

# The history of hip hop



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Introduction Hip hop music is a style of popular music. It is usually composed of two elements: rapping (also known as emceeing) and DJing. When combined with break dancing and graffiti art, these are the four components of hip hop, a cultural movement which began in New York City in the 1970s, predominantly by African Americans and Latinos.[1] The term rap music is sometimes used synonymously with hip hop music, though it is also used to refer specifically to the practice of rapping.

Origins of hip hop The roots of hip hop are found in West African and African-American music. The griots of West Africa are a group of traveling singers and poets, whose musical style is reminiscent of hip hop. Within New York City, griot-like performances of poetry and music by artists such as The Last Poets and Jalal Mansur Nuriddin had a great impact on the post-civil rights era culture of the 1960s and 1970s. Hip hop arose during the 1970s when block parties became common in New York City, especially the Bronx. Block parties were usually accompanied by music, especially funk and soul music. The early DJs at block parties began isolating the percussion breaks to hit songs, realizing that these were the most dance-able and entertaining parts; this technique was then common in Jamaica and had spread via the substantial Jamaican immigrant community in New York City, especially the "godfather" of hip hop, DJ Kool Herc. Dub had arisen in Jamaica due to the influence of American sailors and radio stations playing R&B. Large sound systems were set up to accommodate poor Jamaicans, who couldn't afford to buy records, and dub developed at the sound system. Herc was one of the most popular DJs in early 70s New York, and he quickly switched from using reggae records to funk, rock and, later, disco, since the New York audience did not particularly like reggae. Because the percussive breaks were generally short,

Herc and other DJs began extending them using an audio mixer and two records. Mixing and scratching techniques eventually developed along with the breaks. (The same techniques contributed to the popularization of remixes.) Later DJs such as Grandmaster Flash refined and developed the use of breakbeats, including cutting.[citation needed] As in dub, performers began speaking while the music played; these were originally called MCs; Herc focused primarily on DJing, and began working with two MCs, Coke La Rock and Clark Kent-this was the first emcee crew, Kool Herc & the Herculoids. Originally, these early rappers focused on introducing themselves and others in the audience (the origin of the still common practice of " shouting out" on hip hop records). These early performers often emceed for hours at a time, with some improvisation and a simple four-count beat, along with a basic chorus to allow the performer to gather his thoughts (such as " one, two, three, y'all, to the beat, y'all"). Later, the MCs grew more varied in their vocal and rhythmic approach, incorporating brief rhymes, often with a sexual or scatological theme, in an effort at differentiating themselves and entertaining the audience. These early raps incorporated similar rhyming lyrics from African American culture (see roots of hip hop music), such as the dozens. While Kool Herc & the Herculoids were the first hip hoppers to gain major fame in New York, more emcee teams quickly sprouted up. Frequently, these were collaborations between former gang members, such as Afrikaa Bambaataa's Universal Zulu Nation (now a large, international organization). Melle Mel, a rapper/lyricist with The Furious Five is often credited with being the first rap lyricist to call himself an " MC."

During the early 1970s, break dancing arose during block parties, as b-boys and b-girls got in front of the audience to dance in a distinctive, frenetic

style. The style was documented for release to a world wide audience for the first time in Beat Street. Origin of The Term " Hip Hop" Coinage of the term hip hop is often credited to Keith Cowboy, a rapper with Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five. Though Lovebug Starski, Keith Cowboy, and DJ Hollywood used the term when the music was still known as disco rap, it is believed that Cowboy created the term while teasing a friend who had just joined the US Army, by scat singing the words " hip/hop/hip/hop" in a way that mimicked the rhythmic cadence of marching soldiers. Cowboy later worked the " hip hop" cadence into a part of his stage performance, which was quickly copied by other artists; for example the opening of the song " Rapper's Delight" by The Sugarhill Gang. Former Black Spades gang member Afrika Bambaataa is credited with first using the term to describe the subculture that hip hop music belongs to, although it is also suggested that the term was originally derisively used against the new type of music. Diversification of styles in the later part of the decade In the mid-1970s, hip hop split into two factions. One sampled disco and focused on getting the crowd dancing and excited, with simple or no rhymes; these DJs included Pete DJ Jones, Eddie Cheeba, DJ Hollywood and Love Bug Starski. On the other hand, another group were focusing on rapid-fire rhymes and a more complex rhythmic scheme. These included Afrika Bambaataa, Paul Winley, Grandmaster Flash and Bobby Robinson. As the 70s became the 1980s, many felt that hip hop was a novelty fad that would soon die out. This was to become a constant accusation for at least the next fifteen years. Some of the earliest rappers were novelty acts, using the themes to Gilligan's Island and using sweet doo wop-influenced harmonies. With the advent of recorded hip hop in the late 1970s, all the major elements and techniques of the genre were in place.

