



ORIGINS: Don't Believe the Hype

Don't Believe the Hype: LA Asian Americans in Hip Hop, an exhibition by the Chinese American Museum, originates from the single "Don't Believe the Hype" by Public Enemy. The song encouraged people to question and inspect what was being told to them by the media. Public Enemy's song reminds each of us to think for ourselves before buying into what others believe.

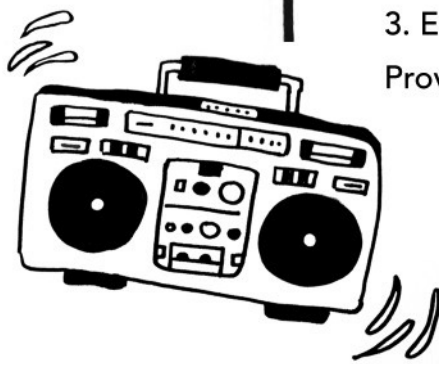
Caught you lookin' for the same thing
It's a new thing, check out this I bring
Uh Oh the roll below the level
'Cause I'm livin' low next to the bass, c'mon
Turn up the radio
They claim that I'm a criminal
By now I wonder how
Some people never know
The enemy could be their friend, guardian
I'm not a hooligan
I rock the party and
Clear all the madness, I'm not a racist
Preach to teach to all
'Cause some they never had this

- "Don't Believe the Hype" by Public Enemy, 1988

1. What is the overall message of Public Enemy's song?

2. In CAM's current exhibition, *Don't Believe the Hype*, the audience is asked to look beyond how Asian Americans are perceived by the media. How does the message of the song and the message in the exhibition complement one another?

3. In the 3rd line of the verse, Public Enemy refers to themselves as "this." What does "this" mean and how does it relate to thinking for yourself?



MUSIC SPOTLIGHT: Analyzing JASON CHU

Do I make my parents proud cause I made it out of the house,
and very few other Asians are makin this kind of sound?
I was raised to be great, told to be the best
Now every project I release that fails just gives me stress
If you've ever been depressed, I know that you can relate
To the weight of a generation and a race
Every time I step on stage, I'm fighting for my place
Even Asians often tell me I don't have a rapper's face
I'm not running in place, I'm just running my race

- "Free" by Jason Chu



1. Free is defined as "not under the control of another." How do these verses show how Jason is feeling in "Free?"

2. Jason uses the word "race" twice in this verse. How is it used the first time compared to the second?

3. Explain whether you agree or disagree with Jason's definition of the word "free." Provide an example of feeling free. If you disagree, how would you define it?

ASIAN WOMEN IN RAP:

Who's? Who?

There's more to female rap than Nicki Minaj. While men dominate the airwaves and the rap game, there are women pushing to be heard and represented.

Unscramble the words to fill in the hip hop verse below or fill in the blanks to create your own version.

You can have the _____, I got the _____ inside of me
drlwo verniues

You can have the _____, I got my _____ to ride with me
amfe ilyfam

Take my last name but you can't deny my history

I'mma show you what it means to have equality

I'mma make my ancestors proud of me

I'mma help you redefine _____
lucniitysam

My fate is greater than the _____ you assign to me
dergen

Yeah I'mma turn you to a _____
nistmeif

I'mma turn you to a feminist

**- ROCKY
RIVERA,**
"TURN YOU"



"Other female rappers are overly sexual, have no wit, and their lyrics are so generic. I want to change the game to make rap that shows I'm not a normal female rapper - it's not about how rich I am, how much sex I have, or how many boyfriends I have. That's just not me."

"I wanted to show people who the person was behind the microphone this time," she added, "tell them about who I was and where I came from."



COMPARE AND CONTRAST: THE ROLE OF Metaphor+Simile IN RAP

Metaphors are comparisons done without the word *like* or *as* whereas similes do use *like* or *as*. They help visualize what is being done. Which one stands out the most to you?

