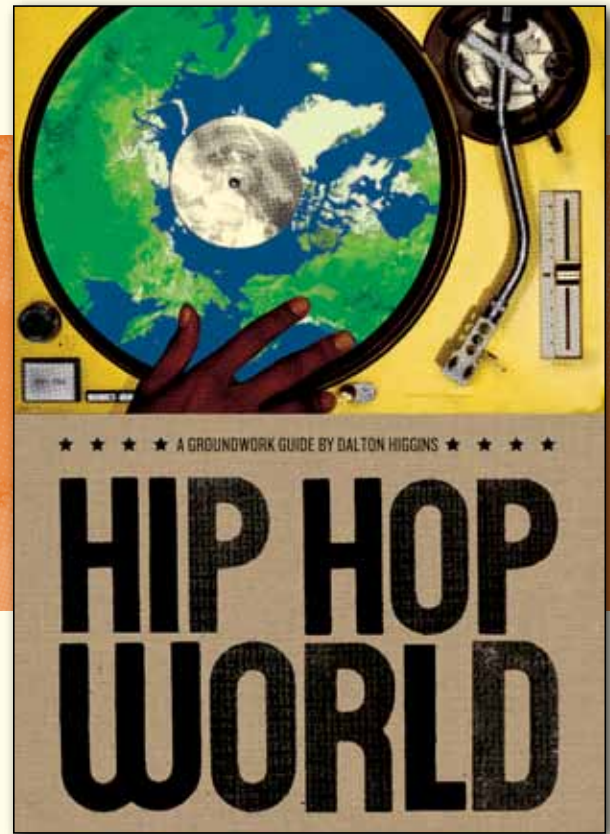


HIP HOP WORLD

A GROUNDWORK GUIDE

Written by Dalton Higgins



ABOUT THE BOOK

The book is about:

- what hip hop is and why we should care about it
- the roots and history of hip hop
- the impact of hip hop, the mainstreaming of hip hop culture, and issues of cultural ownership
- the business and economics of hip hop
- issues of sexism and homophobia
- hip hop as a voice of social conscience and protest
- the future of hip hop

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Music
- Visual Arts
- English Language Arts
- Communications Technology
- Civics
- World Studies
- Business Studies
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Health/Career and Life Management

IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

- Introduce the book and your goals for having students study it, and briefly outline what the book is about. Point out to students that response to music and cultural genres is deeply personal, and explain that, as a class, you will set some ground rules for maintaining a respectful and safe classroom atmosphere for discussing personal views. Ask the class to collaborate to create a list of expectations, such as “We’ll respect one another’s privacy”; “We’ll listen to one another”; “We won’t insult one another”; “We won’t use inappropriate language”; and “We respect the right to have opinions, but we need to think about how our views might affect other people.” Post the list and revisit it periodically to allow students to make observations and air problems.
- Have students complete *Hip Hop World: Getting Started Questionnaire* (following). Then have groups of students share and discuss their responses. You could also use the questionnaire as a way to assess students’ knowledge and interest levels. After their study of the book, students can review their initial responses to the questionnaire and reflect on their goals, opinions and learning.
- Show one of the films/videos listed in “Essential Viewing” in *Hip Hop World*, page 136, and discuss it.
- Have a group or class discussion to introduce the topic. Ideas to prompt discussion are
 - How would you explain hip hop to someone who has never heard of it?
 - Why should you care about hip hop?
 - How did hip hop get started?
 - Who would be on your list of 10 Most Influential Hip Hop Artists, and why?
 - Which hip hop artists would you currently put on a Who’s Hot and Who’s Not list? (six in each category)

TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES

- Read the book as a class, with group or class discussions at the end of each chapter and a culminating activity at the end. You could use a combination of teacher read-aloud, guided reading and independent reading.
- Have students read the book independently and create their own independent study project.
- Assign groups of students one chapter each and have them read it and present it to the rest of the class.
- Have students read the book in groups and then either collaborate on a culminating activity or complete it independently.

GROUNDWORK GUIDES

HIP HOP WORLD

- Ask students to keep an Issues Journal (in writing or on audio or video) in which they comment on what they have read and/or discussed. Encourage frequent updates throughout the study of *Hip Hop World*. Let students know from the outset whether the journal is for personal use only, or if it's meant to be part of their assessment.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you think the “Golden Era” of rap is, and why?
- Should sampling other music be allowed without copyright restrictions?
- Examine the issue of race in hip hop. Should hip hop be appreciated but not appropriated? Why is white enjoyment of black hip hop culture a deep issue? What advice does the author give to hip hop artists about cultural ownership? (See page 52.)
- What about the misogyny, sexism and homophobia in a lot of rap; how do you reconcile the music and the messages?
- The author writes, “The N-word might be the most offensive expletive on the planet” (p. 53). Why is the term so loaded? Should it be banned from rap albums? Should only blacks use it? Is it acceptable with a different spelling?
- What do you think of the author’s claim that “There is no other music genre in the history of North American music that is as fixated on money as hip hop”?
- What is the future of hip hop?

