



Hip Hop and its message

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Personal Project / Supervisor: Aidan Graham / Word Count 3375

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Investigation

Goal and Global Context

The goal my personal project was to create a YouTube documentary stating, explaining, providing evidence and concluding the current state of the United States of America through the viewpoint of contemporary hip hop artists. I aimed to complete this project before the school put winter break into session. The documentary was specifically a YouTube documentary. I would record the monologue for the YouTube documentary in my own voice. Music would be added as an example and/or evidence to support and cement my statements in the audio. The video aspect also served as a support factor to visualize my statements and what was being said in the music.

What made my goal a highly challenging one was approaching the research process with an unbiased perspective. I myself am by default biased, biases that I have cultivated from my changing surroundings. To get an answer that was unbiased I had to make sure that my information was not biased and that I was not approaching the information in a biased manner. The West and East Coast division serves as an excellent example. I was born on the East Coast of the United States of America. I have family in the East Coast, friends in the East Coast and strong memories in the East Coast. Since I have a deep relation to the East Coast, I have a bias towards the East Coast and it's superiority to the West Coast. If an unbiased source of information weighed the East Coast against the West Coast I would have considered that information biased, even if it gave a fair comparison. Every time I began researching I had to keep in mind my biases and put them aside when I read information to deem it biased or not. Through this project I have learnt to put aside my biases when closely analyzing text.

Music and its influence are undoubtedly powerful. Hip-hop specifically is a dynamic format of art. Hip-hop is a form expression of that allows messages to be clearly spoken through it. I chose to create a documentary on contemporary hip hop artists and how hip-hop conveys the current state of the United States of America because it gives the unique perspective of an individual whom came from life vastly different from mine. The difference in perspective, lifestyle and experience intrigued me, as it is radically different from my perspective, my lifestyle and my experiences.

My Global Context is Personal and Cultural Expression. Personal and Cultural Expression is exploring the ways in which we *"discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic."* I selected the global context of Personal and Cultural Expression because it helped to guide my personal project in a direction I was unfamiliar with. I liked to listen to music and what rappers said, but never have I explored why they say it. Good artists, whether it they're painters, musicians or writers represent an underappreciated side of America. Aside from accountants their occupation is a rare one, because it pays them to think, their job is to think. Musicians, more specifically hip-hop artists have seen and lived through a glass that so few have. They then share that glass through their music so that the world can look through theirs. Their music is the expression of their struggle and how they lived and grew. From poverty

and low-income homes with school that had more dropouts than graduates, from places where selling drugs was widespread and the easiest way to get money. These artists express their rough upbringings in areas considered ghettos and how they survived. Their music is more importantly the expression of themselves. The definition of hip-hop is parallel to the definition of Personal and Cultural Expression, exploring the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

Prior Learning

My knowledge prior to beginning the project was merely general and only scratched the surface, the tip of the iceberg. I knew the names of artists, listened to their music and had a general idea of what the golden age of hip-hop was, artists and music that I have come to know and familiarize myself with over years of listening to their music. Aside from listening to the music I had no real knowledge or experience on the true depth of the subject.

The informational gain I have made from my research was tremendous. I have researched many articles, blog posts, discussion forums and YouTube videos to find information that is equally useful and relevant to my project. I have come to understand themes and common messages from the 80's, 90's and 2000's, what considered the 90's as the Golden Age of hip-hop, the transition made between the decades of the 80's, 90's, 2000's and today and the history and true beginnings of hip-hop music.

Research Skills

My research skills prior to beginning the personal project were poor to the degree that all I was able to do was find the information I was searching for to support my claims and cite them, this led to a hole in my research skills. I was unable to read information and properly analyze whether it was biased or unbiased. The MYP Personal Project has significantly improved my research skills. It has taught me to recognize information that is biased and recognize information that has no factual support and is based on claims. My information and media literacy in general greatly improved. I developed skills in critically analyzing, evaluating and interpreting both media and informational communications from hip-hop music videos, performances and lyrics. I learnt to put my biases aside when I began researching for bias-sensitive information, demonstrating my awareness of media interpretation and ability to understand a range of perspectives from multiple varied sources.

I have researched articles, blog posts, discussion forums and YouTube videos to find information that is equally useful, relevant and importantly unbiased for my project. I verified the reliability of a source by crosschecking information and analyzing the author's other work (if there was any) to understand their perspective.