I'm cooler than a polar bear's toenail

- "ATLiens" by Outkast

The Hellraiser, raisin' Hell with the flavor/Terrorize
a jam like troops in Pakistan Swingin' through
your town like your neighbourhood Spiderman

- "Protect Ya Neck" by Wu-Tang Clan

Give it a shot! Write down three metaphors.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Throwing out the wicked like God did the devil,
funky like your grandpa's drawers, don't test me,
we're in like that, you're dead like Presley.

- "Steve Biko" by Q-Tip

If the beef between us, we can settle it
With the chrome and metal shit
I make it hot like a kettle get

- "Kick in The Door" by Notorious B.I.G



Now try it with **similes**. Remember to use *like* or *as* this time around.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



GETTING THE MESSAGE: quote analysis

Read the following rap lyrics and the corresponding question below.



**You took me as safe
That was your first mistake
Who said I was safe
The other night I watched the Oscars**

And the roster of the only yellow men were all statues
We a quarter of the population
There's a room of f[red] in' 1 percenters laughing at you
F[red] a bamboo ceiling, guess I gotta play the villain
- "Safe" by Dumbfoundead

1. Who is Dumbfoundead describing as "safe?" Why does he choose this adjective?



**It's a hard line when you're an import
Baby boy, it's hard times
When you ain't sent for
Racists feed the belly of the beast**

**With they pitchforks, rich chores
Done by the people that get ignored**
- "Immigrants (We Get the Job Done)" by K'naan, Riz Ahmed, Snow Tha Product, and Residente

2. How are the immigrants and imports being compared here? What are the hard times that they have been facing and are they also the people getting “ignored?”



**Skin you alive for my country, I live and die for my country
I kill a pig in a white hooded suit on the low....for my country
They got evil plans in the devil's hands, but I don't pray cause I organize**
- "Us" by Ruby Ibarra featuring Rocky Rivera, Klassy, and Faith Santilla

3. In your opinion, what is the primary message Ruby is trying to get across?

Angel Island

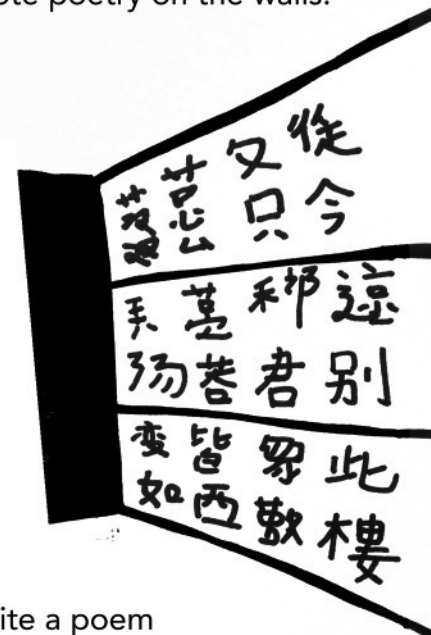
EXPRESS YOURSELF

In 1910, Angel Island was used to regulate immigrants coming into San Francisco, California. Many Chinese immigrants were detained on Angel Island, unable to enter America. To express their hardships, many immigrants wrote poetry on the walls.

I, a seven-foot man, am ashamed I cannot stand tall.
Curled up in an enclosure, my movements are dictated by others.
Enduring a hundred humiliations, I can only cry in vain
This person's tears fall, but what can the blue heavens do?

Most of the poems are written in the styles of classical Chinese poetry which originated during the T'ang Dynasty period. They express a range of thoughts and feelings about dealing with the hardships of migrating so far from home and the difficult conditions they faced once they arrived.

Try it out: knowing what you know about Angel Island, write a poem from the perspective of a Chinese immigrant living on Angel Island.



Answers for Page 31, Asian Women in Rap: Who's Who?

Line 1: world; universe

Line 2: fame; family

Line 6: masculinity

Line 7: gender

Line 8: feminist