

Shakespeare and Hip Hop

What is a classic? We've been talking about this question for weeks, and we've spent some time thinking about how characters can be classic, or archetypal. But what about language? Can words be classic? If yes, what would that mean? This is what we will focus on as we study Shakespeare.

First, we need to learn a little bit about the way Shakespeare wrote. He wrote using a rhyme scheme called **iambic pentameter**. Iambic pentameter means there should be **10 syllables** and **5 stresses** per line, patterned so that the **stresses fall on the even-numbered syllables**.

In each line of iambic pentameter below, the stresses are capitalized, so that when you read the line aloud, the stresses are read louder than the unstresses. Also, try to listen for the 10 syllables by counting them on your fingers as you read.

but SOFT what LIGHT through YONder WINdow BREAKS?
it IS the EAST and JULiET the SUN
deNY thy FAtHer AND reFUSE thy NAME

If you think of it like a beat, the basic beat is **da DUM/ da DUM /da DUM /da DUM /da DUM**

Video: Shakespeare and Hip Hop (<http://goo.gl/eKmD63>)

Video Response

According to Akala:

1. What rhythm does iambic pentameter sound like?
2. Why does iambic pentameter work well with Hip Hop?
3. What are some of the common misunderstandings modern audiences have about Shakespeare?
4. What is the 5th element of Hip Hop?
5. How does this 5th element show a core similarity between Shakespearean language and Hip Hop?

According to you:

6. What questions do you have about Shakespearean language so far?

Introduction to Shakespearean Sonnets

For each sonnet below:

1. Read it out loud at least twice.
2. Try to understand the basic message of the sonnet.
3. Identify 1-3 lines that stand out to you, and be prepared to share why you noticed them.

SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

SONNET 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.