Planning

Developing Criteria

I defined realistic criteria to measure the quality of my project's final outcome by adapting the SMART guidelines. The criterion had to be realistic to my situation, relevant and specific to my product, concise and clear to create a clean understanding of what my goals where to be. In order to create a product I had to create criterion to determine what I expected from myself and from the product.

What determines a good video is its quality, relevancy and how well it answers the central question. To do this the video must clearly state the central question in the beginning, a summary of the answers within the conclusion, be no longer than 20 minutes and is concise, cohesive and thorough. In addition the video must actively retains the viewers' attention and does not include information irrelevant to answering the central question.

To expand my knowledge and properly execute this project, I had to learn to use certain software, specifically iMovie and Photoshop. I originally planned on using Abode Premiere to create the video but had to change the criteria because Adobe Premiere is a difficult application to use, which is why professionals only use it. With lyrics I learnt to properly explicate, analyze and identify the theme of the written piece. I originally intended on focusing on the creation of cinematic video to create beautiful visuals, but later changed that criterion, as clear audio became the clear priority. The skills I obtained would not have been used to their potential and pushed further if I had not learnt to properly research first. I made sure to first create a detailed and thorough outline of what the documentary is going to cover, find out what makes a compelling YouTube video and find contemporary artists (and their songs) that convey the current state of the United States of America, the focus point of my project.

Planning and Recording the Development Process

I set a strict schedule for my and recording process. Every day I would make sure to complete my homework when I came home from school. Once my homework was complete I would use the Pomodoro technique to conduct my research until I had finished 3 rotations. I would only stop early if I had completed an entire criterion (not sub-criterion) or if it was getting late.

The Pomodoro technique is setting a work period that lasts for a certain time within the timeframe of an hour and taking a break that is a third of the work time. For example my work setting was a thirty-minute work period with a ten-minute break. After the break the work period begins again and it all repeats.

At the end of the week or when I finished a criterion I would upload all my work to my Process Journal. This allowed me to keep track of how much progress I made.

Throughout the course of the research and creation of my product I faced numerous obstacles, one being my bias. I had a bias in my project, I would prefer some music to others because of their artist or sound or era. This would have

greatly impacted my research had I not overcome this. I overcame this by learning to recognize biased information while keeping my own biases in mind and using crosschecking to prevent my bias from deeming unbiased information biased.

My biggest obstacle was poor time management. I had set a strict working schedule, told myself nothing would disturb it, and if anything did I would not allow it to. This mindset was immediately paged over. I wouldn't keep to the uploading schedule nor did I ever use the Pomodoro technique. I was working at an inconsistent pace; not working on my personal project when I was supposed to and planned top be working on my personal project became a huge liability. I recognized this this when I realized how much work I had left to do just days before winter break, the day that I had set for myself to complete the project.

Unfortunately at the time I was managing my state of mind poorly. I made the decision to switch from a YouTube video to a podcast. This resulted in me spending the Thursday and Friday before break in the Mac Lab (a computer lab with Apple iMacs) until 8-9 PM each night. I was later again overwhelmed and again spent my evening making visuals for my podcast to create a YouTube video.

The task of citing my sources was laborious and bland to the extent where I just put it off whenever the thought came to me. My sources continued to pile while my citations were empty. Eventually I sat down to reflect on and self-assess my work and the thought of doing my citations came to me again. At that moment I was not going to let poor organizational and self-management skills get the best of me and procrastinate, I was going to be an efficient and effective learner and persevere as I sit in this one spot and refuse to move until my citations are complete. It was laborious, it was exhausting and above all it was bland and boring, but I got it done.

Taking Action

Creating the Product/Outcome

My SMART goal was to create a documentary YouTube documentary stating, explaining, providing evidence and concluding the current state of the United States of America through the viewpoint of contemporary hip hop artists. My end product was exactly so.

At first it was going to be a proper documentary, where I would be on camera speaking about the current state of the United States of America through the viewpoint of contemporary hip hop artists. When music would play there would be cut scenes to where the music video would play in sync to the audio I was using to prove my point.

But multiple problems occurred, specifically the lack of time due to my poor organizational skills. To meet the deadline I set for myself in time I instead created a podcast using GarageBand. Later when I returned from winter break my supervisor told me that it was unacceptable and I had to achieve my criterion. My supervisor was right and to create the video I used various YouTube video and music video clippings to create a visual aid for the

documentary podcast, thus making it a documentary. My original image for the end product was different than what I created, but it was guided by the process and was ultimately better than what I intended it to be.

