

Literacy at Work

how to write a rap



HOW TO WRITE A RAP ACTIVITY

"Compare yourself to the version of you that's greater than you." – Chris Emdin

Use this guide to interact with the "How to Write a Rap" video. Watch a class develop their personas and create rap verses, and then write a rap of your own.

1. WATCH

Watch the video "How to Write a Rap" on hnhco.com/literacyatwork.



2. RESPOND

Answer these questions to begin thinking about what goes into writing a rap and creating a persona.

- How is writing a rap similar to writing a poem or story?
- What are some important elements of rap that Chris and Loaded Lux discuss?
- What does it mean for a rapper to have a persona?
- Chris Emdin asked students, "What's your word?" What were some students' words? Was there a word that caught your attention?

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3. DEFINING PERSONA

An important first step in writing a rap is developing a “persona” that speaks to the real you. A persona is a combination of **performance**, **presence**, and **personality**.

Based on what you learned from the video, what are some actions or qualities that describe each aspect of persona? For example, the expression on your face is an example of presence.

Performance	Presence	Personality
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

4. WHAT’S YOUR WORD?

Your word represents your persona. It can relate to your personality traits, skills, family history, attitude, or style.

Brainstorm

Before you decide on your word, spend five minutes free writing about who you are today and who you want to be in the future. Jot down any thoughts, ideas, phrases, or words that come to mind. There are no wrong answers!

Make Connections

For each of your ideas, write one word that sums up that aspect of your personality. The word does not have to be in English and can even be made up, like Chris’s example, “Ratchedemic.”

Choose Your Word

Read through your list and decide on one word that best matches your persona.

NEED INSPIRATION?

Answer these questions to kickstart your free write.

- How do your friends describe you?
- What aspect of your personality do you wish more people knew about?
- Are you passionate about a hobby, sport, or activity?
- Who’s your hero? What qualities do you have in common with them?
- What’s happening in current events that you are passionate about?

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It's important to reflect on why you chose your word. Think of how you would explain what your word means to your classmates or friends and then answer the questions below.

- What's your word?
- What does your word mean to you?
- How do you live your word? How do you show it in your actions, speech, or body language?

5. WRITING YOUR STORY

Think of a personal story that you want to share with the world. It could be the story of a specific experience or the story of your whole life—there are no limits! Write 3–5 sentences about your story below.

[illegible]

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Time to Rhyme

Now identify ten words that are important to your story. Think of places, emotions, or thoughts that your audience needs to know. Fill out the table below with your ten words. Then, next to each word, write five words that rhyme. Use a rhyming dictionary or ask classmates for ideas.

Hint: You can include imperfect rhymes, like cake and tape, and syllabic rhymes, like never and silver, too!

	Word	Rhyming Words
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

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Writing Your Rap

Use your list of rhyming words as inspiration for your rap verses. Remember that rhyming is important, but so is meaning and structure. The raps should include **figurative language, like metaphors and similes**, to bring depth to the story. Try including other literary devices like **alliteration** and **assonance** to make your verses sound interesting out loud.