Though not yet mainstream, it was well-known among African Americans, even outside of New York City; hip hop could be found in cities as diverse as Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Baltimore, Dallas, Kansas City, Miami, Seattle, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Houston. Philadelphia was, for many years, the only city whose contributions to hip hop were valued as greatly as New York City's by hip hop purists and critics. Hip hop was popular there at least as far back as 1976 (first record: " Rhythm Talk", by Jocko Henderson in 1979), and the New York Times dubbed Philly the " Graffiti Capital of the World" in 1971, due to the influence of such legendary graffiti artists as Cornbread. The first female solo artist to record hip hop was Lady B. (" To the Beat Y'All", 1980), a Philly-area radio DJ. Later Schoolly D helped invent what became known as gangsta rap. The 1980s The 1980s saw intense diversification in hip hop, which developed into a more complex form. The simple tales of 1970s emcees were replaced by highly metaphoric lyrics rapping over complex, multi-layered beats. Some rappers even became mainstream pop performers, including Kurtis Blow, whose appearance in a Sprite commercial made him the first hip hop musician to be considered mainstream enough to represent a major product, but also the first to be accused by the hip-hop audience of selling out. Another popular performer among mainstream audiences was LL Cool J, who was a success from the release of his first LP, Radio. Hip hop was almost entirely unknown outside of the United States prior to the 1980s. During that decade, it began its spread to every inhabited continent and became a part of the music scene in dozens of countries. In the early part of the decade, breakdancing became the first aspect of hip hop culture to reach Germany, Japan and South Africa, where the crew Black Noise established the practice before beginning to rap later in the decade.

Meanwhile, recorded hip hop was released in France (Dee Nasty's 1984 Paname City Rappin') and the Philippines (Dyords Javier's "Na Onseong Delight" and Vincent Dafalong's "Nunal"). In Puerto Rico, Vico C became the first Spanish language rapper, and his recorded work was the beginning of what became known as reggaeton. Politicization The first rap records (Fatback Band's King Tim III, Grandmaster Flash's "Super Rappin'" and The Sugarhill Gang's Rapper's Delight) were actually recorded by live musicians in the studio, with the rappers adding their vocals later. This changed with DJ records such as Grandmaster Flash's "Adventures on the Wheels of Steel" (known for pioneering use of scratching, which was invented by Grandwizard Theodore in 1977) as well as electronic recordings such as "Planet Rock" by Afrika Bambaataa and Run DMC's very basic, all electronic "Sucker MC's" and "Peter Piper" which contains genuine cutting by Run DMC member Jam Master Jay. These early innovators were based out of New York City, which remained the capital of hip hop during the 1980s. This style became known as East Coast hip hop. Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five released a "message rap", called "The Message", in 1982; this was one of the earliest examples of recorded hip hop with a socially aware tone. In 1984, Marley Marl accidentally caught a drum machine snare hit in the sampler; this innovation was vital in the development of electro and other later types of hip hop. Popularization The mid-1980s saw a flourishing of the first hip hop artists to achieve mainstream success, such as Kurtis Blow (Kurtis Blow), LL Cool J (Radio) and especially Run-D. M. C. (Raising Hell), as well as influences in mainstream music, such as Blondie's Debbie Harry rapping in the first non-black hit to feature rapping, "Rapture". LL Cool J's Radio spawned a number of singles that entered the dance charts, peaking with "I Can Give You More"

