

# Rap's controversy



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Rap's Controversy The most popular new music to emerge from the ' 80's was rap music. It first developed in the mid ' 70's in New York City, and soon in other urban areas, primarily amongst African-American teen-agers. It became very popular with the urban public that it soon began to spread throughout the United States and much of the world. It replaced rock music as the creative force in music of the ' 80's and ' 90's. However, as popular as it was then and it is now, the lyrics of many rap songs have caused controversy. Many believe and have charged that these lyrics promote racism and violence and show contempt for women. Those in the mainstream have long considered rap music controversial. However its controversy escalated to a whole new level when the world was introduced to " Gangsta Rap," where violent acts and suggestions are graphically portrayed (yale). The notorious rap group responsible for the introduction of gangsta rap was NWA (bomp). Gangsta rap has been criticized and debated over for its graphic sexual content, and violent imagery (yale). The lyrics in many songs contain violent and explicit lyrics that usually talk about killing someone along with sounds of gunshots in the background. Gangsta rap also talks about drug use and portrays negative attitudes toward women, especially black women. The artists refer to women as, " bitches," " whores" and sex dispensing " hoes." On the contrary there is a nice sideeffect to controversy; you can use it to get a message across and most importantly it sales records, just like NWA, Ice-T, Public Enemy, and the 2 live crew soon discovered early on in their time. Today most young people think that if a person is rich and famous, they can get away with anything. They see rappers get charged with felonies and then they see that the charges get dropped. They've heard of celebrities running over children while drunk and

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get away with it without doing any time. However, not all rappers have run-ins with the law, but the ones that do are very well known. Tupac Shakur (RIP), for example, had many run-ins with the law. He was arrested for aggravated assault, and charged with shooting two off duty police officers in Atlanta in 1993, but the charges were later dropped (bomp). He was also accused of beating a limousine driver in Los Angeles and found guilty of threatening a fellow rapper with a baseball bat in Michigan (bomp). He was then found guilty of sexual abuse in 1994 and was serving time up to 4 ½ years in prison (bomp). In many of his lyrics he glamorized the life of a gangster and fun gunplay. " He lived the life tattooed on his stomach, thug life, and died doing it (bomp)." The main reason why rap is so controversial is because of the vulgar language and absolute disrespect for the public. Rap lyrics mainly focus on sex, money, drugs, and power. G-unit, for example has a strong influence on young adults. They constantly rap about hustling (selling drugs), sex, getting robbed and going after the perpetrators, life in the hood, money, cars, and the everyday struggles they went through to get by in life. Many people believe that by listening to rap the weak minded and gullible teens will listen to it and absorb it and think that this is the way to live to achieve acceptance and maybe even the glitz and glamour that the rappers ended up having. A main concern about rap is also the way the rappers express themselves about women. They look at them as tools and sex toys with no thoughts or feelings. They parade them around their videos wearing barely there clothing and high stiletto heels. You see stripper poles and women giving men lap dances, you see them lying in bed wearing thongs, shaking their booty and degrading themselves just to be in a rap music video. These are the video girls that young teens want to look like and

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be. These are the rappers that young boys want to become and those are the video girls they want to be surrounded by. Some Radio stations are now refusing to play gangsta rap. Women's groups are lobbying against it, and female rappers like Queen Latifah have questioned the negative names used and attitudes directed toward black women (Yale). Who knows where rap will go from here? Even with so much negative response by the public, the music will still be bought and played. Many songs become popular without even getting aired by popular radio stations, but rather receive play in clubs and on college radio stations. People will always be pushing music to the limits and extremes. Rappers will say their music has no effect on people's behavior, but rather, it shows life in America today and what kids have to do to get respect. Others will disagree and say it has a bad impact on behavior because it shows a lack of respect for life, especially when the music content involves killing people (Yale). Still, given what's going on in the black community it's easy to pick out the music as the cause of so much violence, but the claims people make must be supported with evidence. However, there is no evidence that gangsta rap is the cause of problems in the urban community; therefore rap will still continue to hit the air waves and still continue to be the music of choice for the urban community. WORKS CONSULTED ☞ <http://www.yale.edu/ynht/curriculum/units/1993/4/93.04.04.x.html> ☞ Bomp Record label. Bands, news, reviews, history. March 26, 2005. <http://bomp.com> ☞ Constitutional Rights Foundation. Educating Tomorrow's Citizens. The challenge of school Violence: [http://www.crf-usa.org/bria13\\_2.html#music](http://www.crf-usa.org/bria13_2.html#music) ☞ Press Release Newswire. March 26, 2005. <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2004/prwebxm1152022.php>