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

- Students create an annotated and illustrated world map of hip hop, identifying the global hip hop centers and influences described in *Hip Hop World*.
Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, World Studies, English Language Arts, Geography, History, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Students imagine they have been asked to plan a “10 Essential Rap Songs” album. They can design the CD cover and write the notes for the CD liner, explaining the reasons for each choice.
Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, English Language Arts
- Students use a hip hop song they have written, or an existing one, and create a storyboard for a video of the song. If possible, they could also make the video.
Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, English Language Arts, Communications Technology

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- Direct students to page 28 to read about hip hop's presence in the Smithsonian museum. Have students design a museum display. Based on what they have learned from *Hip Hop World*, including the International Hip Hop Timeline, they choose the main artifacts they would feature (with video and audio clips) and draw a mock-up of the display. They also write a description of the display, the reasons for its inclusion in the museum, and explanatory captions for each artifact. Provide a variety of museum catalogues and websites as models.

Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, English Language Arts, History, Humanities and Social Sciences

- Students make a short film about hip hop: a day in the life of a hip hop fan; a dramatized biographical film about a hip hop artist; interviews with people about their opinions of hip hop; or a “how-to” demonstration film.

Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, English Language Arts, Communications Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences

- Students choreograph a hip hop dance and either direct a performance of it or present a description of it. They should include an oral or written explanation of the look and effect they were trying to achieve and of their influences.

Subjects: Dance, Music, English Language Arts

- Students collaborate with a younger student, an adult family member or a senior citizen to discuss an issue they're both concerned about. They consult the collaborator for suggestions of samples of music, audio clips, or other sound samples from that person's musical interests or experiences that would work well in a rap. They could write the rap, or just describe a plan for it and the samples they would use.

Subjects: Music, Visual Arts, English Language Arts, Communications Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences

- Students create a “dream team” hip hop group (emcee, deejay, dancers) and describe in detail the sound and look they want to achieve, in an oral presentation or in writing. Have them skim the book for ideas of global influences they might want to incorporate and for models of how to describe the look and sound (see page 111, for example).

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts, Communications Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Business Studies

- Students write a rap lyric. They could begin by writing a list poem of images based on something they observe: the school cafeteria, the bus ride home, TV commercials, kids playing in a park.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts

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- Students explore the technology behind deejaying: the turntables, mixer, crossfader; digital scratch software; scratch techniques; and/or meshing video with turntabling. Have them give an oral presentation on how the technology works using diagrams, models or a PowerPoint presentation.

Subjects: Music, Communications Technology, English Language Arts, Visual Arts

- Students choose a rap album to review. Provide sample reviews as models.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts

- Students analyze/critique a rap lyric, commenting on the main message and how effectively it's presented; the tone and voice; the images used; and the effectiveness of the rhythm, word choices and rhymes.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts

- Talk with students about the role of a writer-in-residence at colleges and universities. Ask students to imagine they are a hip hop artist-in-residence at your school. Have them describe, in the form of a series of journal entries, what they would advise up-and-coming hip hop artists; issues they are concerned about in the hip hop industry; an event they would organize to promote hip hop.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts, Business Studies

- Students write an essay about *Hip Hop World* in which they comment on author Dalton Higgins's writing style, his own use of wordplay and his skill as a wordsmith.

Subject: English Language Arts

- From the book, students choose one artist, cultural group or issue to research further. They present their findings and opinions in a format they choose, for example, monologue, rap, essay, oral presentation, biography or photo essay.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts, Visual Arts, Communications Technology

- Have students reread page 121, which describes a similarity between rap and country music. Students write an essay comparing rap with another music genre, considering their similarities and differences in terms of roots, themes, musical styles, instruments, venues, cultural influences, social issues, economics and influence on the global scene.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts, Business Studies

- Students write a biography of a hip hop artist(s).

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts

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- Students consider portrayals of women in hip hop. They write an essay or give an oral report comparing the portrayal of women in early hip hop with today's hip hop; comparing how various female hip hop artists portray women; or tracing some common themes in female hip hop artists' work.

Subjects: Music, English Language Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Health/Career and Life Management

CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER GROUNDWORK GUIDES

- See *Being Muslim* for issues of racism and ethnocentrism, and for details of hip hop's influence on some Muslim youth.
- See *The Betrayal of Africa, Democracy and Empire* for issues of poverty, global economics, imperialism, racism and freedom.
- See *Cities* for urban issues and social protests.
- Have students select other books in the series for independent study.

