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Word Generation - Unit 1.05

## Focus Words

considerable | contribute | demonstrate | sufficient | valid

### Weekly Passage

Some people believe that rap music has had considerable influence on children and teenagers, most of which has been negative. They claim that the lyrics are often violent and especially insulting to women. Thus, they say, rap has contributed to aggression among young people and to behavior that disrespects women.

But is that a valid claim? Supporters of rap music say the songs demonstrate a different face of American culture than the one we usually see on television or in newspapers. They think it's important for rappers' voices to be heard. Other people argue that some individuals who listen to rap were probably violent before ever hearing this type of music. Thus we can't blame rap for their violent actions. Still others say that rap is a form of creative expression – this generation's poetry. They point to rap artists who create positive images for today's youth.

However, some parents are worried about the messages conveyed by rap music and asked the music industry to label CDs with a warning. Many rap music fans consider this a form of

artistic censorship that has no place in a free society.

Do you think that listening to rap leads to aggression? Should we have rules to prevent rap artists from talking about violence, especially violence against women? What would be sufficient evidence, in your view, to support the claim that rap has a negative impact on youth?

#### TEACHER

##### Reading Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

- ▶ Are people's concerns about the dangers of rap music valid?
- ▶ Do you think that rap music contributes to violent or aggressive behavior?
- ▶ What does rap music demonstrate about American culture?
- ▶ Do you think labeling CDs with a warning is sufficient to keep kids from hearing music that is disrespectful?
- ▶ Do you think rap music has had considerable influence on today's kids, either positive or negative?

## Unit 1.05

# Does rap music have a negative impact on youth?

## Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes	
considerable	(adj.) - large; important		consider	considerably	considerate consideration
contribute	(v.) - to add (to); to offer	contributed contributed contributing		contributor contribution	distribute retribution
demonstrate	(v.) - to show; to display	demonstrates demonstrated demonstrating		demonstrator demonstrative demonstration demonstrable demonstrably	monster remonstrate
sufficient	(adj.) - enough; adequate		suffice	sufficiency sufficiently	deficient proficient
valid	(adj.) - convincing; defensible			validate validation validity validly invalid	valor

# Does rap music have a negative impact on youth?

## Problem of the Week



Does rap music **contribute** to violence? A **considerable** number of rap songs talk about hurting and killing people, especially women. However, this is not **sufficient** to show that rap itself is dangerous. Researchers have tried to **demonstrate** connections between rap music and aggressive behavior in many different studies. They try to establish **valid** conclusions by keeping many possibilities in mind. For example, even if rap listeners exhibit violent behavior, the music itself may not be the cause.

One study compared two groups: students who watched rap music videos for 14 or more hours each week, and students who rarely or never watched them. The students who watched the videos for at least 14 hours each week showed the following characteristics.

- ▶ They were three times more likely to hit a teacher
- ▶ They were over 2.5 times more likely to get arrested.

**Option 1:** Based on the information above, is the following conclusion valid or invalid?

Students who watched 14 or more hours of rap music videos each week were more likely to hit a teacher than to get arrested.

- A) The conclusion is valid.
- B) The conclusion is invalid.

**Teacher's Note:** The information given does not compare the likelihood of hitting a teacher to the likelihood of getting arrested. The high-frequency viewers were three times more likely than the low-frequency viewers to hit a teacher, but we aren't told what that frequency is, so we can't compare it to the likelihood of getting arrested.

**Option 2:** Manny watches 7 hours of rap music videos each week. Based on the information above, is the following conclusion valid or invalid?

Manny is 1.5 times more likely to hit a teacher than students who rarely or never watch rap music videos.

- A) The conclusion is valid.
- B) The conclusion is invalid.

**Teacher's Note:** The conclusion is invalid because we have no reason to believe that the relationship between watching rap music videos and hitting a teacher is linear. Here is an example of a linear relationship: Alex's father pays her \$2 for each book she reads. We know that each book brings \$2, and we could draw a straight line on a graph representing the relationship between books read and dollars received. In the real world, most relationships are not linear. For example, we know that eating healthy foods contributes to a healthy body and a long life, but we would not expect each fresh apple a person eats to add a certain measurable value to her quality of life or a predictable number of seconds to her life expectancy.

**Math Discussion Question:** What if researchers could **demonstrate** a **valid** cause-and-effect relationship between rap music and violent behavior? For example, what if researchers could show that non-violent teens became violent after listening to rap? Would this be **sufficient** reason for us to ban certain songs or artists? The Constitution gives **considerable** protection to free speech. However, not all speech is protected. Words that endanger others (such as, in one famous example, yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theater) can be banned. What can you **contribute** to this debate? Where should we draw the line between free speech and public safety?

# Does rap music have a negative impact on youth?

## Debating the Issue



### I. Get ready...

# GO!

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

**A** Rap songs that promote violence, especially violence against women, should not be sold to minors because they set a bad example.

**B** Freedom of speech is an important American right, so rap lyrics should never be censored, no matter what they say.

**C** Rap artists should take some responsibility for setting a good example for young people, and promoting violence does not set a good example, but it is ultimately their choice to write about whatever they want.

**D** Rap music is an important form of creative expression, and kids are smart enough to be critical of bad messages and make responsible decisions about how to behave toward each other.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*I believe that...*

*I agree with you because. . .*

*You make a good point, but have you considered...*

*Can you show me evidence in the text that supports what you said?*

### 2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### TEACHER

Whatever the debate format, ask students to use academically productive talk when arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should be encouraged to take their own positions about the issue at hand.

## Unit 1.05

# Does rap music have a negative impact on youth?

## Science Activity

Professor Kahn and the principal, Miss Jackson, are talking about a group of eighth-grade boys. Their fighting has become a **considerable** problem.

