

# Hip-hop fashion essay sample

[Design](#), [Fashion](#)



## 1-History and Location

### What is Hip-Hop Fashion ?

Hip hop fashion, also known as urban fashion is a distinctive style of dress originating with African American youth on the scene of New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, the San Francisco Bay Area, Detroit, Memphis, Virginia, Atlanta, and St. Louis among others. Each city contributed various elements to its overall style seen worldwide today. Hip hop fashion complements the expressions and attitudes of hip hop culture in general. Hip hop fashion has changed significantly during its history, and today, it is a prominent part of popular fashion as a whole across the world and for all ethnicities. Late 1970s to mid-1980s

Late 1980s to early 1990s fashion

Mid-1990s to late 1990s fashion

Modern Hip Hop fashion

Late 1970s to mid-1980s

In the late 1970s, established sportswear and fashion brands, such as Le Coq Sportif, Kangol, Adidas and Pro-Keds attached themselves to the emerging hip hop scene. During the 1980s, hip-hop icons wore clothing items such as brightly colored name-brand tracksuits, sheepskin and leather bomber jackets,[1] Clarks shoes,[1] Britishers a. k. a. British Walkers and sneakers (usually Pro-Keds, Puma, Converse’s Chuck Taylor All-stars, and Adidas Superstars often with “ phat” or oversized shoelaces). Popular haircuts ranged from the early-1980s Jheri curl to the early-1990s hi-top fade popularized by Will Smith (The Fresh Prince) and Christopher “ Kid” Reid of Kid ‘ n Play, among others. Another trend in hip-hop clothing was pioneered

by Dapper Dan in the early 1980s (est. 1982) with the adaptation and brandishing of high net-worth fashion house brands such as Louis Vuitton, Fendi, and Gucci and logos in custom-designed tracksuits, jackets, mink coats. Popular accessories included large eyeglasses (Cazals[2]), [1] Kangol bucket hats, [1] nameplates, [1] name belts, [1] and multiple rings.

Heavy gold jewelry was also popular in the 1980s; heavy jewelry in general would become an enduring element of hip hop fashion.[3] In general, men's jewelry focused on heavy gold chains and women's jewelry on large gold earrings.[3] Performers such as Kurtis Blow and Big Daddy Kane helped popularize gold necklaces and other such jewelry, and female rappers such as Roxanne Shanté and the group Salt-N-Pepa helped popularize oversized gold door-knocker earrings. The heavy jewelry was suggestive of prestige and wealth, and some have connected the style to Africanism.[4] 1980s hip hop fashion is remembered as one of the most important elements of old school hip hop, and it is often celebrated in nostalgic hip hop songs such as Ahmad's 1994 single "Back in the Day", and Missy Elliott's 2002 single "Back in the Day". Late 1980s to early 1990s fashion

Black nationalism was increasingly influential in rap during the late 1980s, and fashions and hairstyles reflected traditional African influences.[3] Blousy pants were popular among dance-oriented rappers like MC Hammer.[3] Fezzes,[3] kufis decorated with the Kemetic ankh,[3] Kente cloth hats,[3] Africa chains, dreadlocks, and Black Nationalist colors of red, black, and green became popular as well, promoted by artists such as Queen Latifah, KRS-One, Public Enemy, and X-Clan). In the early 1990s, pop rappers such as

The Fresh Prince, Kid ' n Play, and Left Eye of TLC popularized baseball caps and bright, often neon-colored, clothing. TLC and late R&B singer Aaliyah created a fashion trend among women. Wearing over-sized pants and big flannel shirts, they would couple the over-sized clothing with a tight shirt usually a sports bra underneath their big shirts. This was to show their own version of femininity, everything does not have to be form fitting and tight in order to be sexy. Kris Kross also established the fad of wearing clothes backwards.[3] Kwamé sparked the brief trend of polka-dot clothing as well, while others continued wearing their mid-80s attire.

The Nike capture of soon-to-be superstar basketball protege Michael Jordan from rivals Adidas in 1984 proved to be a huge turning point, as Nike dominated the urban streetwear sneaker market in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[citation needed] Other clothing brands such as Reebok, Kangol, Champion, Carhartt, and Timberland were very closely associated with the hip hop scene,[citation needed] particularly on the East coast with hip hop acts such as Wu-Tang Clan and Gangstarr sporting the look. Gangsta rap pioneers N. W. A. popularized an early form of street Gangsta style in the late 1980s from the African American Gangs and Huslter clicks who were there, consisting of Dickies pants, white T-shirts, Locs sunglasses, Chuck Taylors sneakers, with black Raiders baseball caps and Raiders Starter jackets. Starter jackets, in addition, were also a popular trend in their own right during the late 1980s and early 90s.

