Study Guide for Teachers

Hip Hop Fundamentals
The Principles of Hip Hop: Peace, Love, Unity and Having Fun

presented by
Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern PA
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Inspire positive change in young people through an exploration of the roots of hip hop culture. This ensemble of dynamic and energetic dancers use breakdancing and abundant audience participation to explore hip hop's rich cultural history and how underserved inner-city youth changed the world. The performance focuses on youth empowerment, diversity, creativity, and working together, embodied by hip hop's four principles: Peace, Love, Unity, and Having Fun!

LEARNING GOALS

Breaking (break dancing) is not only the world's most dynamic dance—guaranteed to grab your student's attention—but its history is also the perfect vehicle for speaking to the issues facing youth today. Through our experience of performing, battling (a competition), and teaching all over the world, we know that hip hop can be a space for everyone. Difference and uniqueness are celebrated, not put down. At its most pure, hip hop can create a safe space for all races, ethnicities, and cultures to come together under one umbrella.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Hip-hop is a cultural movement that began among urban youth in New York City, and has since spread around the world. Elements of the hip-hop arts include dance, rap (music, rhythm and poetry), and graffiti art. Hip-hop began in the mid-1970's as inner-city Black and Latino youths began to develop new styles of music, dance, and painting that emerged from their urban environment.

Hip-hop dance began in a recreation center in the South Bronx in the early 1970's. Street gangs and violence were at an all-time high, but were on the verge of decline, mainly due to the introduction of the new hip-hop culture. The Hip-hop culture would give inner city youths a way to make a name for themselves and escape the anonymity of urban life, by battling other youth with creativity and style instead of violence. The battles in dance and rap that took place between rivals emerged from older forms of competition in the African-American community including boasts about oneself (from the African tradition) and "the dozens" (a competition of inventive put-downs). Respect for self and respect for others was crucial in the development of this art form. Without respect, people would not have been able to learn, share, and grow together.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

1. Discuss some different types of music, including classical, folk, rock, country, jazz, and rap. Does each type of music have a dance associated with it? Talk about how the dances came from the music, and how each art form reflects the other. Ask students to draw a scene where they might encounter a specific style of music and dance. Share with the class and ask students to describe how the music and dance reflect the culture of the people.

2. Have students write a short "boast" rap about themselves and perform it for the class. A boast is a traditional hip hop form that gives students the opportunity to write about themselves and explore why they are special or different from their peers. Most students will be familiar with this form if they listen to rap music.

VOCABULARY

Agility: Moving with quick, easy grace and skill.

Break dance: Dance form invented in the 1970s by disc jockeys.

Choreographer: A person who designs or arranges the movements of a dance.

Drops: Movements that bring the dancer to the floor from top rock to footwork.

Footwork: Done using both hands and feet for support. This aspect of the dance involves a great deal of hard work to develop techniques into a profound style.

Freezes: Stylish stop-action poses done to the beat of the music. These are often used to emphasize a dancer's ability to listen or as a statement of power at the end of a run.

Improvise: To compose, recite, sing, act, or dance on the spur of the movement, not prepared beforehand.

Power moves: Acrobatic moves that require momentum. Done by spinning on backs, legs, heads, and shoulders, the moves are some of the more difficult and are taught more slowly.

Rap music: Chanted verse or prose over a rhythmic background; literally, rhythm and poetry.

Tap dance: Tap is an American art form with its roots in Irish clogging and African dance.

Top rock: A string of steps done in the standing position. This aspect incorporates various dance steps from Latin, African, Eastern European, and other cultures.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Discuss the dances you saw in the program. What are the different parts of hip hop? How did music help the dancers?

2. Ask students to draw a picture or write a paragraph about their favorite part of the show and why.

3. How did the music and dance in the program make you feel? Discuss how music and dance can affect our emotions.

RESOURCES

For Children:

Arnold Adolf, *Street Music City Poems.*

James Haskins, *Black Dance in America: A History through Its People.*

Maurice Jones, *Say It Loud: The Story of Rap Music.*

Eleanor Schick, *I Have Another Language: The Language of Dance.*

Jance Yolen, *Dinosaur Dances.*

For Teachers:

Isadora Duncan, *The Art of Dance.*

Margot Fonteyn, *A Dancer's World.*

Arnold Haskell, *The Wonderful World of Dance.*

George Shannon, *Dancing in the Breeze.*

ARTIST INFORMATION

Hip Hop Fundamentals is a diverse group of professional dancers dedicated to teaching youth empowerment, social issues, and academic content through Breaking/B-Boying, the world's first hip hop dance. We believe that youth learn best when they are having fun. Our dynamic and interactive performances and workshops are guaranteed to empower, engage, and educate youth of all ages.

Since 2004, the company has performed hundreds of shows across the United States. They were featured in Columbia University's collective 2014 book *Advocating Creatively,* as well as articles in *Dance Studio Magazine.* In October 2013 Hip Hop Fundamentals presented at the TEDx conference in Bermuda, lecturing on the power of creative education and hip hop as an educational tool.