

Rap Music

Writing a Response and Including Details

One of the most controversial forms of music is rap and/or hip-hop. In recent years, many poor behaviors of society's young people have been blamed on rap, hip hop, rock and roll, and other forms of music.

Your task is to read the enclosed article "Does Rap Put Teens at Risk?" and write a meaningful response to the following question:

Rap music (gangsta rap and otherwise) and/or rap music videos makes teens more likely to engage in risky behaviors. Do you believe this statement is true? Why or why not?

In order to receive full credit for this assignment, you will need to **provide examples** and **draw conclusions** from the given text.

Before you begin writing, use the worksheet below as a framework for your thoughts.

1. After reading the entire article, do you agree or disagree with the statement provided?
2. What reasons **in the text** make you agree or disagree? Cite at least three examples here (underline them in your text, and make notes on them below). If you disagree, explain **why** you disagree.
3. Take a look at the attached **rubric** for grading. Make sure you understand what is expected of you in this assignment.
4. Begin writing on the provided paper.

Rubric for Text-Based Writing

Rap Music

Name: _____

Date: _____

Section: _____

Length (At least two paragraphs)	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusion of Relevant Text-based Details	2	4	6	8	10
Strong position asserted (answer the question!)	2	4	6	8	10
Grammar, Punctuation, Mechanics	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Read this Article Before Responding!!!!

Does Rap Put Teens at Risk?

Study: Association Found Between Video Viewing Time and Risky Behaviors

By [Sid Kirchheimer](#)

WebMD Medical News

Reviewed By [Brunilda Nazario, MD](#)

on Monday, March 03, 2003

March 3, 2003 -- Teens who spend more time watching the sex and violence depicted in the "reel" life of "gangsta" rap music videos are more likely to practice these behaviors in real life, suggests one of the first studies to specifically explore how rap videos influence emotional and physical health.

After studying 522 black girls between the ages of 14 and 18 from non-urban, lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, researchers found that compared to those who never or rarely watched these videos, the girls who viewed these gangsta videos for at least 14 hours per week were far more likely to practice numerous destructive behaviors. Over the course of the one-year study, they were:

- Three times more likely to hit a teacher
- Over 2.5 times more likely to get arrested
- Twice as likely to have multiple sexual partners
- 1.5 times more likely to get a sexually transmitted disease, use drugs, or drink alcohol.

"What is particularly alarming about our findings is that we didn't find an association with just violence or one or two risky behaviors," says researcher Ralph J. DiClemente, PhD, of Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. "We found an association with a string of these behaviors."

His study, published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, only involved black girls living in Birmingham, Ala. -- all of whom were already sexually active. While the researchers surveyed viewing habits for various types of rap videos, gangsta rap was by far the most popular among the girls practicing these destructive behaviors.

"We wanted to focus on young, African American women, a population that is very vulnerable," DiClemente tells WebMD. "In these videos, men hold the power and women don't and as a result, are subservient. I'm not sure that the girls in our study were lashing out because of this, but more likely role-modeling the behaviors they see. The women in these videos are doing OK, they're hanging around with a man who is powerful, affluent, going to nice clubs and wearing nice clothes. For these girls, they may not be a bad thing."

His team is currently expanding its research to investigate how these and other rap videos may influence behaviors across other racial, gender and socioeconomic lines. Although gangsta rap videos depict tough inner-city "street" life, their largest viewing audience is white suburban youth, who have better access to cable television channels such as MTV and BET (Black Entertainment Television).

Of course, this isn't the first time that rebellious music has been blamed for society's ills. From Elvis to Columbine, the songs of music-obsessed youth have often been blamed for anti-social behavior. But rap -- and in particular, the especially violent and sexually-explicit gangsta variety -- has raised special concern.

"Most children between ages 2 and 18 spend upwards of seven hours a day ingesting some sort of media," says Susan Buttross, MD, FAAP, chief of child development and behavioral pediatrics at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and spokeswoman for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). "We know that with any type of repeated media exposure, a desensitization can occur that makes these behaviors seem normal. So this finding doesn't surprise me at all."

Buttross, who was not involved in DiClemente's study, is a member of the AAP's committee on public education, which has written several policies warning about the effects the media has on children's behavior. Her committee is currently updating its 2001 policy statement that found 75% of music videos involved sexual imagery, and more than half involved violence -- usually against women. In 1996, the AAP issued another policy statement that was critical of rap music.

But others feel that rap is getting a bad rap. "Yes, there are rap videos that are particularly violent or sexual, but let's look at what is more important in whether or not these kids act out of behaviors -- their family structure and the type of parenting they get," says Cheryl Keyes, PhD, associate professor of ethnomusicology at UCLA and author of *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*. "Parents need to get more involved in what their children are watching."

No argument from DiClemente or Buttross.

"You cannot stick your head in the sand and expect your child will only look at good stuff," says Buttross. "Parents need to know what their children are being exposed to. Certainly, rap is not the only music that portrays negative stereotypes or can negatively impact behaviors, and not all rap music should be implicated. But there have been nearly 1,000 studies that have looked at the effects that the media has on children's behavior. And nearly all of them find there is a strong effect."

SOURCES: *American Journal of Public Health*, March 2003. Ralph J. DiClemente, PhD, professor of public health, Rollins School of Public Health; associate director, Center for AIDS Research, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. Susan Buttross, MD, chief of child development and behavioral pediatrics, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, Miss.; member, American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Public Education. Cheryl Keyes, PhD, associate professor of ethnomusicology, University of California at Los Angeles; author, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*. American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement: *Sexuality, Contraception, and the Media*, issued January, 2001. American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement: *Impact of Music Lyrics and Music Videos on Children and Youth*, December 1996.