Demonstrating Thinking Skills

My thinking skills before this project were basic. I was able to think on general and broad topics but had never gone deeper and branched out into the topics. My thinking was for the most part biased and black and white. When evaluating texts, media, issues and ideas that opposed my opinion I would approach them by comparing the information to my prejudices and preconceptions, and if the information was not convincing enough to change my mind I would reject the information completely.

From this project I have learnt to think as an internationally minded, reflective and open-minded thinker. To fully understand what it is I am learning I now try to develop my knowledge and ability to explore ideas and issues that have a local and global importance by inquiring into the aspects of an idea or issue that I am unfamiliar with. When doing so I make sure to keep myself open-minded of opinions and ideas that differ from mine when analyzing information.

When evaluating texts, media, issues and ideas that opposed my opinion I now approach them with an open-mind without bias, taking into consideration not only the information itself but also the perspective that the information is coming from. My ability to generate novel ideas and consider new perspectives is now multi-faceted and my opinions are cultivated from deeper understandings of different viewpoints.

Reflecting

Evaluating the Quality

My criteria for the product is 1) Skills to obtain; How to use iMovie, How to use Photoshop, How to make clear audio, How to properly explicate and analyze lyrics, How to properly identify the theme of the piece. 2) Research; Create a detailed and thorough outline of what the documentary is going to cover, Find out what makes a compelling YouTube video, Contemporary artists (and their songs) that convey the current state of the United States of America, and 3) Video quality; Answers the central question, Clearly states central question in the beginning, Clearly states a summary of the answers within the conclusion, Maximum length 20 minutes and Video is concise, cohesive and thorough which is assessed by how it Actively retains the viewers' attention and Doesn't include information irrelevant to answering the central question.

The criterion *Skills to obtain* was met completely. I learnt to use iMovie and Photoshop CS6 to a level where I was able to use the applications with proficiency. I met the criterion for learning how to create clear audio by interviewing Mr. Guime

Odendaal, our music teacher. In general I accomplished this criterion well as I prompted myself to be a knowledgeable risk-taker when tackling unfamiliar situations. I was being a risk-taker by learning to use applications I had never used before and using those applications to create my product. I had to keep myself open-minded when explicating lyrics in order to properly do so. The area where I did not perform as well was learning *how to make clear audio*. I was unable to properly interview Mr. Odendaal on how to make clear audio and performed poorly in expressing my ideas as a communicator.

The second criterion to begin my journey into the project was the most difficult hurdle to overcome. There is a Korean proverb whose literal translation is “*Starting is half the task*”. I spent an entire weekend doing nothing besides creating a well structured outline for my project, because I knew that once I did so my journey would be more forgiving and focused.

To improve I would not have spent any time trying to figure out what makes a compelling YouTube video. I would not have even included it in my criteria. This is because my project was not aimed towards creating a compelling YouTube video, it was about creating a compelling documentary. The two may seem parallel as they are both videos, but the research I did on creating a compelling YouTube had the core idea of getting views in mind. If my goal was to generate views I would have found this information useful, but my purpose was to create quality content, not content that would generate views and clicks. The specifications for my documentary itself in the entire criterion of *Video Quality* were overly general. To improve I would have made the specifications much more specific and correlated to my research.

Extending Knowledge

During the process of completing this project I’ve learnt about what Personal and Cultural Expression is and about my project and how they relate to each other. Personal and Cultural Expression is exploring the ways in which we “*discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.*” What I learnt about the importance of global context of Personal and Cultural Expression is integration to life. Without exploring the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, beliefs, enjoy our creativity and appreciate aesthetic we wouldn’t have the art that is hip hop music today. Hip hop is an art, a form of personal and cultural expression that expresses and extends creativity and is an aesthetic.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Process Journal Extracts

WEDNESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2016

Yesterday I wrote the script for my documentary. I realized that due to time constraints I wouldn't be able to make a video documentary, and decided to create an audio instead. Today I edited the script, recorded the audio and downloaded the necessary songs to input. All I have left to do is cut the audios together and export them.

SATURDAY, 03 DECEMBER 2016

The artists I chose from the 2000's are still relevant today. I feel that the 2000's were a transitional period, where most artists who were rapping in the 2000's really found their voice. Some of them continued on to today, such as the three I chose. Others, like Young Jeezy, were great artists but didn't survive the transformation into today. The reason I feel that the 2000's were a transitional period is because it went from being real in the 90's to showing off in the 2000's to back to being real today. I'm not sure how to effectively explain it, but I will have to figure out a way to prove my point.

