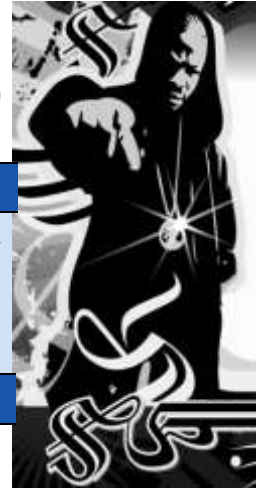


Bust a rhyme not an arm – writing an OHS rap



Background

In this unit, students will write a rap song that deals with OHS. The unit provides a fun way to engage students in workplace safety issues and offers the opportunity to integrate the topic with literacy and music.

Overview of the unit

There are two activities in this unit:

- Activity 1: Analysing a rap song
- Activity 2: Writing an OHS rap song

The activities are sequential. In Activity 1, students analyse the features of a rap song and in Activity 2 they use this information to help them write their own rap song. If students are familiar with rapping they may like to go straight to Activity 2 and refer to Activity sheet 1 where needed.

Purpose of the unit

- To develop a broader understanding of workplace safety
- To develop the ability to communicate a message through music.

Resource requirements

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Activity sheets | Activity sheet 1: Analysing a rap song Activity sheet 2: Word up - Writing an OHS rap song |
| Other material or resources | Appendix 1: Safety starts with S Safety starts with S Mp3 available on SafeT1 website |
| Facilities and equipment | MP3 player to play OHS rap Recording device Internet to source lyrics of rap songs and beats for rap |

Assessment & curriculum alignment

The activities in this unit are designed to **support** student learning but may also be used for assessment purposes. The activities support the learning outcomes listed in the table below but **may not cover all the elements**. If the activities are to be used as assessment tasks, teachers should **check the relevant curriculum document**, e.g. the VCAL Curriculum Planning Guides, to ensure all the elements are covered and the activity is consistent with the unit purpose statement.

While documentation from undertaking the activities in this unit can be collected to build a portfolio of evidence to be used for the assessment of relevant learning outcomes, students will need to demonstrate competence of a learning outcome on more than one occasion and, wherever possible, in different contexts, to ensure the assessment is consistent, fair and equitable.

| | VCAL Foundation | VCAL Intermediate | VCAL Senior | VELS | Primary e-phase |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| Activity 1: Analysing a rap song | R&W – LO 5* OC - support for elements of LO 1 or 4 depending on context * | R&W – LO 5 OC - support for elements of LO 1 or 4 depending on context | R&W – LO 5 OC - support for elements of LO 1 or 4 depending on context | English: • Reading Comm: •Listening, viewing and responding | Engage Explore Explain |
| Activity 2: Writing an OHS rap song | R&W – LO 1* OC - support for LO 1 or 4 depending on context * WRS 1 – support for LO 4* | R&W – LO 1 OC - support for LO 1 or 4 depending on context WRS 1 – support for LO 2 & 4 | R&W – LO 1 OC - support for LO 1 or 4 depending on context WRS 1 – support for LO 2 | English: • Reading • Writing Comm: •Listening, viewing and responding | Explore Elaborate |

* Students working at VCAL Foundation level would need considerable support.

Activity 1: Analysing a rap song

In this activity, students choose a rap song they like and analyse its structure. By doing this, students gain an understanding of how rap songs are written. In Activity 2, students will use their research to write their own rap song based around OHS.

If the students are familiar with rapping and writing rap songs, you may like to start with Activity 2 and use the information in Activity 1 (including Activity sheet 1) as a reference to be used as and when needed.

What to do

Explain to students that they will be writing a rap song and that it will help them to look at how rap songs are structured and how language is used. Listen to different rap songs with the class and brainstorm some of the elements in the songs that students can identify.

Some rap songs may have lyrics that are offensive to some people. If this is an issue for the class, some rap songs that may be suitable are:

- Concrete Schoolyard – Jurassic 5
- Fight the Power – Public Enemy
- Blazing Arrow – Blackalicious
- The Message – Grandmaster Flash
- I was only 19 – The Herd
- The Nosebleed Section - Hilltop Hoods.

Official videos of these songs can be found on You Tube.