They became something of a status-symbol, with incidents of robberies of the jackets reported in the media.[citation needed] Hip hop fashion in this

period also influenced high fashion designs. In the late 1980s, Isaac Mizrahi, inspired by his elevator operator who wore a heavy gold chain, showed a collection deeply influenced by hip hop fashion.[5] Models wore black catsuits, “ gold chains, big gold nameplate-inspired belts, and black bomber jackets with fur-trimmed hoods. “[5] Womenswear Daily called the look “ homeboy chic. “[5] In the early 1990s, Chanel showed hip-hop-inspired fashion in several shows. In one, models wore black leather jackets and piles of gold chains.[5] In another, they wore long black dresses, accessorized with heavy, padlocked silver chains.[5] (These silver chains were remarkably similar to the metal chain-link and padlock worn by Treach of Naughty by Nature, who said he did so in solidarity with “ all the brothers who are locked down. “[5]) The hip hop trend, however, did not last; designers quickly moved on to new influences.[5] Mid-1990s to late 1990s fashion

#### Fashion among “ hip hop” elites

On the East Coast, members of the hip hop community looked back to the gangsters of the 1930s and 1940s for inspiration.[6] Mafioso influences, especially and primarily inspired by the 1983 remake version of Scarface, became popular in hip hop. Many rappers set aside gang-inspired clothing in favor of classic gangster fashions such as bowler hats,[6] double-breasted suits,[6] silk shirts,[6] and alligator-skin shoes (“ gators”).

This certain look transcended into the R&B world in the mid 90s when Jodeci came onto the scene, who were crooners but with more edgy and sexual look. By wearing gangster style clothes along with the badboy attitude and being a R&B group they appealed to both men and women. Particularly

known for their baggy clothing, symbolising a hand me down from an older relative of a bigger build as a sign of toughness.

On the East Coast, “ghetto fabulous” fashion (a term coined by Sean Combs) who was responsible for Jodeci’s look was on the rise.[6]

Urban streetwear

Tommy Hilfiger was one of the most prominent brand in 1990s sportswear, though Polo Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Nautica, and DKNY were also popular.[7] When Snoop Doggy Dogg wore a Hilfiger sweatshirt during an appearance on Saturday Night Live, it sold out of New York City stores the next day.[7] Hilfiger’s popularity was due to its perceived waspiness, which made it seem exclusive and aspirational.[7] Moreover, Hilfiger courted the new hip hop market: black models featured prominently in the company’s advertising campaigns, and rappers like Puffy and Coolio walked during its runways shows.[7]

Karl Kani was the first to set the trend of merging hip hop with fashion. By combining his two passions Karl started a whole new fashion movement and many designers followed in his footsteps. Growing up Karl Kani wondered “Can I do it? Can I become the Ralph Lauren of the streets? Karl didn’t have the answer for all these questions but it did provide the basis for his new name, Kani, a variation on “Can I?”. With a stylish “K” replacing the “C” in his first name, he ventured his own optimistic reply, Karl Kani.[8]

Other brands, such as Nike, Jordan, FUBU, Reebok Pro-Keds, Adidas, Ecko Unlimited, Mecca USA, Lugz, Rocawear, harputs by Gus Harput,

Boss Jeans by IG Design, and Enyce, arose to capitalize on the market for urban streetwear.

### Throwback clothing

One sportswear trend that emerged was the rise in popularity of throwback jerseys, such as those produced by Mitchell & Ness. Sports jerseys have always been popular in hip-hop fashion, as evidenced by Will Smith's early 90s video "Summertime", and Spike Lee wearing a throwback Brooklyn Dodgers jersey in the film "Do the Right Thing." The late 90s saw the rise in popularity of very expensive throwbacks, often costing hundreds of dollars. Hip-hop artists donning the pricey jerseys in music videos led to increased demand, and led to the rise of counterfeiters flooding the market with fake jerseys to capitalize on the craze. The mid-to-late 2000s saw a decrease in popularity of throwbacks, with some hip-hop artists even shunning the raiments. In 1990 it was very big part for fashion because of all the hip hop artists that wore the various throwback jerseys.

The "hip-pop" era also saw the split between male and female hip hop fashion, which had previously been more or less similar. Women in hip hop had emulated the male tough-guy fashions such as baggy pants, "Loc" sunglasses, tough looks and heavy workboots; many, such as Da Brat, accomplished this with little more than some lip gloss and a bit of make-up to make the industrial work pants and work boots feminine. The female performers who completely turned the tide such as Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown popularized glamorous, high-fashion feminine hip hop styles, such as Kimora Lee Simmons fashion line of Baby Phat. While Lauryn Hill and Eve

popularized more conservative styles that still maintained both a distinctly feminine and distinctly hip hop feel.