THURSDAY, 01 DECEMBER 2016

What makes a good Youtube video?

quality camera - If the quality of the content is bad, nobody will watch it and focus more on how pixelated the video is instead of the video itself.
good lighting - Even with a quality camera, people can't move the video around to see the objects from a better angle. This means that it's up to the content creator to find the best angle with the best lighting to shoot.

quality sound - my interview with Mr.O went above and beyond with this decent editing skills - a video has to be pretty, that's why it's a video and not a form of non-visual art. I've learnt how to use iMovie and the Youtube Online Editor is another tool that was mentioned.
Title / headlines - No one can find your video if you don't properly tag, categorize and title it.

<http://www.dummies.com/business/marketing/social-m...>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/youtube-videos-suck/>

THURSDAY, 01 DECEMBER 2016

I conducted the interview with Mr.Odendaal, therefore I am done with the criteria of skills to obtain. I interviewed Mr.O about proper audio production and got all the information I needed very quickly.

Q: What are the key things to focus on when producing speech / voiceover audio?

Room you're recording in
White noise levels (keep it as low as possible)
Make sure there's no reverb and/or bounce
Prevent sound from leaking in
Focus the sound using a quality microphone, the quality of the microphone

There're two main types of microphones; unidirectional (cardioid) and omnidirectional. With cardioid microphones you have to speak directly to it, only has one specific distance from the mic, if the mic is away from your mouth, won't record well. Other type omnidirectional, it picks up all sounds everywhere at different distances. They're better for recording audio / music because they pick up more than regular mics do.

Q: What equipment would you use for sound leak prevention?

Use bed foam and egg cartons to cover the walls
cover electric outlets
use sound diffusers and sound reflectors
quality microphone

use a high-quality editing program for producing; i.e. FL Studio

THURSDAY, 01 DECEMBER 2016

At this point I've completed the following criteria; how to use iMovie, how to use Photoshop, create a detailed and thorough outline of what the documentary is going to cover, how to properly explicate and analyze lyrics and how to properly identify the theme of the piece. After I have interviewed Mr. O on how to make clear audio I will have completed the entire set of skills I need to obtain and will continue with the research I've been doing, but more focused now. I aim to conduct the interview before the end of this week and finish my research before Monday as well. The video should be done by the end of next week.

WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2016

The three artists I've chosen for the contemporary category are; Killer Mike, Kendrick Lamar and Drake. I almost went with Ab Soul over Kendrick Lamar but I felt that Kendrick Lamar was a better choice. The reason being that even though Ab Soul is very politically raw, he seems to jump around a lot in his songs. That's my opinion, and I've listened to the *These Days* album and the songs *Huey Knew* and *Terrorist Threats*. The reason I chose the rappers I chose was because they represent what hip hop has become today. Killer Mike is political, Kendrick Lamar is real and Drake is emotional. I almost chose Kanye West but didn't because although he is an icon of the contemporary hip hop generation, his work is so vast that there's too much about him already in terms of Youtube.

TUESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2016

I spiraled down the youtube rabbit hole and discovered music I never learnt

before. I've never liked Drake because I read an interview from a ex-OVO member that Drake used them as his hit-factory. During the elections I became much more aware of biased information. Nothing is black and white, and it's up to myself to understand the gray.

So I started off with listening to Drake songs. Drake is a good example of contemporary hip hop and he isn't as bad as I made him out to be. After three songs I came upon Killer Mike. I've listened to one Killer Mike song before; Reagan. The whole thing gave me goosebumps. It was political, it was real and it was aggressive. Killer Mike is most definitely a voice of the people in modern society, how slavery has been abolished in law, but not in mind. There were also the song "Fuck Donald Trump" by YG. It was very relevant and expressed similar concerns to Killer Mike's "Pressure" and "Reagan", except more simple and hood-local (hood-local; language, references and activities are local to the hood, like gangbanging and jumping cars that mexicans from the hood usually own).

