

Hip Hop

Ciphers And Battles



Let's Dance! Ciphers And Battles In Hip Hop

Learn how to freestyle like a pro using ciphers and battles. Put your unique mark on your moves by taking part in a freestyling battle in a group setting called a cipher.

What do you need?

- a clear space to warm up and practise in
- comfortable clothes and shoes that allow you to move freely
- a music player and speakers
- appropriate hip hop tracks

Let's begin

1. Choose two songs for your warm-up and go through:
 - cardio exercises
 - isolation exercises
 - basic stretches

Create a cipher

1. Set up a CD player, MP3 player, or computer with speakers in the room. You can either use one of the warm-up songs or the hip hop routine song.
2. Stand in a circle as a class, at least an arm's length apart from one another.

3. When the music plays, one person enters the centre of the circle and performs a dance move.
4. Once the person has completed their move, another person takes their place and performs their own dance move.
5. This process continues until everyone in the circle has had their turn.

The rules of ciphers

- If you are not in the middle, clap.
- Enter the cipher with confidence.
- Do not comment on the other dancers.
- Only try moves that you can perform safely.
- Try new moves on grass or the gym mats first.

Let the battle begin!

1. Set up a CD player, MP3 player, or computer with speakers in the room.
2. Divide the class into two even groups.
3. Within each group, number yourselves so that you know in which order you will dance.
4. One group stands on one side of the room, and the other group stands on the opposite side of the room.

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5. Using masking tape, or coloured tape, stick a cross on the floor in the middle of the room, big enough for a person to dance on.
6. Decide which group will go first.
7. The first member of this group goes to the cross and performs a dance move facing the other team. When they have finished their move, they return to their own group.
8. Then a member of the competing group goes to the cross and 'answers' the move with a move of their own.
9. The battle continues like a conversation: each group member dances and the competing group answers with a move from one of their members. Each move is meant to be bigger and better than the last.
10. The winner is the group that has the most spectacular last move.
11. Remember to be safe, and not to try a move that you are not comfortable with!
12. Finish with cool-down stretches and basic stretches.

Did you know?

Improvisation or freestyling challenges dancers to be as creative as possible without preplanning. A few seconds of improvisation is a great start. You can then build up your freestyling skills as you gain confidence.

For your response

- Interview a friend using a recording device (audio or audio/visual) and ask them:
- How did it feel to make up moves on the spot?
- What was the best part of cipherying? Why?
- What did you enjoy most about the battle? Why?
- Who won?
- Describe some of the winning moves.