(#21). 1986 saw two hip hop acts in the Billboard Top Ten; Run-D. M. C.'s "Walk This Way" collaboration with Aerosmith, and the Beastie Boys "(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (To Party!)". The pop success of both singles was unheard of for the time; "Walk This Way" has proved especially memorable for its early mixture of hip hop and rock (though it was not the first such mixture), and it peaked at an unheard of #4 on the pop charts. Also, the mid-1980s saw the rise of the first major black female group, Salt-N-Pepa, who hit the charts with singles like "The Show Stoppa" in 1985. Ice-T's seminal "6n' Da Mornin'" (1986) is one of the first nationally successful West Coast hip hop singles, and is often said to be the beginning of gangsta hip hop (along with Schoolly D, LL Cool J and N. W. A.). In 1987, Public Enemy brought out their debut album (Yo! Bum Rush the Show) on Def Jam - one of hip hop's oldest and most important labels, and Boogie Down Productions followed up in 1988 with By All Means Necessary; both records pioneered wave of hard-edged politicized performers. The late 1980s saw a flourishing of like-minded rappers on both coasts, and Public Enemy's It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back became surprisingly successful, despite its militant and confrontational tone, appearing on both the club and rap charts, and peaking at #17 and #11, respectively. Aside from the lyrical innovations, Public Enemy's Terminator X (along with Eric B., of Eric B. & Rakim) pioneered new techniques in sampling that resulted in dense, multi-layered sonic collages. The Rise of Gangsta Rap The first gangsta rap album to become a mainstream pop hit, selling more than 2.5 million copies, was N. W. A.'s Straight Outta Compton (1988). N. W. A.'s controversial subject matter, including drugs, violence and sex, helped popularize what became known as gangsta rap (said to have begun with Ice-T's "6N' Da Morning").

Specifically, the song "F\*\*\* Tha Police" earned the foursome the enmity of law enforcement, resulting in a strongly-worded letter of discontent from the FBI. N. W. A.'s most lasting impact, however, was placing the West Coast on the hip hop map. Diversification Though women, whites and Latinos had long been a part of the hip hop scene, it was not until the 1980s that groups other than young African American males began creating popular, innovative and distinctive styles of hip hop music. The first rap recording by a solo female was Philadelphia-based Lady B.'s "To the Beat, Y'All" (1980), while The Sequence became the first female group to record. It was, not, however, until Salt-N-Pepa in the middle of the decade that female performers gained mainstream success. The first groups to mix hip hop and heavy metal included 1984's "Rock Box" (Run-D. M. C.) and "Rock Hard" (Beastie Boys). Later in the decade, Ice-T and Anthrax were among the most innovative mixers of thrash metal and hip hop. These fusions helped move hip hop into new audiences, and introduced it to legions of new fans in the States and abroad. International spread Beginning in the early 1980s, hip hop culture began its spread across the world. By the end of the 1990s, popular hip hop was sold almost everywhere, and native performers were recording in most every country with a popular music industry. Elements of hip hop became fused with numerous styles of music, including ragga, cumbia and samba, for example. The Senegalese mbalax rhythm became a component of hip hop, while the United Kingdom and Belgium produced a variety of electronic music fusions of hip hop, most famously including British trip hop. Hip hop also spread to countries like Greece, Spain and Cuba in the 1980s, led in Cuba by the self-exiled African American activist Nehanda Abiodun and aided by Fidel Castro's government. In Japan, graffiti art and breakdancing had