Choose one of the rap songs above and work through the questions in Activity sheet 1 with the whole class, discussing some of the techniques and structure used in the song. Elements for discussion could include:

- rhyming and rhyme schemes
- hooks
- poetic devices (similes, metaphors, alliteration, personification)
- structure (verse, chorus, bridge).

When you have been through a rap song together, ask students to find a rap song that they like and source the lyrics through the internet or from a CD booklet. Working in pairs or small groups, students record the techniques and structure of the song they have chosen, using Activity sheet 1.

Ask each group of students to play the song that they have chosen to the class and discuss the techniques they have identified.

Facilitate further discussion on each group's song with the following questions:

- What grabbed you about your song (what makes you want to listen to it?)
- How did the singer use their voice to make the song interesting? E.g. intonation, pronunciation etc.
- Are there different singers? How do they arrange the vocals?
- What sound effects are used? E.g. do they put echoes on the vocals?

Student roles and responsibilities in relation to the activity

Contribute to class discussions.

Listen to the views of others.

Work with others in a group.

Take on a role and show responsibility consistent with the level of VCAL they are undertaking.

Level of teacher support

Facilitate discussion.

Provide support appropriate to the level of VCAL the students are working at.

Provide access to the internet.

Assessment

This is a learning activity. This activity could be used to support the literacy learning outcomes as indicated in the table on page 3.

If the activity is to be used as an assessment task, teachers should check the relevant curriculum document, e.g. the VCAL Curriculum Planning Guides, to ensure all the elements are covered and the activity is consistent with the unit purpose statement.

Students working at a Foundation level would need considerable support in undertaking this activity.

Activity 2: Writing an OHS rap song

In this activity, students will write and record an OHS rap song with a message informing people about workplace health and safety incidents and how to prevent them.

Students will use their research from Activity 1 on the techniques and structure used in rap songs to help them with their writing.

What to do

Play students the *Safety Starts with S* – OHS rap written by Year 12 Students at Narre Warren South P-12 College. See www.safe-t1.net.au/index.php?id=298. Provide students with the lyrics (see appendix 1).

Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm ideas for their OHS rap. Encourage students to consider risks and accidents that are common in the workplace and how they could persuade people to prevent accidents happening.

Provide students with *Activity sheet 2: Word up - Writing an OHS rap song*. Ask students to plan their song by:

- considering what OHS topics to include in their song
- brainstorming words related to the topic
- developing a rhyme scheme
- using at least one poetic device (similes, metaphors, alliteration, personification)
- coming up with a hook for the song
- deciding on the structure of their song.

Support students in writing their song.

Encourage students to put their rap song to music. There are a number of websites with free downloadable hip hop beats such as www.20dollarbeats.com/freebeats/freebeats.php and www.free-hiphopbeats.com/ or students may wish to make their own.

Provide students with an opportunity to perform their song either by recording it or performing it to the class or at a school or community event.

Student roles and responsibilities in relation to the activity

Work with others in a group.

Write and perform their song and listen to the performances of others.

Take on a role and show responsibility consistent with the level of VCAL they are undertaking.

Level of teacher support

Support students with writing and performing.

Ensure students have access to the internet to undertake the required research.

Ensure students have access to recording equipment, if appropriate.

Provide support appropriate to the level of VCAL the students are working at.

Assessment

This is a learning activity. This activity could be used to support the learning outcomes as indicated in the table on page 3.

If the activity is to be used as an assessment task, teachers should check the relevant curriculum document, e.g. the VCAL Curriculum Planning Guides, to ensure all the elements are covered and the activity is consistent with the unit purpose statement.

Students working at a Foundation level would need considerable support in undertaking this activity.

Analysing a rap song

Choose a rap song and find the lyrics on the internet.

Read about some of the techniques used in rap songs and see if you can find them being used in the song you have chosen.

Techniques used in rap songs

Rhyme Scheme – the way a song rhymes

Rhyme is the most important part of rap and all rap songs use it in different ways. The first rap songs used rhyming couplets (where a line rhymes with the next line)

It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me **wonder**
How I keep from going **under**
From The Message by Grandmaster Flash

Later rap songs evolved and used rhyme in more complex ways. Here's an example from *Fight the Power* by *Public Enemy*.