Links to GENIUS lyrics of the songs I listened to this session:

[Drake - Started from the Bottom](#) [Drake - Worst Behavior](#) [Drake - Headlines](#) [Killer Mike - Reagan](#)

[Killer Mike - Pressure](#) [Killer Mike - A.D.I.D.A.S Outkast - The Whole World](#)

MONDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2016

I met with my project supervisor during lunch and discussed my idea of using atlanta and gambino as a lens for my work, it was rejected. If I did go through with doing so then my argument would be weak and I'd have little to talk about. I've created the outline for my documentary and once approved will begin the creation of the documentary. I've already run into one problem, that being related to adobe premiere. My computer isn't capable of running premiere smoothly, neither is my desktop or my school issued laptop. I think I may have to settle with using iMovie on the school iMacs, which isn't bad. Instead of learning how to use Adobe Premiere I now have to learn to use iMovie.

This is my outline for the documentary:

Thesis: Contemporary Hip Hop has normalized and popularized music that realistic, political and emotional. Hip hop now is more real, political and emotional than it ever has been.

*select a few artists from each era

Outline / Structure:

-Hip Hop in the 1980's
oStyle of 80's hip hop
oHow do you identify the style of music?
oWhat was the style of hip hop in the 1980's in regard to music and it's relation to fashion?
oMajor themes of 80's hip hop
o80's hip hop transition

to the 90's / golden age-Hip Hop in the 1990'soStyle of 90's hip hop\$What was the style of 90's hip hop in regard to music (gangsta rap and the golden age) and its relation to fashion? \$What is the golden age of hip hop and why was it considered the golden age?oMajor themes of 90's hip hopoThe end of the golden age and the transition to 2000's hip hop-Hip Hop in the 2000's

oStyle of 2000 hip hop in regard to music and fashionoMajor themes of 2000 hip hop-Contemporary hip hopoStyle of contemporary hip hop in regard to music and fashion\$How is today's music and lyrics different from the past?\$How is fashion much more prevalent / different in hip hop than it was in the past? (think Kanye and Yeezy, Tyler the Creator and GOLF, Chance the rapper and how he doesn't sell his music but makes merch like tshirts)

oMajor themes of contemporary hip hop\$How are these themes similar to the past?\$How are these themes different?-Summarize everything with compare and contrasts, give conclusion, restate and reinforce thesis, and what the future of rap is

SUNDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2016

Atlanta is a TV show with the rapper Childish Gambino, aka Donald Glover. The T.V show was recommended to me by my supervisor. I've only watched the rst season, but the sheer content and truth in the T.V show explains, showcases and sheds light on my entire project. What does contemporary hip hop say about the current state of the USA? Atlanta answers exactly that. the main character (earn) in the story is a Princeton-dropout and is trying to make it in the rap game. He's a manager for his cousin, who's a famous hood rapper. He's homeless, divorced with a child and poor. In the T.V show they talk about many facets of what contemporary hip hop is saying.

The rst episode begins with a man on a date breaking the side-mirror of Paper boi's car. Although paper talks about getting lots of money and being famous, he's only locally famous and isn't rich enough to afford an expensive car. Either he can't afford one or he's staying incognito. I don't believe he's trying to be inconspicuous because later in the season him and his friend Darrius tell Earn that they need to ex more, to aunt their money more. Earn says they need to get more money before they can do that, to which paper boi and Darrius laugh at him. I'm not sure what that means, but I think it has something to do with the poor state of the education system and social pressure to show off. It's possible that's social pressure because when paper boi, Darrius and Earn were in the club paper boi kept trying to one up another rapper who had more money, girls and was in a better VIP lounge. The rst episode shows Earn's current state; a homeless and divorced man with kids and a very low income job who is determined to make it in the rap game. An interesting bit was when a white guy told Earn a joke and used the word "Nigga" unnecessarily, but when Earn was in the car with Darrius and Paper boi, two big guys who look like thugs, the white guy left the word "nigga" out the joke. The joke wasn't even funny, it's like the white guy said "Nigga" for the sake of saying "Nigga". The joke was that he was at a party, it was going

good but his DJ kept playing a certain artist (Flo-Rida) back-to-back, so he pulled him aside and said “Really Nigga?”. That was the joke. The beginning scene with the conflict over the broken headlight escalated to them showing their guns, and one man on the street screaming “WORLDSTAR!”. Worldstar (to my understanding) is a youtube channel with clips of black people fighting, that’s about it.

The appropriation of Worldstar degrades black people, it makes drug-dealers and gangbangers cool. This is satirically explained in an episode of The Boondocks, where WSHH (WorldStarHipHop) is doing it’s best to keep black people dumb and ratchet so they can exploit and make money off of their stupidity. I don’t know how realistic the episode is being but I’m sure it’s correct to a degree.

