

It's a Rap

Year 4

Summer 1

Unit Overview

Lesson One - An Introduction to Rap

- In this scheme we introduce the children to 'Rap' music.
- Start by asking the children what they think 'rap' music is? Where do they think it came from? When did it start?
- Then continue the lesson by playing the 'Examples of Rap' video. This gives three snippets of famous rap songs. 'Rappers Delight' by the Sugarhill Gang, 'Lose Yourself' by Eminem and 'Me, Myself and I' by De La Soul. Explain that each piece has a different message it is trying to relay and has a different emotional feel it is trying to give its audience. 'Rappers Delight' is a very early example of rapping in action and uses a funk, soul groove. The lyrics are upbeat and are made to encourage dancing and audience participation. 'Lose Yourself' has an affronted energy using rage and fury to ignite a feeling of the pursuit of accomplishment and achievement. 'Me, Myself and I' is a pop-style rap that introduces the feeling of 'Holding Your Own' and 'Looking After Yourself'. Not feeling you have live in other peoples shoes.
- Let the children discuss the songs they have heard. Which do they like? Why? Which don't they like as much? Why? What do each of the raps have in common?
- Hand out the 'Introduction Reading Material' sheets. Let the children read through the information. Once the children have read through, hand out an 'Introduction Worksheet' to each child. This is a comprehension exercise so they need to use the information sheet to find the correct answers, including the names of the famous Rappers.

Lesson Two - Knowledge is Power

- To start the lesson, recap the work children did on 'Rap' music in the previous lesson. Ask some questions to jog the children's memories and play the 'Rap Examples' video again.
- Today the children will learn an original Rap I have written for this scheme. 'Knowledge is Power' is a Rap song that looks at the everyday life of a Primary school child, soaking up information each day in multiple different disciplines.
- Play the song and then ask the children about the different elements of the song on it's completion. The Chorus is sung, the verses are performed as a Rap. What rhyming words can the children remember? What instruments were being used in the background? What subjects were mentioned and which subjects do the children enjoy the most?
- Spend the rest of the lesson learning the different sections of the song. Maybe start with the chorus and then move on to the Rap sections, making sure that the children are getting the timing of the lyrics with the track and emphasising the rhyming words at the end of lines.
- Ask the children to look out for sections where multiple rhymes are heard in one line. This is a technique that Lin Manuel Miranda likes to use in his Hip-Hop Musicals In the Heights and Hamilton. For example, the line "**Music**, I can **use it**, shake my Maracas to a Motown **Groove it...**" has Three Rhymes! "Music - Use It and Groove It". How does this technique make it easier for the singer to learn?
- Once the children have practices see if the class can sing the whole song through with the video. Print out the PDF lyrics so each child can see the words clearly.
- If you have time, you could invite children to have a go at rapping solo sections or in small groups.

Lesson Three - Knowledge is Power - Tuned Percussion

- In this lesson the children will learn tuned percussion as an accompaniment to the Rap 'Knowledge is Power'.
- To start let the children sing the song through in it's entirety. Remind them to emphasise the rhyming words and feel the rhythm of the beat to help keep the rapping of the lyrics in time.
- Show the children the 'Knowledge is Power - Tuned Percussion' video. What has been added to the video. Can the children work out what the 'Coloured Vinyl' means at the bottom? And why the record are dropping from the top of the screen. I have made this video to allow the children to play Tuned Percussion along with the song. As the notes falls to the bottom of the page the player must play their instrument precisely as the Vinyl glows yellow. This will keep them in time.
- Start by handing each child one of the notes. They could use chime bars, boomwhackers, hand bells etc. I'd avoid using Xylophones or Glockenspiels at this point at these have multiple notes that would need removing or displacing and this can get rather convoluted!
- When each child has got a note to play, start the video and let them play along, making sure that the children keep to the beat of the music by playing their note at just the right time!
- As the lesson moves on, let children try more than one note at a time. This is easy to do with chime bars, xylophones and glockenspiels, however, with regards to Boomwhackers, the children would need to use two at a time and strike them on the floor. I would lessen the children playing as you do this so you can really focus on who is doing particularly well. Maybe work in groups of 6/10 at a time. Make sure the other children are following the music and ask them to follow two or three notes and tap their knee each time their note should be played. Each child in the class can be engaged, even when they don't have a percussion instrument in their hand.
- At the end of the lesson, you could ask a few children to try and play all of the notes. They will need a full set of chime bars to do this. Or they can use a xylophones or glockenspiel.

