unwrapped

Rap is defined as talking in rhyme to the rhythm of a beat

But where did it come from and how did it start...?

The legacy began when Jamaican born DJ Kool Herc moved to New York in the late 1960's and brought with him the Jamaican tradition of "toasting". He used twin turntables and cut back and forth between records and would chant things like "Throw your hands in the air/And wave 'em like ya just don't care!". This type of crowd pleaser chant was known as "rapping" to the crowd and the person chanting to the crowd was known as an MC, or Master of Ceremonies.

Grand Wizard Theodore was the first DJ to scratch, through an accidental discovery! Playing his music too loud during a practice session, while his mother was yelling, he held back the record and it began to move back and forth, giving a new sound through earphones. And all because his mum told him off!

Rap, in the form we know it today, was born in the early 1970s in the neighbourhoods of the South Bronx, New York. Gifted teenagers with plenty of imagination but little cash extracted rhythms and melodies from existing records and mixed them up with poetry about life in the neighbourhood. Then it was known as 'hip-hop'.

The Sugarhill Gang's Rappers Delight in 1979 is widely held as the first rap single. Although initially it was regarded by many as little more than a novelty hit it went on to become an international hit and the best selling 12-inch record of all time!

Rap came into its own in the 1980's with lots of rap record labels springing up and new styles being introduced. Rap even met rock when Run DMC, one of the biggest early Rap acts, added rock guitars to the beats and collaborated with massive rock band Aerosmith on their huge hit, 'Walk This Way'.

Style and fashion have always been an important element of rap. RUN D.M.C made their street style of gold chains and sportswear a huge part of their image. They even dedicated a record to their shoes, called 'My Adidas' and were the first band to be sponsored by a clothing company.

Sampling other songs is a huge part of rap music. As a result, organisations have been set up to pay the original musicians for their material. Now, the average rap album costs an extra \$30,000 just to pay for the samples!

Make your own rap

Top rapper, Shystie, says:

"A lot of rappers tend to rap about anger, cars and bling, but here's a chance to make rapping more imaginative by talking about better things.

It's heavy to know that just by rhyming we can make big or small changes in this world and being a part of Fairtrade is definitely one of them. I'm more than hyped to hearing some heavy beats, flow and content from you guys so hey lets see what ya got!"

Shystie's top tips

- 👂 Work on the projection of your voice. You want to be heard.
- 👂 Practise your clarity. Make sure that people understand what you are saying and try not to slur your words.
- 👂 Keep your lyrics relevant to the subject. Try and stick to ideas, stories and don't chat rubbish! For your rap to mean something to people, it has to mean something to you first.
- 👂 Try out different rhyme patterns and flows – you need to be diverse and original.
- 👂 Practise... practise... practise.

Now start writing your rap.

Here are some words and phrases to start you off:

- 👂 Respect
- 👂 Justice
- 👂 Power
- 👂 Fairtrade Flava
- 👂 Shout out for Fairtrade
- 👂 Power in your pocket
- 👂 Everybody wins
- 👂 Choice makes change
- 👂 It's time to rearrange
- 👂 What's your Flava?
- 👂 What's your taste?
- 👂 Who has the power?
- 👂 Who gets a say?
- 👂 Who wins?
- 👂 Who loses?
- 👂 Say Papapaa