In the mid to late 1990s, platinum replaced gold as the metal of choice in hip hop fashion.[3] Artists and fans alike wore platinum (or silver) jewelry, often embedded with diamonds. Juvenile, and The Hot Boys were largely responsible for this trend.[3] Platinum fronts also became popular; Cash Money Records executive/rapper Brian “ Baby” Williams has an entire mouthful of permanent platinum teeth. Others have fashioned grills, removable metal jewelled teeth coverings. With the advent of the Jewellery culture, the turn of the century established luxury brands made inroads into the hip hop market, with brands like Gucci, Louis Vuitton and 212 Diamond City making appearances in hip hop videos and films.

#### Modern Hip Hop fashion

In the 1990s and beyond, many hip hop artists and executives started their own fashion labels and clothing lines.[9] Notable examples include Wu-Tang Clan (Wu-Wear), Nelly (Vokal), Russell Simmons (Phat Farm), Kimora Lee Simmons (Baby Phat), Diddy (Sean John), TI (AKOO), Nelly (Apple Bottom Jeans), Damon Dash and Jay-Z (Rocawear), 50 Cent (GUnit Clothing), Eminem (Shady Limited), 2Pac (Makaveli Branded) and OutKast (OutKast Clothing) Lil Wayne (Trukfit) . Other prominent hip hop fashion companies have included Karl Kani, FUBU, Eckō, Girbaud, Enyce, Famous Stars and Straps, Bape, Billionaire Boys Club, Beans, Ciara, Erykah Badu (Starter Clothing Line), LRG, Akademiks and Southpole Heah Honcho



Up and coming urban clothing lines have dominated the fashion in the Hip-Hop genre. Baggy Pants and Skinny Low jeans also came into style due to New Boyz's jerk dance from the song " You're a Jerk. " The hip hop fashion trends of the 2000s were all over the place and changed constantly, with the continue (balla) type image meaning extra baggy clothes, jerseys, and continue of bling. During these years there was a heavy celebrity influence among fashion trends. Hip Hop artists made brands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton popular amongst the hip hop community, where most initially used hip hop as a way to a better life. Throughout these years many fashion trends from the 80s and early 90s were made popular again, when we see the rebirth of the door knocker earring and form fitting jeans for males. We also see bright colors being used and cartoon graphic print hoodies by Bathing Ape made popular by artist and producer Pharrell (<http://thehiphopicon.com/fashion.htm>) . Females could not get enough of high heels in all different forms and many ideas were crossed and we saw things like the open toed boot.[10]

In recent years the hip hop world has seen a resurgence of old fads as well as the emergence of of tattoos covering artists from head to toe. Soulja Boy, Wiz Khalifa, Lil' Wayne and Tyga are all examples of artists that have set the trend of being completely " tatted up. "[11] Although having tattoos is nothing new to the music industry, never have tattoos been so pervasive in the hip hop industry. Tattoos covering the face and the head have also become increasing popular. For example artists such as Birdman ' Baby' Williams now sports a star tattoo on the crown of his head, Gucci Mane

proudly boasts an ice cream tattoo on his right cheek, and Lil Wayne on his eyelids and forehead.[12]

One cannot speak of fashion trends without mentioning the importance of hair styles, particularly for women. In the past few years there has been a resurgence of the asymmetrical hair cut with a contemporary spin. Stars such as Rihanna, Cassie and Kelis have all dared to be different by setting the new trend of the half-shaven head.[13] The reemergence of Adidas track jackets and the use of fashion scarves have been some of the latest trends to hit the hip hop fashion scene. Adidas track suits are certainly not new to hip hop culture as they have been around essentially since commercialized hip hop was created, however they have recently once again become popular. Fashion scarves have also become popularized in recent years. Kanye West is the most recent artist to launch his own line of products by selling decorative scarves with provocative depictions, named Risque Scarves.[14] Skater Fashion has been used on Hip-Hop scene this 2010-2011 including Knit Caps, Bonnets, Fitted Pants or Shorts, Vans, Nike SB (Skateboarding), Shirts with sleeves, Printed Tees (brands like OBEY, Stussy, Adidas, Supra, Circa, DC, RDS, Emericas). Chris Brown, Tyler the Creator & Lil' Wayne wear this once or twice on their music videos & concerts.