There are so many things I could say about each and every episode, which is what I plan to do for my documentary. I’ll use the tv show Atlanta to represent what struggles the people face and how they live and back up what I say using lyrics.

MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2016

As a member of the SPARK newsletter (a student run newspaper) I was assigned to write about the personal project. I think I was assigned to do it, or I chose to do it. One or the other. The article expressed not all but much of my thought on the PP.

Title: The personal project; A project that is personal.

This is it. This is the final challenge in the game, the last hurdle in the race. This is that last piece of broccoli you have to eat before you can watch T.V, the last question on the homework sheet before you can play Super Mario. The last hour you have to work before that paycheck comes in. Just that last little bit and you’ve beaten the game, won the race, eaten the broccoli, played Mario and cashed in that paycheck. All your hard work has paid off and you’ve been rewarded for your efforts. You get a big ol’ number on your report card and 2 months before you begin to cry yourself to sleep every night, granted you get any sleep at all.

What is the personal project? It’s a project you do personally. Jokes aside, it’s the culmination of everything you’ve done in the past years put into one project that determines whether or not you’ve been doing anything useful for the past 4 years. It cements all the criteria; Investigating, planning, taking action and reflecting. Essentially you have a topic you’re interested in, a question you want to answer and a goal that explains what you’re going to do. You relate this to a Global Context, a category for the what and why of your project. Then comes the fun part, making your criteria. It’s like writing your own death sentence, because people usually make unrealistic goals and then try to weasel their way out of it in the reflections. This is why it’s important to use the S.M.A.R.T technique when writing your goal, because

you use logic and reason to determine whether you're trying to grow as a learner or look pretty on your resume. That's also why your topic matters, because if you don't like it, you're probably not going to want to do it. Do whatever you want to do, it's all up to you. It's a student's wet dream.

But there's a reason why dreams are different from reality, because dreams are utopian and the current state of our earth isn't. Being completely liable for all my work isn't fair, it's my first time doing this and it's going to be my only time! Goddamn IB, setting unrealistic standards for students. Who do they think they are, the standard for education that will prepare us for a better future? pshh, that's what I have google for. Why even go to school if we have google? I hate this.

No matter how much you love your topic and all, you're not going to like the process. For one, you have to regularly update your process journal. A process journal is where you make posts reflecting and keeping track of what you've done. It's like Facebook, but you can't broadcast political opinions purposely angering your Hillary-supporting friend to start a comment war with you. You should update your process journal once a week reflecting on what you've done so far this week to meet your deadlines (that you've created!) and what you've done to make progress with your project. This is all done in your free-time, on top of your all your homework, studying, extra-curricular activities and intense meme-browsing sessions.

I myself am an avid fan hip hop. I don't know a whole lot about it but I love the music. I wanted to know what does contemporary hip hop convey about the current state of the United States of America? so I decided to create a concise, cohesive and thorough YouTube documentary stating, explaining, providing evidence and concluding the current state of the United States of America through the viewpoint of contemporary hip hop artists. My topic was contemporary Hip Hop and it's viewpoint on the current situation of the United States of America and it relates to personal and cultural expression because it explores how hip hop expresses ideas, feelings and values in the ways in which we reflect on, enjoy the creativity and appreciate the aesthetic of the music.

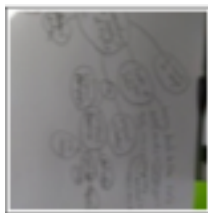
You see what I did right there? I just stated my inquiry question, topic, goal and global context in less than 150 words (132 to be exact). I would've started talking about my criteria but I'm sure that you would've caught on by then.

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2016

I've discussed my plan with a supervisor, and the main goal is to complete a criterion (or piece of criterion) every 2 weeks, more if possible. To understand contemporary hip-hop I have to go to the roots and understand old hip-hop. I will continue to read at least 1 article related to my PP a week and reflect upon it. In addition I need to focus on 2-3 specific artists and explain why I chose those specific artists (why doesn't have to be political).

