In the early 1970s, African American, Afro-Caribbean and Latino teenagers in New York City began creating the cultural movement that we know today as Hip Hop. Hip Hop’s popularity should come as no surprise. It comes from a history of cultural traditions that have long sustained communities and connected people. Today, Hip Hop connects a wide range of individuals across different cultures and life experiences all over the world.
The musical influences of Hip Hop are rooted in West African song and dance. Musical practices such as rhythmic singing over drums (a precursor to rapping) and dances like the Bamboula (a precursor to break dancing) date back centuries in West African cultures.

When enslaved Africans were first brought to North America in the early 1600s, they brought their musical practices with them. Over time, these song and dance traditions made their way into the work songs, field hollers, and spirituals of enslaved African Americans; evident by the use of vocal call and response, hand clapping, foot stomping, and more.

Following the abolition of slavery in 1865, African Americans continued the musical practices of their ancestors in the form of gospel music and the blues. By the turn of the 20th century, musicians in New Orleans developed a highly syncopated and improvised style of dance music called jazz, which became popular in big cities like Chicago and New York.

While jazz ruled the radio waves in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, television became the popular technology of choice by the 1950s. Evolving out of jazz, rhythm and blues and rock and roll music kept the nation dancing with television programs like American Bandstand. By the 1960s, soul and funk music helped usher in a new era of television programs like Soul Train, which popularized the latest trends in African American music, dance, and fashion.

In the early 1970s, DJs in The Bronx started spinning records using their turntables and audio mixers as if they were musical instruments. They sampled popular soul and funk records and created breaks for B-boys and B-girls to dance to, in addition to scratching and cutting between records for special effect. It wasn’t long before MCs started rapping over the samples and breaks DJs were playing, and Hip Hop was born.

Drawing from the musical influences of their West African and African American ancestors, particularly vocal and dance traditions, early Hip Hop artists pioneered what has become one of the most influential cultural movements in history. Hip Hop continues to impact nearly all aspects of popular culture today, and will no doubt influence the future of music in America and beyond for generations to come.

**Words to Know**

| **Audio Mixer:** | Allows DJs to control sound effects audiences hear. |
| **Battles:** | Competitions between dancers, MCs or DJs. |
| **Breaks:** | To isolate the drums and bass from a sample of music. |
| **Cutting:** | Going back and forth between two different records. |
| **Improvised:** | Individual freedom within a structure agreed upon by a group. |
| **Rapping:** | To recite words rhythmically over a beat. |
| **Sampling:** | To isolate a small sample of music and play it repeatedly. |
| **Scratching:** | To start and stop a record with your hand to create a rhythmic effect. |
| **Spinning:** | To play a 33.3 vinyl record on a turntable. |
| **Syncopated:** | A bouncy rhythmic feel emphasizing the “upbeats” in music. |
| **Turntable:** | A record player. |
| **Upbeats:** | In a four beat measure, the rhythmic “up” feel of beats 2 and 4. |
Hip Hop dance allows each individual to express themselves freely through movement. Initially, this improvisational dance style was not learned or taught in the dance studio.

Dancers were inspired by their surroundings. They explored their creativity by using tricks, footwork and body action from other dance styles they saw on television, at parties, or in their communities.

Breakdancing, also known as breaking, is said to have originated with African American youth of the South Bronx, and was popularized and developed by Puerto Ricans who added their own style to the foundation of moves. Like Hip Hop music, Hip Hop dance was influenced by tap, the lindy hop, salsa, Afro-Cuban and other African and Native American dances. Some dancers describe being influenced by martial arts such as Kung Fu and Capoeira.

While youngsters on the east coast of the United States were involved in breakdancing, those on the west coast were creating two other forms of Hip Hop dance called popping and locking. These dance styles are often referred to together as “pop-locking,” but that is incorrect. Dancers may fuse these styles together while dancing, but popping and locking are two completely different styles, created by two different pioneers.

Locking was created in Los Angeles, California by Don “Campbellock” Campbell in the early 1970s. Campbellock was inspired by watching the popular dances of the time like the Funky Chicken. Locking combined sharp, linear limb extensions and elastic-like movement. The “lock” is a sudden pause or freeze and is used to connect a series of locking steps. Campbellock formed his own dance crew called The Lockers, who continued to develop and popularize the style, becoming one of the first funk style dance crews to perform on television.

Popping originated with Samuel “Boogaloo Sam” Solomon in Fresno, California in the late 1970s. Boogaloo Sam was inspired by watching The Lockers dance on television. He created the technique of popping, contracting and relaxing muscles in the body, causing a jerking motion which is referred to as a “pop” or “hit”. Boogaloo Sam also went on to create his own dance crew, The Electric Boogaloos. They also became known for another funk-style called Boogaloo which involves circular rolls of the hips, knees, and head.

