

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF HIP HOP

Est. Time: 45 minutes

Subjects: General Music, Social Studies

Age Range: Middle & High School

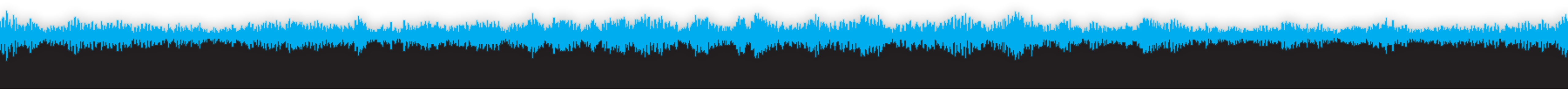
See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



What are the historical roots of Hip Hop?

In this lesson you will:

- Discover where Hip Hop was first created
 - Consider what life was like for some New Yorkers in the 1970s
 - Explore the connections between Hip Hop and other musical styles
 - Learn about key Hip Hop pioneers
- 




SOUTH BRONX BLOCK PARTIES

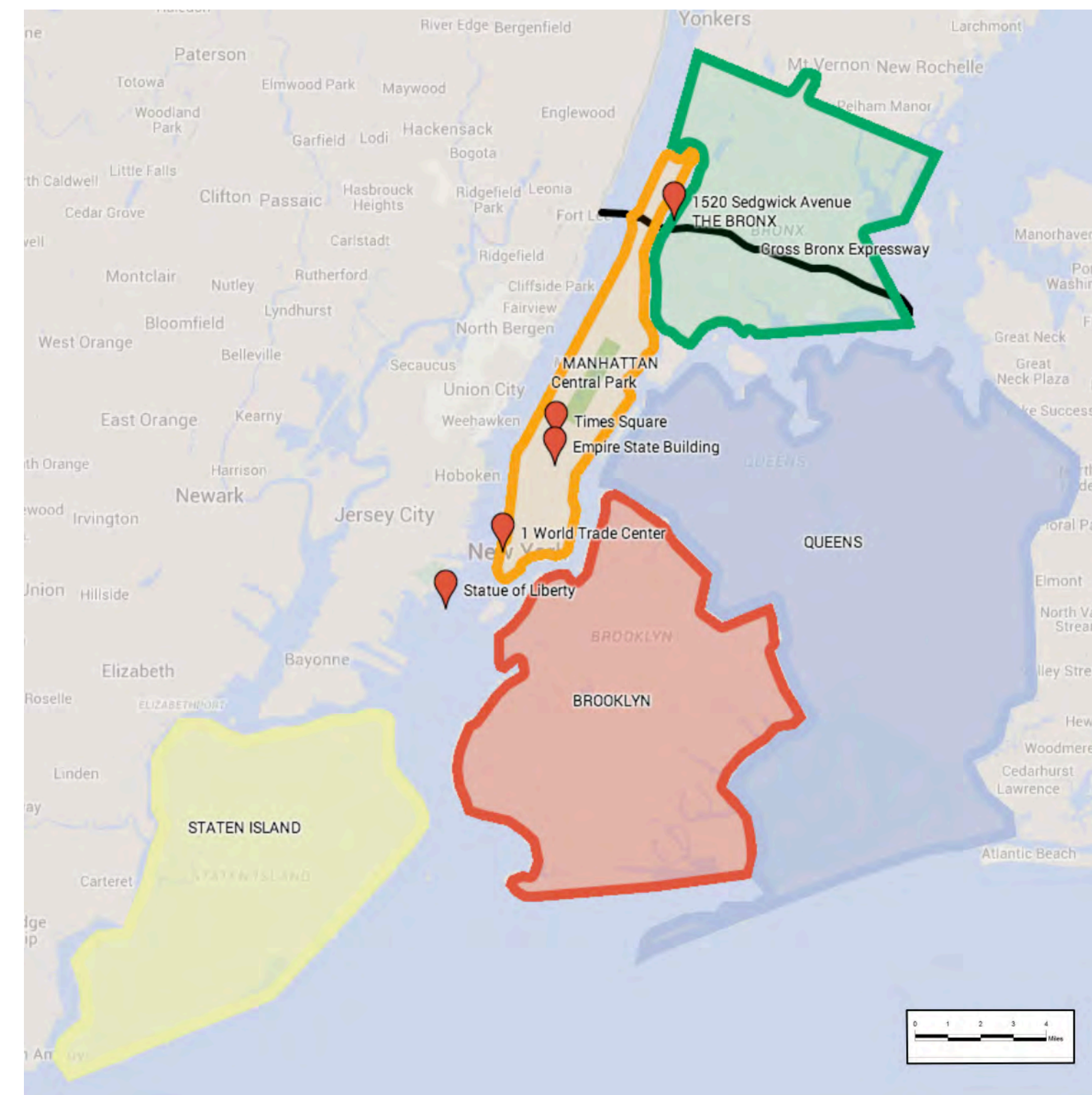
Watch [this video](#) about early Hip Hop Parties in the South Bronx, New York City.



