

UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Hip-Hop Hooray! (Social Studies, Music, Theater)

It's hip-hop's fiftieth birthday! Celebrate this huge cultural milestone by teaching your class what hip-hop is and where it came from. With your class, research the Black communities that started the cultural movement, what it stood for and why it was born. After talking about the history of hip-hop in the classroom, have your students observe and appreciate where they may see hip-hop in the world around them. Maybe this is a rap song they listen to with their friends, graffiti they see on their way to school or breakdancing they see on television. After a week, reconvene to engage in a discussion about where hip-hop lives and how it may have evolved over time. Some questions to get you started are: *What is the subject matter of hip-hop today? Who is creating this art? Is it similar or different to hip-hop made fifty years ago? Why or why not?* Then, have your students pick one aspect of hip-hop they saw in their communities (graffiti, rap, DJing, etc.) and research a famous hip-hop artist who engaged in that art form. In their research, have them create a presentation that honors the artist and their work. As a bonus, invite students to create or perform a bit of hip-hop inspired by their chosen artist! Finally, have everyone share their presentation with the class to honor the past fifty years of hip-hop tradition and artmaking.

To support this unit, use the *My Pride Rap Creativity Page* in the Respond and Connect section.

Gym Jam (Physical Education, Dance)

Dance isn't just an art form—it can also be a workout! Use the basics of dance and acrobatics to get your class moving and energized in a lesson in physical education. Begin by teaching your class a few basic movements, such as a grapevine, a pivot, a spin or a jump. Write down these terms as you explore each movement to create a “movement vocabulary bank” for the whole class to reference. Then, you can add to this word bank by sourcing different dance movements from your students. These can be silly, like the running man; pedestrian, like running in place; or more technical, like toprock. After you have created a vocabulary of movements, split your class into small groups and assign each group a song. Have each group choreograph a combination to their song using the movement bank as inspiration. When you reconvene, ask each group to teach their dance moves to the rest of the class. Then, turn each dance into a workout by having your students repeat movements, speed up or slow down, do it in pairs or even try to do it backwards! Throughout the rest of the year, use your students' dances as a way to start the day and warm up your bodies, or to get your blood flowing after sitting down for a lesson. Once everyone has the moves down, perform your dance workout for another class!

To support this unit, use the *The Way You Move Activity* in the Respond and Connect section.

*For clarification on these steps or to find more moves to inspire your class's movement, Youtube channels like Howcast provide a wide array of dance tutorial videos.

Circusology (Science, Theater)

While it may seem that skills like BMX biking, juggling and breakdancing are superhuman, all of these stunts are made possible by the laws of physics! Let the tricks of an urban circus inspire a research project about physics and how it can relate to the motion of a performer. Start by introducing your class to a few fundamental concepts of physics like gravity, velocity, inertia and centripetal force. Over the course of a week, have your students research one essential law surrounding one of these concepts. They can investigate what their law is, how it was discovered, how it functions and how it applies to the real world. Once they've completed their research, have each student demonstrate their chosen physics concept to the rest of the class using only classroom objects. After everyone has presented and gained a basic understanding of the laws of physics, choose a video together of an urban circus stunt or breakdancing trick. As a class, break down how science makes this feat possible and how what they've learned applies to the performance. If possible, your class can even try to replicate the trick in your classroom (safely, of course)!

To support this unit, use the *Doin' the Newton Dance Activity* in the Discover and Create section.

