



315 W. 39th Street #1610
New York, NY 10018

646-473-1819
www.flocabulary.com

Lesson Plan for Hip-Hop U.S. History

By Justin Marchetti, Flocabulary

Curriculum Goals

The goal of this lesson is to give students an expanded knowledge of U.S. history (terms, dates, and concepts) through hip-hop song lyrics, and foster student engagement with the stories of each time period. This general lesson plan can be adapted to any of the songs on Hip-Hop U.S. History. You can also find lesson plans on specific songs at Flocabulary.com/history/historylessonplans. Teachers are encouraged to provide a copy of the lyrics via *Hip-Hop U.S. History* books or a digital site license.

Lesson Goals

In each lesson your students will:

*Listen to a song.

*Discuss the period of history described in the chosen song, including:

- a. the general time period.
- b. the specific bold-faced terms.
- c. how the cultural, political, and sociological changes of the time period affected the country.
- d. how the time period has affected America and the world today.

Time Needed

One 30-minute session with optional homework and follow up exercises.

Materials Needed

**Hip-Hop U.S. History* books for each student, or a digital site license (which allows you to distribute copies of the files electronically or via burned CD's and printouts).

*A CD player

Lesson Sequence

1. Preface the listening with a short speech and/or discussion of the general time period. (5-10 minutes)
2. Play the song in its entirety with the students following along with the lyrics. (4 minutes)

3. Now go through the song playing one verse at a time, with the class together defining the bold-face terms and analyzing the meaning of the verse. Ask the students to explain each cultural and historical reference. (15 minutes)

Follow-up Exercise

*Have your students complete an in-class writing exercise. Give the students (or groups of students) two or three pieces of historical information. Have them write four to six rhyming lines that present that information (in the spirit of Flocabulary). Encourage students to get creative and take it farther. Give students the option of performing their lyrics – students who are apprehensive about rapping can give an emotive reading, spoken word style.

Homework

*Assign the crossword puzzle for the time period. The puzzles are available for free at Flocabulary.com/history/historypuzzles

Additional Ideas

The Great Debate

Many times events in history present two factions warring against each other (Andrew Jackson v. Native Americans, Colonists v. Britain, Robber barons v. union workers, etc).

At the end of the group discussion have students divide into groups, with two groups each representing two differing perspectives taught in the song and one group representing a jury that can ask questions and hold a mock debate moderated by yourself.

Start by giving the sides time to prepare an argument and defense. Conduct the debate in a fashion similar to high school debate teams, with cross examination and concluding statements. Make sure to ask stimulating questions throughout that encourage students to delve into the lesson material. Resolve the debate with a vote from the jury and a closing class discussion.

The Journal

* Write a 1-2 page narrative choosing one character described in the song and write from his or her perspective. The narrative should be time-sensitive to the period. The narrative should include references to events that took place during his/her lifetime, but invoke a uniquely creative student response of the character's thoughts and emotions to these events.

The Term Sheet & Jeopardy

Have your students keep a running terms sheet for each song, adding onto it with each lesson. You can complete a quick review, or quiz at the beginning of each lesson to help students retain the knowledge learned from the past lessons.

Once you have completed a few lessons and your students have compiled a formidable terms sheet, design a Jeopardy game with the categories coinciding with the material taught in the individual songs. Choose answers based on the terms, dates, and concepts of your choosing. This can be a fun, and engaging way to prepare for a unit test.

The Play

After listening and analyzing the song, break the students up into small groups and have them write a short play depicting all or part of the material discussed. After an allotted time to prepare, have your students perform their compositions in front of the class.

You can give your students 20 minutes and make this exercise an in-class activity or you could make it an extended project; student groups could schedule to meet out of class, design sets and props, write a script, and videotape their performance. If your school is equipped with the right software, you could even have your students complete some basic editing: title, credits, special effects, etc.