Consider or ask a friend:


- What were some of the venues that early Hip Hop parties were held in?
 - Does it seem like these events were just for younger or older people, or do they seem to have been open to all?
 - What do you see the people at these parties doing? Does it seem fun to you? Why or why not?
- 

Look at the map of the five boroughs of New York City on **this handout**.





Consider or ask a friend:

- What do you think a borough is, based on this map?
 - How many of the boroughs had you heard of before? Which one had you heard the most about?
 - Why might 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx be included as a famous landmark on the map?
 - What is the other landmark noted in the Bronx?
- 


Many suggest a 1971 party DJ Kool Herc threw in the lounge of 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the South Bronx was the first Hip Hop event and the “birth” of the genre.


Watch [this video](#) and consider how Herc discusses Hip Hop, what you see while he drives, and what he has to say about the Bronx.



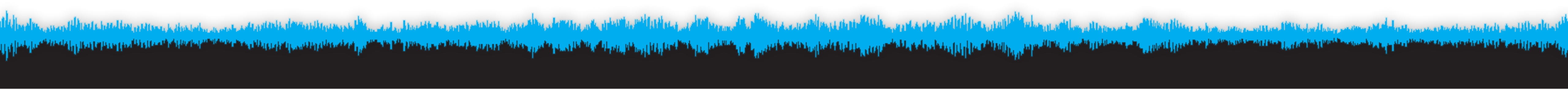


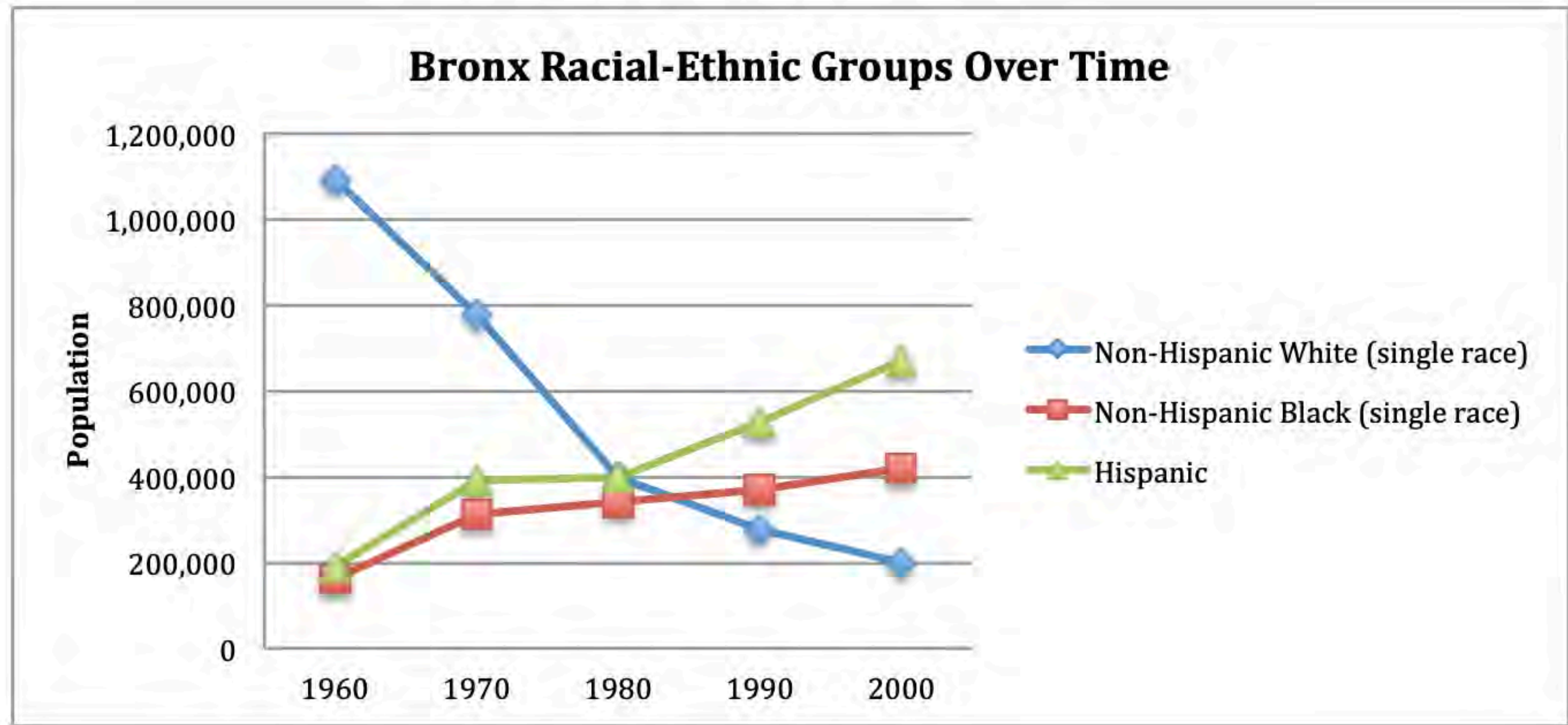
Consider or ask a friend:

- Do you think DJ Kool Herc is proud of being from the Bronx? Does he seem to love the Bronx? Why?
 - What do you see as DJ Kool Herc drives through the Bronx?
 - DJ Kool Herc suggests that he believes the Bronx is “in an uplift,” what do you think he means?
