

Stage your own word war



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Please make sure you've downloaded the resource 'Discursive Writing Preparation for Rap Battles' by Helen Mackenzie for further activities to help with the planning and evaluation of the Word War project.

Note for teachers: All CfE outcomes throughout are for Third Level, but the resource will also cover the equivalent outcomes at Fourth Level.

Introduction to Rap Battles

Rap battles are thought to have originated in the East Coast of America in the 1970s Hip Hop scene.

In a rap battle, two rappers compete against each other using braggadocio, put-downs and disses.

A battle is a test of skills in wordplay, imagery, rhyme and rhythm.

Whilst it may appear aggressive, it is comparable to a 'gentleman's sport' such as boxing in that each competitor's sparring is simply focused on winning. Also similar to a boxing match, rap battles are controlled by a referee.

Task

Unlike ordinary rap battles where the topics are personal, ours will be discursive. This way, we can have the necessary competitive element with two sides of an argument being battled out without any personal attacks. In this way, our battles will be more like debates.

Groups will plan content and write the 'bars' together (the lines of rap) with one member of the group actually delivering them in the battle.

A battle will last for three rounds and each round will alternate between competitors. Raps will last for 60 to 90 seconds.

Stage one – training camp

- There will be three battles between groups in each class first.
- Battle topics will be chosen at random.
- A winner will be voted for by the groups not participating in the current battle.
- The winning group from each battle will compete in the Word War.

Stage two – word war

The best groups from each class will each enter a battle.

Again, battles will last for three rounds.

The winner will be decided by the judge on the basis of ideas, vocabulary and use of poetic devices, as well as humour, structure and style.

When the Word War is over you may want to take the opportunity to write a longer piece of discursive writing on your chosen topic. [See accompanying resource document 'Discursive Writing Preparation for Rap Battle' by Helen Mackenzie, for activities to help with this extension activity.]

RULES

- No swearing! The most skilful wordsmith need not resort to bad language.
- No notes – although your rap is prepared, it should appear spontaneous.

TOPICS

- Technology is killing and not aiding communication.
- The school leaving age should be lowered.
- It is time for Scottish independence.

The side of the argument each group is on will be decided at random.

Regardless of your true opinion on the topic, you must battle to win for your team.

How to plan

Although only one individual will participate in the battle, the whole group will collaborate on writing the rap.

1. In your group, decide which member will be presenting the rap.
2. Make a list of arguments on both sides of the argument. (Although you will be battling to convince the audience of your opinion, you need to be aware of opposing views and respond to them!) [See accompanying resource document 'Discursive Writing Preparation for Rap Battle' by Helen Mackenzie, for activities to help with this stage of the task.]
3. Write 16 bars (16 lines of verse) for each of your three arguments. You will need to expand on your arguments in your rap just as you would in an essay, so each round will be like a paragraph in an essay.
4. Organise your bars into a structure and add rhyme, rhythm and any other poetic devices (e.g. imagery, metaphor) which could be effective.
5. Once you have written your three rounds (48 bars in total), the group should coach the individual in how to deliver them, i.e. phrasing, pauses, gestures, pitch, etc.

Discuss the following techniques with your teacher and then with your group when it comes to writing and structuring your rap.

Think about the sound of the words you are using and employ techniques such as:

- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Cacophony
- Consonance
- Euphony
- Onomatopoeia
- Repetition
- Rhyme
- Rhythm

Consider the meanings of the words you choose and select the ones which are most effective.

e.g. Wordplay is very important in rap and demonstrates intelligence and creativity.

Avoid simply rhyming throughout your rap as this will get monotonous and appear unimaginative.

There are many techniques at your disposal and you should challenge yourself to use them:

- Allegory
- Allusion
- Ambiguity
- Analogy
- Cliché
- Connotation
- Contrast
- Euphemism
- Hyperbole
- Irony
- Metaphor
- Metonymy
- Oxymoron/
Paradox
- Personification
- Pun
- Simile
- Symbol
- Synecdoch

Planning

- Decide who will be your group's MC.
- Brainstorm arguments for your rap.
- Once you have three points/arguments, start making notes on each one.

FOR EACH ROUND, MAKE THE FOLLOWING PREPARATIONS:

Step One

1. Create a word bank of vocabulary you want to use to convey ideas.
2. Begin writing couplets and cut them up – you can organise the structure later.

Step Two

1. Begin organising your structure by moving the lines around until you are happy with the order.
2. Consider the style and techniques used in each round – could it sound better? Could it be cleverer? Could it be funnier?

Step Three

1. Now think about delivery – how is each line going to be performed?
2. Think about pauses, emphasis, gesturing, etc. Plan these and rehearse them in your group.

What next?

When the Word War is over you may want to take the opportunity to write a longer piece of discursive writing on your chosen topic. [See accompanying resource document 'Discursive Writing Preparation for Rap Battle' by Helen Mackenzie, for help with this extension activity.]

CfE Outcomes

- I can communicate, collaborate and build relationships (working in a group).
- When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.
- I enjoy creating texts of my choice. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

CfE

Lit 3-05a
Lit 3-09a

Eng 3-27a

Lit 3-24a
Eng 3-27a

Lit 3-03a

Lit 3-29a

Word war – rap sheet

- Use this sheet to write the final drafts of your three rounds (16 bars each)
- Each round has been broken into four stanzas to help you structure your rhymes.
- Include a basic outline of the argument for each round.

Group Name: _____

Topic: _____

Round ____

Summary of Argument: _____

16 Bars

Word war – unit evaluation

Name: _____

Please write a detailed paragraph in response to each question.

1. Did you find Word War unit enjoyable? If so, explain why. (If not, how might the unit have been more enjoyable?)

2. What did you learn from doing this project?

3. Would any other materials have helped to develop the project and make it more worthwhile?

4. What aspects of this unit did you enjoy the most and why?

Word war – peer evaluation

Name: _____

Write a detailed paragraph under each outcome saying:

- If they achieved the outcome and what they did well;
- How could they have been more successful in this area?

1. I can communicate, collaborate and build relationships (working in a group).

2. When I engage with others, I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.

3. I enjoy creating texts of my choice. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

4. Peer Evaluation:

5. Teacher Evaluation:
