



Hip Hop Fundamentals  
Supplementary Materials for educators

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After students view our Principles of Hip Hop Show, teachers can expand upon its simple lessons. Here are some ideas for movement exercises, texts/video clips to analyze, and a simple quiz that you can utilize to make Hip Hop work as a teaching tool in your classroom. This will also provide you with some ideas to research to prepare your students to view our show, or prepare them to explore the culture of Hip Hop.

**Breaking Vocabulary Review:**

**Toprock** – all movement in Breaking performed standing

**Footwork** – all movements performed on the ground, using feet and legs to kick and sweep in circles or steps.

**Powermove** – all ‘spin moves’, or moves that utilize momentum

**Freeze** – any non-moving pose

**Movement and Analytical Exercises**

Utilizing Breaking as a part of your teaching can actually help reinforce Common Core Anchor Standards (utilized mostly in Pennsylvania) in creative ways. Below are some ideas for you to include Breaking into your classroom. Students’ abilities to determine a central theme or idea of a dance routine can teach to:

*English Language Arts Standards » Anchor Standards » College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading » 2*

*Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.*

Movement is a fantastic way to solidify information for students, or simply even to get the brain ready to learn. Students can use the parts of Breaking (Toprock, Footwork, Powermoves, Freezes) to create their own moves. Each student can, for example, easily create their own toprock move or footwork move. Then students could also teach their individual moves to a partner to create a 2 person routine.

Students can use dance to interpret. Can you create a sad move? A happy move? An angry move? How about a dance sequence that tells a story? Which parts of Breaking fit each emotion best?

Always begin movement exercises with a basic group warmup and stretch, to physically and mentally prepare your students to move. Also, you can include a Freestyle Circle, where students can do anything they want in the middle. This activity is a good way to encourage students to show off what they have learned and play with the material.

**Activity for younger students:**

Have your students create their own short dance sequences using all the parts of Breaking. Their movements do not need to be technically advanced, as they can interpret the parts of breaking in any rudimentary way they choose. They can order the parts (toprock, footwork, powermove, Freeze) in whatever way they choose. Let the students design their dance sequence around a central emotional theme (such as Happiness, Sadness, Anger, or Silliness). Then have the rest of the students watch the sequence and deduce what the emotive message was. In this way, students can practice analyzing the elements of dance in the same way they look for indicators and information in text. Make sure you have students explain how they analyzed their peers' dances (How did you know that he was dancing sad? What moves clued you in to the theme?)

**Activity for older students:**

Breaking is a dance created by young people in the 1970's Bronx. After watching the Hip Hop Fundamentals performance, what ways can we analyze the 'central idea' of Breaking? Even though the inventors of Breaking may not have been consciously trying to send a message through their dance, what emotions or themes can you see in the dance, looking at the dance's elements (toprock, footwork, powermoves, and freezes). Also, look at *how* the dance is performed to determine central themes or ideas. Have students explain their deductions.

*Possible answers: Happiness, frustration, competition, camaraderie, aggression, humor*

Follow up questions:

What was happening in 1970's New York that may have led to the creation of this dance? What were the economic/political/social movements that were occurring in New York that drove young people to create this art form on their own?

Older students can also create their own short dance routines with emotive content or messages. Can you create a routine (as a solo, small group, or entire class) that can

convey a central theme/idea/message that is relevant to them? Create a dance around an idea that is valid to the current lives of the students. For example, create a short dance about school violence, Facebook drama, peer pressure, or any idea that is relevant to their lives.

## **History of Hip Hop**

For more specific lessons on Hip Hop, look to prominent historical figures of the culture.

### DJ Kool Herc

DJ Kool Herc was an innovator in the world of Hip Hop music. He immigrated to the Bronx, New York when he was only 12 in the late 1960's. When he was only 17, he created a new style of party music by 'extending the break' of popular records. He noticed that his community really enjoyed certain sections of popular songs, which were usually the 'breaks', or the section of the song that contained mostly fast-paced drums. To make his parties more exciting, he would take two of the same record on two separate turntables and loop or repeat the most popular parts of the songs, thus creating a long continuous section of drums. He called this technique the 'merry go round', and the looping and sampling (taking short sections of songs) became a staple in all Hip Hop music to come. Since rap music hadn't been formally recorded at the time, the music Kool Herc's community enjoyed was mostly Funk, Soul, Latin, Rock and Roll, and early Disco. By extending the drum break of songs, Kool Herc provided a space for Breakers to dance, the MC's to rhyme, and the people to party.