 - In 1977, President Jimmy Carter visited the South Bronx. What does Kool Herc say about President Carter?
- 



The other Bronx landmark on the Borough Map was the Cross Bronx Expressway. Look at **this image** of the Cross Bronx Expressway, which was constructed between 1948 and 1972, then consider or ask a friend:

- Does the Cross Bronx Expressway seem to run through areas you expect to be rural or more likely urban and densely packed with people?
 - How might building a major highway through a residential neighborhood change that neighborhood?
 - Who builds highways and how are the decisions regarding where they're built made?
- 

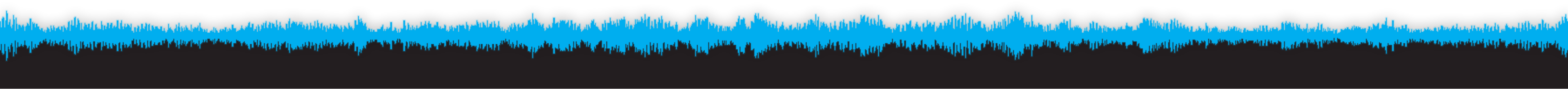


BRONX DEMOGRAPHICS

Look at the chart of Bronx Demographics 1960-2000 on [this handout](#).



Based on what you saw in the handout, consider or ask a friend:

- What population decreased most in the Bronx between 1960 and 1980? Which population increased the most?
 - What happened to the poverty rate of the total population of the Bronx between 1970 and 2000? What percentage of the total population was in poverty in 1980?
 - What overall conclusions can you draw from these charts about the socioeconomic conditions in the Bronx while Hip Hop was developing there in the 1970s?
 - What about the state of the South Bronx in the 1970s might have made Hip Hop Block parties so popular?
- 




GRANDMASTER FLASH

Watch [this short documentary](#) about Grandmaster Flash and the rise of DJing and Rapping in the Bronx.