Lesson Four - The Rap Maker

- Today, the children will learn the song 'The Rap Maker'. In this song the children get to rap, but also they have to work out the final word of the 2nd and 4th lines, using rhyming and rhythmic skills.
- Play the 'Rap Maker' video. Encourage the children to pay particular attention to the 'red' words. Why are the words coloured in red so important? They are the words that are made to rhyme in time with the music.
- Hand out the three PDF's below the song. The three sheets show the lyrics, however, like in the video, the last word is missing on the 2nd and 4th lines. Can the children fill in the missing words. Let them fill in the sheets and then play the track again so the children can have a go with finishing the lyrics.
- Next, play the 'Rap Maker - Answer' video. Did the children get the rhyming words correct? Try rapping along with the whole song.
- To finish the lesson, play the 'Rap Maker Composition Exercise' video and let the children try and work out what they will be doing in the next lesson.

Lesson Five - The Rap Maker Rhyme and Rhythm

- Today, the children be creating their own lyrics for sections of the Rap Maker song.
- Firstly, they will work on creating their own rhyming words for the ends of the 2nd and 4th line. Hand out the 'Rhyme Worksheets' on the left hand side of the Composition video. Here, the children will get to create four rhyming words for the ends of each line. The first word they need to find a rhyme for is 'Breeze'. So let the children think of four rhyming words such as: 'Fleas' 'Ease' 'Cheese' 'Please'. They then move onto the next rhyming word, finding rhymes for 'Tock'. For example: 'Block' 'Sock' 'Shock' 'Rock'.
- Let the children fill in rhyming words for each of the three worksheets.
- The children will notice these words will not work for the 2nd and 4th lines of the original song, anymore. The next task is for the children to fill in the full lines of 2 and 4 with their new words creating the rhyme. This is particularly tricky because of the rhythm that the children will now need to focus on.

- Let the children see the 'Rap Maker Composition' video again and they will notice that their line needs to be 4 beats long, with the final beat using their new rhyming word. So really, they only have 3 beats to make up the first part of the line. Here is an example:
 - If the child has chosen 'Cheese' as their rhyming word for the 2nd line and 'Rock' for the 4th line, they now need to make the new words work in a new sentence.
 - Line 1 - Let's begin. It's a Breeze
 - Line 2 - My rhyme goes together like Tomato and Cheese
 - Line 3 - My woodblock's tapping with a tick and a tock
 - Line 4 - The snare drum's roll and the Bass Drums rock!

OR

- Line 1 - Let's begin. It's a breeze
- Line 2 - I make my rhymes with particular ease
- Line 3 - My woodblock's tapping with a tick and a tock
- Line 4 - My toes are tapping as I'm walking round the block.

The challenge in this part of the lesson (and the final lesson) is for the children to understand the importance of rhythmic beat in rap music. They don't want to make their sentence too long for the beat. For example, for line 4 they couldn't write 'I'm walking on the street with my best friends who really rock'. Because they would not be able to fit these words into the beat of the song.

Let the children use whiteboards to try and create some lines that might work. Explain that they will write these onto the composition sheets in the next lesson. This lesson is just a chance to try some ideas out.

Lesson Six - Rap Compositions

- To finish the unit the children will complete their rap compositions.
- Hand out the 3 compositions worksheets on the right hand side of the video. Allow children plenty of time to think of creative lines to fill in line 2 and 4 of each verse.
- As the children work, let some ideas be attempted out loud for the class to hear. This might help inspire other class members who are finding the task a little tricky. If you, as the teacher could also think of some suggestions this might help.
- Encourage the children to use short sentences and feel the beat of the song as they are writing. And remember, they need to try and make the sentence make sense!
- At the end, let the children see the two wonderful songs written by MC Grammar. He is a Primary School teacher who creates rap songs to help inspire children in the classroom.