The rebirth of the 90's Snapback Caps is the most notable sign of the New School Throwback Image. The " New" Snapback hype started around mid-2010. Around late-2010 and early-2011, the " New" Snapback movement exploded. Starter Clothing Line manufactured the most sought for Snapbacks in the 90's, and made its return in the Coming of Age as the hype for

snapbacks grew, many of the well-known hat companies started to sell snapbacks, such as New Era, Mitchell & Ness, Reebok, Adidas, and many more companies followed suit. There are many notable artists are credited with the comeback of Snapbacks by sporting gear from a company named Ti\$A VI\$ION. Chris Brown, Tyga, and Big Sean are among the early supporters of this company since the Spring of 2010. Many urban fashionists credit Mac Miller, a wellknown YouTube MC, with starting the hype with the release of his song entitled “ Snap Back, ” which was on his mixtape The Jukebox: Prelude to Class Clown, released in June 2009.

This was earlier before the “ New” Snapback hype started to take root in Hip-Hop culture. Much controversy surrounds this topic of who started the “ New” Snapback trend. It is enough to say that snapbacks now have an importance when it didn’t matter back in the day. Many arguments of Snapback Caps almost leave the originators of the “ Original” 90’s Snapbacktrend bewildered. Before they were seen as items to show support to the local teams of the states. It’s as though the true meaning of Snapback Caps is gone. Examples are seen today with the overpricing of Snapbacks. Snapbacks in the 90’s went for \$10-\$15. Now the prices range from \$25-\$70. Snapbacks have now become a business proposal with a reception of major profit. Modern hip hop fashion includes low rise, whale tail for girls, skinny jeans, graphic tees, snap back. Also sports wear, basket ball and skateboarding shoes, hoodies, piercings in one ear or both, leather jackets, sleeveless shirts, polo shirts, saggy pants, bikini top for girls, crop tops, tube tops, tanks tops and cropped t-shirts.

## Women in hip hop

Along with the turning of the tide by select female hip hop artists came the emergence of promoting sex appeal through fashion. Female artists have faced a number of pressures ranging from gaining exposure to further their careers as well as conforming with certain images to remain in demand and relevant. The alignment of R&B music with hip-hop music (with collaborations being more and more prevalent) placed a whole new category of females within the categorization of what constituted a hip-hop artist.

As referenced above, the nineties decade centered around women's senses of style revolving around that of men in that they'd adopted the use of oversized t-shirts and baggy pants. Also listed above are Aaliyah, TLC, and Da' Brat as conformists to that trend. Female rap group Salt-N-Pepa are considered amongst the frontrunners in leading the transition of moving away from the male alignment and asserting feminism in creating a new sense of dress. They are said to have "wowed fans while wearing hot pants, cut-off denim shorts and Lycra body suits".[22] "Black women's relationships to their bodies occur within overlapping cultural contexts that offer contradictory messages about their value and function".[23] In a male dominated society, it is no wonder that women used to work hard to align themselves with male images including how they'd dressed.

As women generally gained access to and exposure within the offerings of several sectors of society, for example music, movies and television, we saw more images of what constituted attractiveness emerge. Following this came the perception of freedom to express oneself through several avenues

including apparel. Rappers Lil' Kim and Eve are known for resorting to trends surrounding being scantily clad with provocative tattoos and being perceived as attractive in the process. Not all female rappers, or female artists in general have resorted to these methods within their careers. “.. the recent appearance of Black women performers, songwriters, and producers in Black popular culture has called attention to the ways in which young Black women use popular culture to negotiate social existence and attempt to express independence, self-reliance, and agency”.[24]

#### Criticism of hip hop fashion (Disadvantages)

Commentators from both inside and outside the hip-hop community have criticized the cost of many of the accoutrements of hip hop fashion. Chuck D of Public Enemy summarized the mentality of Hip hop fashion and some low-income youths as “ Man, I work at McDonald’s, but in order for me to feel good about myself I got to get a gold chain or I got to get a fly car in order to impress a sister or whatever. “[15] In his 1992 song “ Us”, Ice Cube rapped that “ Us niggaz will always sing the blues / ‘cause all we care about is hairstyles and tennis shoes”. Some fans have expressed disappointment with the increased amount of advertising for expensive hip-hop brands in hip-hop magazines.[20] In one letter to the editor in Source magazine, a reader wrote that the magazine should “ try showing some less expensive brands so heads will know they don’t have to hustle, steal, or rob and blast shots for flyness. “[21] In fact, there were many highly-publicized robberies of hip-hop artists by the late 1990s.[20] Guru of Gang Starr was robbed of his Rolex watch at gunpoint, Queen

Latifah's car was car-jacked, and Prodigy was robbed at gunpoint of \$300,000 in jewelry.[20]

A few hip hop insiders, such as the members of Public Enemy, Immortal Technique, Paris and Common have made the deliberate choice not to don expensive jewelry as a statement against materialism.