MCs would rhyme to the DJ’s beats. B-boys and B-girls would have dance “battles” in the streets. Graffiti artists expressed themselves through visual art, tagging their AKA’s (nicknames or “also known as”) on walls and subway cars.
PANTSULA

South Africa is known for a number of different dance styles, many of which were established and influenced by the culture of the country’s indigenous groups. Pantsula is one of the newer styles of dance that have come out of South Africa. It draws on the breakdancing styles that were first seen in the Bronx in the 1970s. Just as breakdancing grew out of the cultural and social experiences of young New York City B-boys and B-girls, pantsula is closely related to the experiences of young South Africans and developed as a social dance mostly performed in the streets. With its growth in popularity over the years, pantsula can now be seen on major stages around the world.

THE SOWETO SKELETON MOVERS

The Soweto Skeleton Movers take their name from the South African township, Soweto, which is located in the city of Johannesburg. The Soweto Skeleton Movers perform a style of pantsula dance that was developed by the group’s founder, Jabulani. In dancing pantsula, the Skeleton Movers contort their bodies in comedic ways, while performing magic tricks and using frenetic footwork. *The Soweto Skeleton Movers from South Africa.*
L

ite Feet, also known as “getting lite”, is a style that came to life in Harlem, New York in the early 2000s. Chrybaby Cozie is one of the people who originated this style of dance. Being raised in Harlem in the 1980s was a source of great influence on Chrybaby; it was his foundation for dance, music and the source of inspiration for his ongoing work today uplifting youth and communities.

In 2005, he created an organization called The Bwreckfast Club, E.A.T. which stands for Earning All Together. The Bwreckfast Club is a platform for engaging youth to build on their passion and talent while offering the opportunity to promote themselves in a positive light. After the creation of The Bwreckfast Club, Chrybaby created The Lite Feet Nation, a community connected by individuals who were there from the beginning of the creation of the Lite Feet dance style and youth who continue to keep the style alive today. He has been teaching Lite Feet and Hip Hop dance for more than 10 years. His dedication and love for the culture has changed his life and inspired many others around him.

THINK ABOUT IT:

What musical influences led to the development of your favorite style of music? How have those influences evolved to impact music history and popular culture today?
Some people only associate Hip Hop with dance or rap, but Hip Hop is a cultural movement that many see as consisting of five elements:

**Djing:** When the DJ, or disc jockey, overlaps recorded music to create a mixture of sounds. The DJ plays music on the radio, in a dance club, or at a party.

**MCing:** Also known as the “master of ceremonies”, the MC or emcee, raps over the DJ’s music often using rhymes.

**B-boy or B-girl:** The break dancers who use various Hip Hop styles.

**Graffiti:** A style of painting using aerosol can paints, usually in public spaces, with bold and expressive images, tags, and words.

**Activism:** Involvement in activities that highlight or help to change social injustices.

Clive Campbell, also known as DJ Kool Herc, was one of the earliest pioneers of Hip Hop music. Known for transforming the turntable on the record player into an instrument of its own, Kool Herc took liberty in mixing multiple styles of music, such as R&B, funk, soul, and disco, on multiple record players. His style changed the dance party scene forever. A Jamaican immigrant, Kool Herc is also credited with Djing what is thought to be the first Hip Hop party in 1973 at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx. During this time, young people often gathered for house parties and block parties across the city. While Djing, Herc would extend “the break” in the music, where all the elements of a song, except for the percussion, would disappear. The crowd responded enthusiastically and the boys and girls were inspired to dance for an extended period of time. This is how the B-boys and B-girls got their names: the letter “B” stands for break; break-boys and break-girls.
LET’S PLAY: NAME THAT HIP HOP DANCE STYLE!

Now that you have read through the Dance to the Music section of the study guide, use the table below to see if you can match each Hip Hop dance style to its pioneer and place of origin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hip Hop Dance Styles</th>
<th>Answer Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Breaking</td>
<td>A □ B □ C □ D □ E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lite Feet</td>
<td>A □ B □ C □ D □ E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Popping</td>
<td>A □ B □ C □ D □ E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Locking</td>
<td>A □ B □ C □ D □ E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Krumping</td>
<td>A □ B □ C □ D □ E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Origin and Pioneers**

A. was created in Los Angeles, California by Don Campbelllock Campbell and made known by his crew The Lockers.

B. South Central Los Angeles is where this style originated with dancers Ceasare “Tight Eyez” Willis and Jo'Artis “Big Mijo” Ratti.

C. originated by Samuel “Boogaloo Sam” Solomon in Fresno, California and familiarized by The Electric Boogaloos.

D. Chrybaby Cozie’s upbringing in Harlem inspired this style of Hip Hop dance.

E. It was created and developed in the South Bronx by African Americans and Puerto Rican youths.

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