GROUNDWORK GUIDES

HIP HOP WORLD

HIP HOP WORLD: GETTING STARTED QUESTIONNAIRE

1. My knowledge of hip hop is

☐ huge ☐ average ☐ fair ☐ limited

2. I think the study of hip hop is

☐ highly relevant to me ☐ somewhat relevant to me ☐ not relevant to me

3. My comfort level in discussing my opinions about hip hop is

☐ very comfortable ☐ reasonably comfortable ☐ not comfortable

4. What I feel about hip hop is . . .

5. What I want to know about hip hop is . . .

6. I think my opinion of hip hop is affected by . . .

7. My goals for studying this book are . . .

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Name: _____ Date: _____

	NO	SOME- WHAT	YES	COMMENTS
1. I achieved the goals I set for myself for studying this book.				
2. I took part in group and class discussions and gave supported opinions.				
3. I showed respect for classmates, and I cooperated in class and group work.				
4. I did my best work on my project/task.				
5. I have a solid understanding of the issues the book presents.				

DALTON HIGGINS



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DALTON HIGGINS is a music programmer, pop culture critic, author, broadcaster and journalist.

He is the co-author of two books: *Hip Hop* (Thomson Nelson) and *Much Master T: A VJ's Journey* (ECW Press), and his work has been referenced in many popular culture essays around the world.

As a print journalist, Dalton is a Canadian National Magazine award recipient, and his articles have appeared in esteemed print and online mediums in the United States and Canada.

As a broadcaster, he is a former TV host and writer of BPM TV's *Urban Groove*, and has appeared as a regular pundit on shows ranging from CTV's *Talk TV*, *The Chatroom* to MuchMoreMusic's *Listed*. An expert on a wide range of topics related to popular culture, Dalton has appeared on CTV's *Canada AM*, CBC Radio One's *Metro Morning*, CTV Newsnet's *The Verdict*, TVO, OMNI TV, TSN's *Off the Record*, I Channel, and MuchMusic's *Rap City* and *The New Music* among others, providing opinions on hot issues of the day. Behind the camera, he has produced documentaries about barbershop culture (*More Than a Haircut* premiered at the 2009 Reelworld Film Festival), human beatboxers on CBC Radio One's *Outfront*, and has worked on CBC and SUN TV broadcasts of the Cana-

dian Urban Music Award shows as a scriptwriter for Russell Peters, Master T and Jilly Black.

In the global arts and entertainment industry, Dalton Higgins is a respected online content provider, having co-managed the Canadian chapter of NYC-based youth web organization Shine and shine.com, and created content for NY-based, urban multi-media company UBO (indieplanet.com).

He is a music programmer at the Harbourfront Centre — Canada's Centre of Contemporary Culture — and has sat on a long list of juries that run the gamut from the Juno Awards (Canada's equivalent to the Grammys) and the Echo Prize (presented by SOCAN, the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, to identify what's best in current independent music) to Honey Jam (Canada's all-female talent showcase).

Dalton holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature/Mass Communications from York University, a Book & Magazine Publishing diploma from Centennial College, and he spent a summer doing graduate research on reggae music at the University of the West Indies (Jamaica).

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“[The Groundwork Guides] are excellent books, mandatory for school libraries and the increasing body of young people prepared to take ownership of the situations and problems previous generations have left them.”

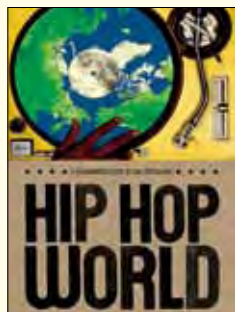
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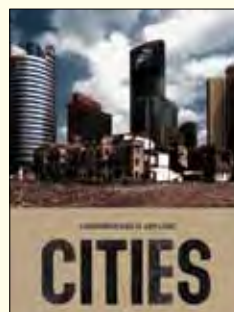
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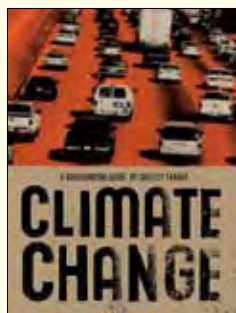


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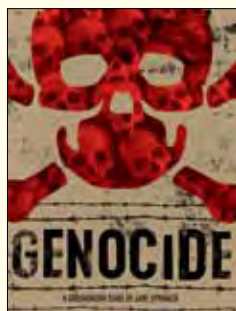
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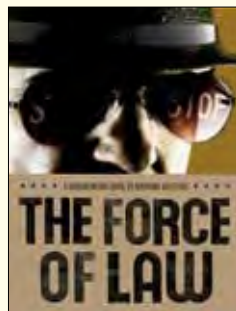
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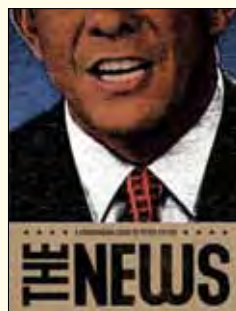
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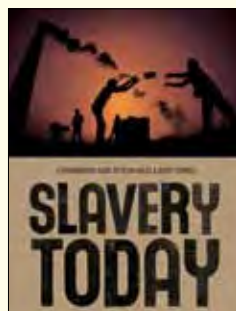
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