As the rhythm designed to **bounce** what **counts**
is that the **rhymes designed** to fill your **mind**
Now that you've **realized** the **prides arrived**
We got to pump the **stuff** to make us **tough**
from the **heart** It's a **start**, a work of **art**

Rap songs are continually evolving and using rhyme in different ways.

What is the rhyme scheme of the song you chose? Does it stay the same throughout the song? Give some examples.

Hook – grabs the attention of the listener

Most rap songs have a hook (something to catch your attention): lyrics (words), music or sound effects. It's often found in the chorus.

Where is the hook in the song you chose? If the hook is in the words (lyrics), write it down.



Similies, Metaphors, Alliteration, Personification

Many people don't realise it but rap is a lot like poetry!

Raps use similies, metaphors, alliteration and personification. Never heard of them?? Read on...

A **simile** compares two things by using the words "like", "as", or "than".

E.g. I'm empty inside, *like* Hollow Man/ I'm here but I'm not, *like* a hologram (Re-Up Gang).

A **metaphor** is comparing one thing in terms of another,

Eg. This *song* is a *war zone* and you listeners in the cross fire (Crooked I).

Alliteration repeats the sound of the start of a series of words.

E.g. Artificial amateurs, aren't at all amazing, analytically, I assault, animate things (Blackalicious).

Personification is where an object is represented as a person.

E.g. Check out *Stray Bullet* by Organised Confusion, which raps from the perspective of a bullet.

Does the rap song you chose use any of these [poetic] devices? Write down the lyrics and the device used.

| Lyrics | Poetic device used |
|--------|--------------------|
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Structure

Rap songs can have different structures but the most common elements are:

Verse – verses are different each time. There is usually more than one.

Chorus – the chorus repeats each time. It often has a hook (catchy melody).

Bridge – a contrasting section that adds variety to the song.

| A common structure is: | What is the structure of the rap song you chose? |
|------------------------|--|
| Verse | |
| Chorus | |
| Verse | |
| Chorus | |
| Bridge | |
| Chorus | |

If you're having trouble nutting out the structure, check out [the article](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapping) on rapping in Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapping> .

Word up - Writing an OHS rap song

Yo, word up homies. You've analysed a rap song and looked at all its different parts. Now it's time to write your own. Your rap should include a message about OHS in the workplace. The rest is up to you... so start writing some dope rhymes.

Brainstorming

What message do you want to get across in your rap? You may want to check out some of the OHS campaigns that Worksafe Victoria is running at the moment to give you some ideas. Go to <http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au>

Rhyming

Write down some words that you could use that are about your idea. See if you can think of some rhyming words to use when you're writing your rap.

What kind of rhyme scheme are you going to use? Put your rhyming words into phrases and see if you can get them to follow a rhythm. It might help you to say them out loud.

Poetic devices

Can you use any poetic devices (similies, metaphors, alliteration, personification)?

Start with some similes (phrases that compare two things). These lines might help you:

_____ like a _____

More _____ than a _____

As _____ as a _____

Hook

Rap songs usually have a hook. See if you can come up with some catchy lines that get across your message. These are usually repeated throughout the song. In the *Safety starts with S* rap, that phrase is the hook.



Structure

Decide on the structure of your song. Keep it simple at first. You can always add more later.

There's no right way to lay out a rap song. It's up to you. So as 80s rapper Young MC said 'Don't just stand there... bust a move'.

OHS rap song - Safety starts with S

Lyrics Written by VCAL Year 12 Narre Warren South P-12 College



Verse

Safety is the way of life
Don't matter whether it's day or night
Just get it right, survive you might
Forget about it, that's your life

Chorus

Safety starts with 'S' but begins with you
Practice it regularly, it's something you gotta do
Stick to the plan and follow the rules
Work safe, work hard 'n' use the right tools



Verse

Just don't pucker around
This could be your last round
It's not better to be sorry than safe and sound
Confused doesn't know what he's doin'
Should ask his boss
But he's scared so he doesn't



Chorus (repeat)

Verse

He pucks up
There goes the gas pipe
Lights up the joint
Boom! A flash of light
His life flashes before his eyes
Can't stand right
Hits his head on the ground
He can't see, there goes his sight



Chorus (repeat)

Verse

He can't breathe right
Smoke goin' through his wind pipe
Wakes up in hospital getting his ass wiped
Doctors report - say he can't move, can't talk