[Wikipedia has a good comprehensive history of Kool Herc.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DJ_Kool_Herc)

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[This article and interview with Kool Herc](http://www.cincystreetdesign.com/1520_Sedgwick/) delves deeper into the motivations behind his techniques, the economic environment which gave rise to Hip Hop, and the Jamaican influence on the music. It is a comprehensive read, best for older students.

[http://www.cincystreetdesign.com/1520\\_Sedgwick/](http://www.cincystreetdesign.com/1520_Sedgwick/)

[Kool Herc's story is also now the topic of a children's book, as seen here.](http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2014/01/29/267599216/when-the-beat-was-born-hip-hops-big-bang-becomes-a-kids-book)

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Hip Hop history has many other colorful and important figures to research, such as:

Grandwizard Theodore, the first DJ to create the 'scratch'

The Rock Steady Crew, the first Breaking team to spread the dance across the world

## Videos

### [Uprock – Music Video by Rock Steady Crew](#)

<http://vimeo.com/14419829>

This music video, released in 1984, was from the first album created and performed by a Breaking Crew. The Rock Steady Crew, founded in New York City in the 1970's, is one of the most famous and influential teams in Hip Hop History. Their albums, appearances in films, and worldwide performance tours in the 1980's helped expose the entire world to the dance of Breaking. The average age of these dancers at the time the video was released was only 15, and the group's front-person was the charismatic and innovative B-Girl, Babylove.

The other members of the Rock Steady Crew which appear here are:

Devious Doze

Ken Swift

Crazy Legs

Kuriaki

All of the movements in this video were choreographed by the dancers themselves, and were influenced by Kung Fu films (which were very popular at the time), cartoons, and everyday New York life. The Rock Steady Crew is still active and holds a worldwide anniversary competition in New York City every year. Some of the dancers in this video (now in their mid 40's) are still dancing and are considered legends in the Breaking world. [Ken Swift was even recognized as the #2 most iconic dancer of the last century by CNN!](#)

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/SHOWBIZ/01/26/dancers.vote/>

Questions and things to watch for in this video:

*For younger students:*

- Can you spot the routines influenced by Kung Fu?
- Can you spot the routines influenced by children's games like Cops and Robbers?
- Can you identify the four parts of breaking? (Toprock, Footwork, Powermoves, and Freezes)
- All of the Breakers say their names in the song. Listen closely to find out who is who!

*For older students:*

- Hip Hop has changed and grown over the years. Discuss some ways in which you see differences between this video's music and fashion and the popular styles of today.

-City life and growing up in tough neighborhoods greatly inspired all of Hip Hop's creation, particularly the dancing. What are some ways in which you observe life in the rough boroughs of 1970's New York reflected in this video?

-All of Breaking evolved from dances that young people created to have fun and express themselves. Young students would unite to practice moves, hang out, and have fun – at the beginning, no one realized how influential and empowerment their movement would grow to become. In its early stages, Hip Hop dance was often misinterpreted as dangerous or promoting negativity. What are some current forms of positive expression that were created by youth? How exactly are they positive? How are some of these expressive forms misunderstood?

**[Kyushu Danji Jr. Breaking team](#)**

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeyepYnpbPM>**

Since the 1980's, Breaking has spread worldwide and has become extremely popular in many countries. This 2013 video of a dance team from Japan consists entirely of very young performers, who are striving to create new exciting routines.

Questions and things to watch for in this video:

How is this dance showcase different from the Rock Steady Crew's performance in the 'Uprock' video?

Can you see any similarities in Kyushu Danji Jr's video and the 'Uprock' video from the 1980's? Can you spot the Toprock, Footwork, Powermoves, and Freezes?