Consider or ask a friend:

- What equipment did Grandmaster Flash use to build a new musical sound? How did he utilize this equipment in an innovative way?
 - Does it seem like it was easy for Grandmaster Flash, or something he had to practice and develop?
 - What are “the breaks” to which Grandmaster Flash is referring? What is “scratching”? What about the way Hip Hop DJs played this music made it original?
 - How does Grandmaster Flash describe the role of the Master of Ceremonies, or MC at a Hip Hop performance?
- 

SUMMARY

- Hip Hop began in the South Bronx in the early 1970s
- Many suggest the first Hip Hop event was hosted by DJ Kool Herc at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in 1971
- Following the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway, the South Bronx experienced “White Flight,” and the population became increasingly Black and Latinx



SUMMARY

- As the area changed, poverty rates rose and parts of the South Bronx were visibly declining
- Artists such as DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash loved the Bronx and were proud of the area, as were many residents
- The earliest phase of Hip Hop Culture was established during this period as these residents gathered to dance and celebrate to the groundbreaking approaches to making music artists such as DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five represented

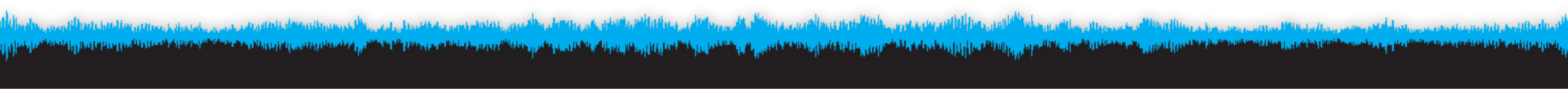


BE CREATIVE

There are Five Elements of Hip Hop Culture established early in the Bronx: MCing or rapping (oral), turntablism or DJing (aural), b-boying or dancing (physical), graffiti art (visual), and knowledge.

If you have space in your home, try [this introduction](#) to Breakdancing.

Or try an art project using [this tutorial](#) about how to draw graffiti style lettering.



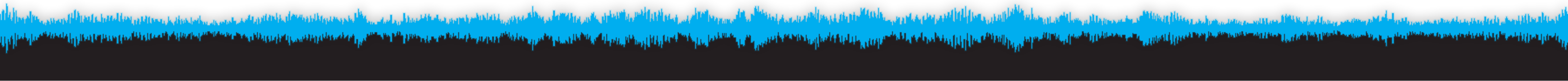
BE CREATIVE

Imagine there's a Block Party planned in your neighborhood, and you have been asked to DJ with a friend. Work together to create a playlist for the event. Remember, it's not just you who will be there. What song will your youngest family members like? How will you keep the party moving and get older people on the dance floor? Is there a song that you love that you will not include on this list out of consideration for somebody else? Tell your friend about the song and why you made the choice not to play it at your Block Party.



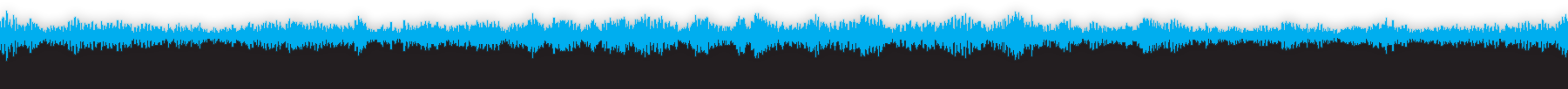
BE CREATIVE

Create a playlist, video, or art project that represents your family, your group of friends, or your neighborhood. Feel free to work together with anyone who can contribute. What makes you proud about your people and place?



CONNECT

Share your project with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your playlist or art project with TeachRock on **Instagram** or **Facebook**, email to **info@teachrock.org**, or Tweet it to **@TeachRock**





★ *TEACHROCK* ★
•ORG

Visit us at teachrock.org for hundreds of other free arts-rich resources for every age range and classroom.

Please check back to teachrock.org/distancelearning frequently as we will update the material daily!