been popular since the early part of the decade, but many of those active in the scene felt that the Japanese language was unsuited for rapping; nevertheless, by the beginning of the 1990s, a wave of rappers emerged, including Ito Seiko, Chikado Haruo, Tinnie Punx and Takagi Kan. The New Zealand hip hop scene began in earnest in the late 1980s, when Maori performers like Upper Hutt Posse and Dalvanius Prime began recording, gaining notoriety for lyrics that espoused tino rangatiratanga (Maori sovereignty). The 1990s In the 90s, gangsta rap became mainstream, beginning in about 1992, with the release of Dr. Dre's *The Chronic*. This album established a style called G Funk, which soon came to dominate West Coast hip hop. Later in the decade, record labels based out of Atlanta, St. Louis and New Orleans gained fame for their local scenes. By the end of the decade, especially with the success of Eminem, hip hop was an integral part of popular music, and nearly all American pop songs had a major hip hop component. The rise of the West Coast After N. W. A. broke up, Dr. Dre (a former member) released *The Chronic* (1992), which peaked at #1 on the R&B/hip hop chart and #3 on the pop chart and spawned a #2 pop single in "Nothin' But a 'G' Thang".. *The Chronic* took West Coast rap in a new direction, influenced strongly by P funk artists, melding the psychedelic funky beats with slowly drawled lyrics–this came to be known as G funk, and dominated mainstream hip hop for several years through a roster of artists on Death Row Records, including most popularly, Snoop Doggy Dogg, whose *Doggystyle* included "What's My Name" and "Gin and Juice", both Top Ten pop hits. Though West Coast artists eclipsed New York, some East Coast rappers achieved success. New York became dominated in terms of sales by Puff Daddy (*No Way Out*), Mase (*Harlem World*) and other Bad Boy Records

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artists, in spite of often scathing criticism for a perceived over-reliance on sampling and a general watered-down sound, aimed directly for pop markets. Other New York based artists continued with a harder edged sound, achieving only limited popular success. Nas (*Illmatic*), Busta Rhymes (*The Coming*) and The Wu-Tang Clan (*Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*), for example, received excellent reviews but generally mediocre or sporadic sales. The sales rivalry between the East Coast and the West Coast eventually turned into a personal rivalry, aided in part by the music media. Many reporters were not aware that MC battles were an integral part of hip hop since its inception, and that, generally, little was meant by open taunts on albums and in performances. Nevertheless, the East Coast-West Coast rivalry grew, eventually resulting in the still unsolved deaths of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B. I. G... Diversification of styles In the wake of declining sales following the deaths of both superstar artists, the sounds of hip hop were greatly diversified. Most important was the rise of Southern rap, starting with OutKast (*ATLiens*) and Goodie Mob (*Soul Food*), based out of Atlanta. Later, Master P (*Ghetto D*) built up an impressive roster of popular artists (the No Limit posse) based out of New Orleans and incorporating G funk and Miami bass influences, and distinctive regional sounds from St. Louis, Chicago, Washington D. C., Detroit (ghettotech) and others began to gain some popularity. Also in the 1990s, rapcore (a fusion of hip hop and heavy metal) became popular among mainstream audiences. Rage against the Machine, Linkin Park and Limp Bizkit were among the most popular rapcore bands. Though Caucasian rappers like the Beastie Boys (*Paul's Boutique*), Vanilla Ice (*To the Extreme*) and 3rd Bass (*The Cactus Album*) had had some popular success and/or critical acceptance from the hip hop community, Detroit-

native Eminem's success, beginning in 1999 with the triple platinum The Slim Shady LP, came as a surprise to many. Like most successful hip hop artists of the time, Eminem came to be criticized for alleged glorification of violence, misogyny, and drug abuse, as well as homophobia and albums laced with constant profanity.

2000s In the year 2000, The Marshall Mathers LP by Eminem sold over nine million copies in the United States, and Nelly's debut LP, Country Grammar, sold over six million copies. In the next several years, a wave of increasingly pop-oriented R&B crossover acts, like Ja Rule and Destiny's Child, dominated American popular music. It was not until the sudden breakthrough success of the hard-edged 50 Cent that hardcore hip hop returned to the pop charts. The United States also saw the rise of alternative hip hop in the form of moderately popular performers like The Roots, Dilated Peoples and Mos Def, who achieved unheard-of success for their field. Some countries, like Tanzania, maintained popular acts of their own in the early 2000s, though many others produced few home-grown stars, instead following American trends. Scandinavian, especially Danish and Swedish, performers became well known outside of their country, while hip hop continued its spread into new lands, including Russia, Japan, Philippines, Canada and China.

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