

# HEALTH

## Hip-Hop, Sex, and Body Image

### Related Subjects:

Media Literacy  
Language Arts  
Social Studies

### Objectives:

- Analyze in what ways sexual attitudes and behaviors are influenced by Hip-Hop
- Examine how conceptions of body image are influenced by Hip-Hop
- Increase each student's awareness of his/her physical self and of media influences on his/her self-image and behavior

### Materials:

- Popular magazines for clipping, such as *Vibe*, *Source*, and *XXL*; scissors and glue; newsprint [two sheets for each group of four or five students] and markers; masking tape
- Storyboard Sample (handout)
- "Study Raps Hip-Hop Videos" article (download from Web site)

### Resources:

*The Monster*, A short film written by a group of incarcerated youth that deals with HIV status, communication, and discrimination (Scenarios USA).

### Introduction:

This lesson is intended to prompt discussions about how Hip-Hop affects youth views on sex and body image — for both males and females. Students should examine the net effect of ads, lyrics, and music videos that feature overcharged sexual imagery but don't contain safe sex messages. What are the implications of these images? How do they affect youth attitudes and behaviors?

### Activity:

Have the class read the "Study Raps Hip-Hop Videos" article and discuss. In the study described, girls who watched the most rap videos were nearly two times more likely to have had sex with multiple partners. What does the class think about this? Does the study seem credible?

Next, break the class into small groups and hand them each two sheets of newsprint and some magazines. Students should comb through the magazines and cut out the dominant images and attach them onto the large paper. When they've finished the collage, tape the collages on one of the walls. Ask students to walk around the room, look at the collages, and reflect on what they're seeing.

Possible questions for discussion include:

- Which images appear most often?
- What kind of symbolism is attached to these images?
- How many of the images could be considered sexual?
- What do the videos suggest about sexual activity?
- Do any of the images project safe sex messages?
- Are men and women represented differently?



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## Related activity:

Shift the conversation to body image. Possible questions include:

- o What are the possible effects of these images on youth attitudes towards body image?
- o Where do we get our ideas about what's attractive and what's not?
- o How do media images influence how attractive or appealing we feel?
- o What is it about us that is attractive and that doesn't rest on our appearance? [If students don't suggest these things, be sure to bring them up: humor, intelligence, friendliness, kindness, tact, consideration, patience, determination, compassion. How about our ability to love and be loved, to be a good parent, student, employee, or employer, friend, neighbor?]
- o What things can teens do to feel better about their bodies?

*(questions by Advocates for Youth)*

## Production activity:

Have students create a storyboard for a short video that would inform youth about safer sex or positive body image. The artwork doesn't need to be professional but it needs to tell a story and be aimed at other youth.