“It’s the music they listen to!” grumbles Miss Jackson. “Kids who listen to rap get in more fights.”

Is this true? Professor Kahn decides to find out.

### Question:

Do students who listen to rap get in more fights?

### Hypothesis:

Students who listen to rap get in more fights than students who don’t listen to rap.

### Materials:

- ▶ 100 students

### Procedure:

1. Ask students what kind of music they listen to.
2. For one year, record how many fights these students get involved in.
3. Calculate the average number of fights for rap listeners and non-rap listeners.



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week’s focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

### TEACHER

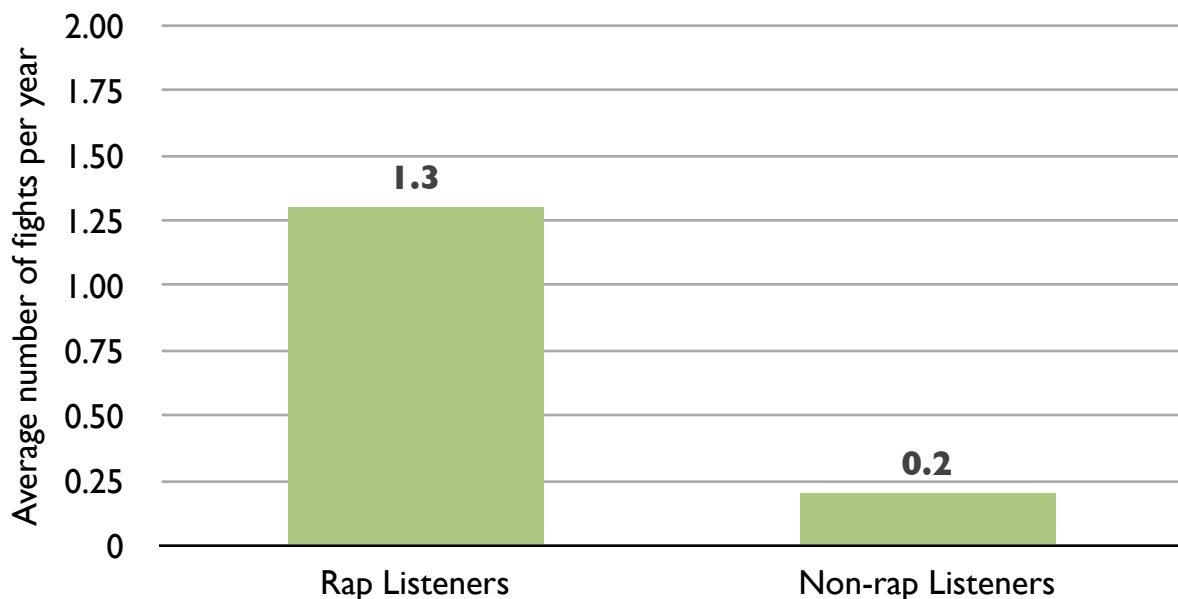
#### Real Research

-This study of young people from the ages of 15 to 25 found that listening to rap was “significantly and positively associated with alcohol use, problematic alcohol use, illicit-drug use, and aggressive behaviors when all other variables were controlled.”

Chen, M.J. et. al. (2006). Music, substance use, and aggression. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67(3), 373-381. Retrieved on November 10 from <http://www.pire.org/detail2.asp?core=38198&cms=294>

#### More on Correlation vs. Causation

In the Analysis, Professor Kahn addresses the fallacy that correlation implies causation. Sometimes, of course, a correlation does reflect causation. (For example, people who smoke are more likely to get lung cancer. And, indeed, smoking causes lung cancer.) Just not always. In one real-life example, women taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) had a lower-than-average incidence of heart disease. Based on this correlation, doctors suspected that HRT helped prevent heart disease. Closer study revealed that the women taking HRT tended to be from a higher socioeconomic group and tended to eat better and exercise more than women who weren’t taking HRT. It was these factors, not the HRT, that were keeping their hearts healthy. In fact, once researchers controlled for variables like diet and exercise, they found that HRT-takers had a higher-than-average incidence of heart disease.

**Data:****Analysis:**

“I knew it,” says Principal Jackson. “Rap makes kids violent.”

Professor Kahn disagrees. “That is not a **valid** conclusion,” she says. “Kids who listen to rap music may get in more fights, but that’s not **sufficient** evidence to **demonstrate** that rap music causes fighting. It may not **contribute** to fighting at all.”

“What do you mean?” Miss Jackson asks.

“Just because two things are correlated, or happen together, doesn’t mean that one thing causes the other,” says Professor Kahn. “For example, people that live in New Orleans tend to eat gumbo. They also tend to like the New Orleans Saints football team. If we did a study, I bet we’d find that gumbo eaters are more likely to like the Saints than non-gumbo eaters. But eating gumbo doesn’t cause people to like the Saints.”

Principal Jackson is quiet. Then she says, “I see what you mean. We need to do more research on rap and violence before we draw conclusions.”

**Conclusion:**

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

While there is a correlation here, this cannot be interpreted as causation. (See teacher notes.)

What evidence supports your conclusion?

On average, rap listeners get in 1.1 more fights per year than non-rap listeners.

How would you make this a better experiment?

Encourage students to consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, whether the experiment can be repeated by other scientists, data collection and recording systems, and other potential explanations for the outcome. Students should understand that these simple experiments represent the beginning of an exploration, not the end. If time permits, have students suggest how the experiment could be strengthened, emphasizing the use of the target words in the discussion.



## Writing Prompt:

Does rap music have a negative impact on youth?

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

### Focus Words

considerable | contribute | demonstrate | sufficient | valid

#### A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

##### Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

##### Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

##### Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

#### TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.

[illegible]