

MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING: A HIP-HOP HISTORY & COMPOSITION RESIDENCY



TEACHING ARTIST: **TERRELL X**

Terrell X believes that music has the incomparable power to improve the quality of our lives in countless ways. He sees it as his calling to promote the honing of abilities that allow us the opportunities to express ourselves, while identifying and strengthening our unique voices. Terrell's constant quest to learn leads him to view himself — and participants — as both facilitators and students in constant states of artistic growth. Terrell doesn't call himself "the expert." This is part of what keeps him humble, enabling him to welcome the mutual exchange of knowledge and positive energies.

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students engaging in my MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING residency will learn general points about the history of Hip-Hop, the living conditions of the Americans who birthed the culture, and its key founders/icons who became early influencers of the genre. Students will then be introduced to the basics of Human Beat Boxing and body percussion, followed by making beats using pedals and microphones. To accompany the beats, general practices in song writing will be implemented. As a group, students will write a theme song or chorus to go with the beats. Then, if there is time, students will write and perform their own verses for each other in between the choruses.



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This work is funded in part by the Minnesota Humanities Center with money from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund that was created with the vote of the people of Minnesota on Nov 4, 2008.

ARTISTS & PIECES OF ART INCLUDED:

- DJ Kool Herc (founder/creator of Hip-Hop),
- Grand Wizard Theodore and Grand Master Flash (inventors of the record scratch and "quick mix"),
- Melle Mel (the first "rapper/emcee"),
- Sugar Hill Gang, The Fat Boys and Dougie Fresh (first rappers to make a record, originators of "fun rap" and Human Beat Boxing),
- Public Enemy (cutting edge political Hip-Hop pioneers and masters of music sampling),
- RunDMC (masters of commercial Hip-Hop and fashion),
- L.L. Cool J and Eminem (master wordsmiths and leading emcees of the 80's and 90's).

COMPAS PRISM PROGRAM

Lesson plans are created by COMPAS Artists. Each highlights artists and artworks from African, Latinx, Indigenous, and/or Asian communities.

LEARNING GOALS:

- Students will: learn how and why Hip-Hop became such a huge influence on American culture; develop a better understanding of rhythm and sound; experience how much strength and independence resides in composing music with or without instruments; gain knowledge in collaborating with others to form healthy social bonds; appreciate the importance of having an outlet for positive self-expression; build higher self-esteem while identifying the values of their unique voices; increase their confidence in speaking and performing live.
- **Why did you choose to share this lesson?**
Hip-Hop and all forms of music helped shape who I have become today. The pillars and elements moved the entire world!
- **What inspires you about this activity?**
Everything! The power to show young people that what they are experiencing now is a huge opportunity to discover and nurture their own unique voices and identities.
- **Why is this activity, these artists, this art important?**
It sheds a more positive light on Hip-Hop as a way of living. This can hopefully dim the negative light it often receives from those who haven't taken the time to learn more about this art form other than what is consumed through mainstream media.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON:

- Gather video footage of the Hip-Hop artists featured: interviews, live performances, etc.
- Study the equipment that the artists highlighted in this lesson utilized
- Listen to the music of the featured artists

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Small PA to project sound
- Large computer screen with access to clear and clean sound to project images and hear musical nuances
- Space to be loud and move around freely
- Paper, laptops, writing utensils

LESSON ACTIVITIES:

- “What is Hip-Hop?” - a historical account of the creators of a culture
- “What is Scratching?” - how a DJ can make sounds with his hand on a record placed on a record player
- “Rap Is Something You Do” - what the differences are between Rap and Hip-Hop
- “Human Beat Boxing IS Music!” - how the body can be used to compose music in the moment
- “What is an MC?” - how an MC (Emcee) controls a room while on stage

INDICATORS OF REACHING THE LEARNING GOALS:

- Growing interest in the art form, insightful questions asked, and retention of knowledge about Hip-Hop history
- Improved rhythm and timing while beat boxing
- Increased ability to compose and recite song lyrics with and without music
- Confidence in performing in front of others

COMMUNITY THIS ACTIVITY IS DESIGNED FOR:

- Grades 3 through 12

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

- The Arts (music, song composition, arrangement, graphics and pictures - media)
- Physical education (stamina, maintaining rhythm and breath control while Human Beat Boxing and performing on stage) /
- English Language Arts (Hip-Hop song writing, structure, annunciation)
- Social Studies (what living conditions were responsible for Hip-Hop’s creation)

WHAT COULD A COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST HELP YOU ACHIEVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

Learn more at COMPAS.org