WEDNESDAY, 02 NOVEMBER 2016

Today was my second PP meeting. I decided on the central question of "What does contemporary hip hop convey about the current state of the United States of America?" because I feel that it's an angle that hasn't been explored yet. One of the reasons being that the direct opinion from the artist gives a raw and honest perspective of what they're speaking about, which is much stronger than a statistic or a general conclusion from a survey. Originally I intended to make a documentary that was over 20 minutes long. But my PP adviser asked me how many >20min videos I watch on YouTube (as my intention was to share the video on YouTube) a day, to which my answer was little to none. Using S.M.A.R.T planning the decision was made to make the video a MAXIMUM of 20 minutes, as most channels that provide similar-esque content have videos that range from 4-12 minutes average (Vox, Wisecrack). Once the criterion for success was clearly explained to me I understood as more of a checklist than as a general rubric. I changed my goal to "To create a concise, cohesive and thorough YouTube documentary stating, explaining, providing evidence and concluding the current state of the United States of America through the viewpoint of contemporary hip hop artists" to make it more concise to my central question.



TUESDAY, 01 NOVEMBER 2016

Last week was my first PP meeting. During this meeting guidelines for criteria for success, my central question and how previous artists influence the contemporary. In between then and my next PP meeting I have formed a criteria for success and two central questions. In the next meeting my goals are to decide which question I'm going to pursue and cement my success criteria.

Central Question (1): What does contemporary hip hop convey about the current state of the United States of America? Study messages (lyrics) of certain artists. Analyze the lyrics and categorize by general message. Explain why the certain artists were chosen.

Central Question (2): Is the struggle still real (same)? Old hip hop with messages of struggle (racism, poverty, etc.) compared to struggles expressed by contemporary artists linked with historical events (MLK, Rodney King trial, etc./.)

Criteria for success;

Thoroughly answers the central question
Clearly states central question in the beginning
Clearly states a summary of the answers within the conclusion

Minimum length 20 minutes
Audience feedback forms result in >80% satisfaction

SUNDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2016

I watched this Vox video on why rappers love Grey Poupon. Grey Poupon is mustard, but it comes in a glass jar and costs more. The narrator more so emphasized how it rhymed with other words and that being a part of its success, but I agree more with her statement on it being a status symbol. It's a lot about what hip-hop has become, artists aunting how much more they have than you. Grey Poupon represents getting out out of the hood of French's, it's a metaphor that they've "made it". I see/hear this a lot in today's hip-hop, Gucci mane especially.

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2016

In the video posted previous to this post the narrator deconstructed the lyrics of rappers in various ways. One of the methods being to highlight with different colors the words with 1, 2 and 3 (maybe 4?) syllables. I did this to J. Cole's "Let Nas Down". The entire process was tedious and long, which is why I didn't do the entire song.

Doing so gave me a better understanding of the lyrics and aspects of the song in the sense of rhythm and enunciation. Certain words began to link with the rhythm and creating a ow, how the suf xes where alike, but even when they didn't rhyme still sounded like they rhymed. In this song Cole uses the technique of NOT rhyming certain words to retain the listeners attention, sending the message across to them clearly. The song isn't spoken rapidly, but at an understanding pace. The use of language indirectly improves your english, with the use of words such as; plateau, velour, resentment, tainted, archaic, formulaic and more (these words are just from the beginning until the the end of the rst verse!).

TUESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

I was supposed to write about this event earlier, but I (obviously) didn't. I am writing this now because I have an English essay due in a day and I only have a 100 words and am still doing the introduction (I don't even have an outline yet, how will I ever make complete the PP without receiving a 1?). I essentially haven't even started, but there's a Korean proverb that a friend once bestowed upon me; "Once you've started, you're already 50% done". I don't get it -_-

On Friday, the 23rd of September a dragon was to encounter me. A dragon known as the "Personal Project Panel Discussion Meeting Evaluation Union Meeting Meeting". As I sharpened my sword and buffered my armor (bling bling) something dawned upon me. Like a schizophrenic, I came to a sudden realization that I had no sword and I was just rubbing my adductor pollicis and the armor I was buf ng was me rubbing saliva on my laptop's track-pad.

So I dug deep. What do I care about? I'm quite the narcissist, self centered and self absorbed intellectual which made this task quite difficult. And then it came to me. Music. I loved Music and the Rap/Hip-Hop culture (not that dancing nonsense, the music), and I've always been curious about its roots and its golden age. And so it was I decided, that if it was music I hungered for, it'd be music I chased. "Stay hungry, stay foolish" I told myself.

My stomach is itching more than olympic gymnast, could it be because I had one too many Pop-Tarts® this morning? hopefully so. Fast forward and the meeting went much quicker than expected, I may have gotten whiplash. I'm doing a documentary on the golden age of Hip-Hop and have to write a podcast about something, not sure what though (hopefully I'll remember at one point). I should do my English essay now, but first I deserve a chocolate milk. Why do I deserve a chocolate milk? critics may question, but I say "Por qué no?".

Appendix B

Criterion for success

Criteria for success;

- I. Skills to obtain;
 - a. How to use iMovie
 - b. How to use Photoshop
 - c. How to make clear audio
 - d. How to properly explicate and analyze lyrics
 - e. How to properly identify the theme of the piece
- II. Research;
 - a. Create a detailed and thorough outline of what the documentary is going to cover
 - b. Find out what makes a compelling YouTube video.
 - c. Contemporary artists (and their songs) that convey the current state of the United States of America.
- III. Video quality;
 - a. Answers the central question
 - b. Clearly states central question in the beginning
 - c. Clearly states a summary of the answers within the conclusion
 - d. Maximum length 20 minutes
 - e. Video is concise, cohesive and thorough
 - i. Actively retains the viewers' attention
 - ii. Doesn't include information irrelevant to answering the central question

Appendix 3

My J.Cole lyrical explication

2 syllables, 3 syllables

J. Cole - Let Nas Down

[Intro:]

Freedom or jail, clips inserted

A baby's bein' born, same time a man is murdered

The beginning and end, as far as rap goes

It's only natural, I explain my plateau

(plateau is a state of little or no change following a period of activity or progress)

And also what defines my name

[Hook:]

Yeah, long live the idols, may they never be your rivals

Pac was like Jesus, Nas wrote the Bible

Now what you're 'bout to hear's a tale of glory and sin

No I.D., my mentor now let the story begin

[Verse 1:]

I used to print out Nas raps and tape 'em up on my wall

My niggas thought they was words, but it was pictures I saw

And since I wanted to draw, I used to read 'em in awe

Then he dropped Stillmatic, rocked the cleanest Velour

(Velour is a plush woven fabric resembling velvet)

Fast forward, who'da thought that I would meet him on tour?

I'm earnin' stripes now nigga, got Adidas galore

Backstage I shook his hand, let him know that he's the man

When he said he was a fan it was too hard to understand

No time to soak up the moment though, cause I was in a jam

Hov askin' where's the record that the radio could play

And I was strikin' out for months, 9th inning feeling fear

Jeter (reference to Derrick Jeter) under pressure, made the biggest hit of my career

But at first, that wasn't clear, niggas had no idea

Dion (Who is Dion?) called me when it dropped, sounded sad but sincere

Told me Nas heard your single and he hate that shit

Said you the one, yo why you make that shit?

I can't believe I let Nas down

Damn, my heart sunk to my stomach, I can't believe I let Nas down

I got defensive on the phone, resentment was in my tone, fuck it

[Verse 2:]

I couldn't help but think that maybe I had made a mistake

I mean, you made "You Owe Me" dog, I thought that you could relate

But while I shot up the charts, you mean tellin' me

That I was not up to par, when I followed my heart

Granted, my heart was tainted by my mind, I kept on sayin'

Where's the hits? You ain't got none

You know Jay would never put your album out without none.

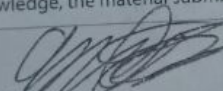
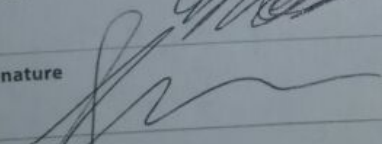
MYP projects academic honesty form

MYP Community project/MYP Personal project

(Delete as appropriate)

Student name	OMAIR KHATTAK									
Student number										
School name	Tashkent International School TIS									
School number										
Supervisor name	Aidan Graham									
<p>Student: This document records your progress and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You should aim to see your supervisor at least three times: at the start of the process to discuss your initial ideas, then once you have completed a significant amount of your project, and finally once your completed report/presentation has been submitted.</p> <p>Supervisor: You are asked to have at least three supervision sessions with students, one at the start of the process, an interim meeting and then the final meeting. Other sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each session, students should make a summary of what was discussed and you should sign and date these comments.</p>										
	Date	Main points discussed							Signature/initials	
Meeting 1									Student:	
									Supervisor:	
Meeting 2									Student:	
									Supervisor:	

MYP projects academic honesty form

Meeting 3			Student:
			Supervisor:
Supervisor comment			
Student declaration I confirm that this work is my own and this is the final version. I have acknowledged, in the body of my work, each use of the words, work or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual (hard copy and/or electronic materials).			
Supervisor declaration I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the student.			
Student's signature			Date 07/2/16
Supervisor's signature			Date 07/2/16