

# FLEXING WITH GIRL ZONE – WORD UP (Part 1)

**Learning Area:** The Arts, English

**Strands:** Music, Literature

**Year Level:** 5–8



**Sound Bites** is a series of videos and associated resources for teachers and students with tips and tricks around song writing and song construction. The Australian Music Vault and The Song Room have partnered with artists to deconstruct an aspect of their process and to give students insight into aspects of their song creation.



### CONTENT DESCRIPTORS (5–6):

- Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view (ACELY1699).
- Develop technical and expressive skills in singing and playing instruments with understanding of rhythm, pitch and form in a range of pieces, including in music from the community (ACAMUM089).

### CONTENT DESCRIPTORS (7–8):

- Use interaction skills when discussing and presenting ideas and information, selecting body language, voice qualities and other elements, (for example music and sound) to add interest and meaning (ACELY1804).
- Develop musical ideas, such as mood, by improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music (ACAMUM093).

### LEARNING FOCUS

- Students explore vocal improvisation, rhyming and word play games.

## GETTING STARTED

**Girl Zone** is a squad of five young rappers from Melbourne bursting with energy, confidence and fire who, at the age of twelve and thirteen, have already inspired other young rap squads such as Lit Queens, YSB, Drip Squad and LSGs to follow in their footsteps. They were only nine years old when they formed, and have since supported international artists such as Noname (USA), Tank and the Bangas (USA) and Klein (UK). They have performed at Darebin Music Feast, Leaps and Bounds music festival, Peel Street Festival, Brunswick Music Festival. They have also been guest speakers at the Melbourne Writers Festival and performed on national television for ABCme. Recently, they performed their first interstate show at the Dark Mofo festival in Tasmania, where they performed to a sold out crowd alongside their fabulous DJ, Style and Grace. They rap and sing about their lives and their future ambitions, covering everything from basketball to world domination. Inspired by the likes of Lil Baby, Cardi B, Roddy Ricch and Princess Nokia, Girl Zone promises to bring something truly unique to the table.

[Watch Girl Zone's video clip: Flex on Them.](#)



## WARM UP

Complete a short physical and vocal warm up with the group. Choose from the activities below. This lesson can be repeated many times so there are several ideas to choose from.

### Breathing exercises;

- Breathe in through the nose for four counts, hold for two counts and then breath out using a hissing sound for seven counts. Repeat the activity five times.
- Breathe in through the nose for four counts, on the out breath say as much of the alphabet as you can. Repeat three times.

### Stretching exercises;

- Make circles with different joints of the body such as ankles, knees, hips, elbows, chin. Be gentle with the neck.
- Breathe in as you raise hands up over heads. Breathe and bring them back down. This exercise can be done with a rhythmic count or each student can do it at their own pace. Repeat three times.

### Body Shake up;

- Everyone stands in a circle and jogs on the spot.
- Call out "right" and direct everyone to punch the air five times with their right hand as they count "1, 2, 3, 4, 5!"
- Repeat with the left arm.
- Call out different combinations "right, right, left" for the group to follow.
- Speed up.
- As an extension students can lead the call or add in additional action and call ideas.

### Zip Zap Zoom game;

- Everyone stands in a circle.
- The game starts with players passing an 'offer' around the circle in a clockwise direction. The first player turns to the person next to them, makes eye contact and a directed clap and says "ZIP!" This continues around the circle. See how smoothly and quickly players can do this.
- Once this is smooth let players know that the 'offer' can change direction. If players are sending offers in an anti-clockwise direction they turn to player on their right, make eye contact, send a directed clap and say "ZAP!".
- From then on, any player can choose which direction the 'offer' will go in so all players need to be focused and ready,
- Once this is smooth, introduce the ideas that offers can be passed across the circle. To do this a player chooses another player, makes eye contact, sends a directed clap and says "ZOOM!"
- Encourage students to see how quickly and smoothly they can work together.
- As an extension see if students can play the game in time with a beat.
- Alternatively students can play with inventing and adding in other sounds and actions?
- KEY – ZIP = clockwise ZAP = anti-clockwise ZOOM = across the circle.



## WORD PLAY



Choose one of the word play group activities from the list below. These are best repeated over multiple sessions so that students develop confidence with the games. Explain that the goal of these activities is to get ideas flowing. Participation and momentum is more important than perfection or accuracy. Teacher participation is encouraged as it will support student's bravery.

### **Rhyme Circle game;**

- Everyone stands or sits in a circle.
- Pick a simple word such as 'bat'.
- Go around the circle and have students make a rhyme with the word. For example; bat, fat, drat, rat.
- Change the word and repeat a few times.
- As an extension challenge students to make rhymes in alphabetical order. For example; bat, cat, fat, hat.

### **Rhyme Circle game version two;**

- Everyone in a circle.
- One player chooses a word.
- Player make rhymes around the circle. Emphasise speed.
- When players run out of ideas they can use a simile instead of the last word and then a new rhyme can begin. For example, waterfall, ball, wall, small, little (simile of small), whittle, carve (simile of whittle), starve and so on.

### Word association with a beat;

- Everyone stands in a circle.
- Decide on a category or topic such as animals, colours, food, sports or planets. Consider using a current inquiry or learning topics.
- Set a group rhythm pattern using body percussion. For example everyone could do two pats on their knees and then two claps. Use a slow tempo and get everyone in time.
- Go around the circle and have each player say their name and a word associated with the topic. For example, if the topic is 'outer space' players might say "Ali/star", "Jenny/Jupiter", "Deepak/Saturn". Each idea would be repeated back by the group.
- The goal is to say these words in time with the rhythm. See the example below.

Rhythm (everyone)	Knee pat	Knee pat	clap	clap
Spoken (individual)			Sar –	ah
Rhythm (everyone)	Knee pat	Knee pat	clap	clap
Spoken (individual)			Mer – cu -	- ry
Rhythm (everyone)	Knee pat	Knee pat	clap	clap
Spoken (group)			Sar -	ah
Rhythm (everyone)	Knee pat	Knee pat	clap	clap
Spoken (group)			Mer – cu -	- ry

It may take a bit of practise for the students to keep in time, slow down or restart the group's rhythm pattern as needed. It is important for the rhythm to be consistent before the spoken element is introduced.

### Roll Call Game;

This game is based on a scene from Spike Lee's, 1996 *Get On the Bus* film. This is a call and response rhyming game. Consider looking at the original film clip to help explain the game. Begin by teaching the class the song pattern. Use the Roll Call lyric sheet to support the process. In the game each student makes up their own verse related to their name. It can follow a rhyming pattern but this is not required.

[Watch clip from Spike Lee's film: \*Get On the Bus\*](#)

### Verse - example (The bold words are said in response by the whole class)

My name is Matt

**YEAH**

I have a cat

**YEAH**

Sits on a mat

**YEAH**

Won't wear a hat

**ROLL CALL!**

Chorus (can be repeated multiple times)

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**

My name is Mary

**YEAH**

I like to dance

**YEAH**

My moves are scary

**YEAH**

Give me a chance

**ROLL CALL!**

Chorus (can be repeated multiple times)

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**

My name is Anne

**YEAH**

And I play football

**YEAH**

I get up early

**YEAH**

And play before school

**ROLL CALL!**

Chorus (can be repeated multiple times)

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**

**SHABOOYA, SHA, SHA, SHABOOYA, ROLL CALL!**



Discuss the way rhyme is used in the example. Can students identify any rhyming patterns used?

The goal of the game is to help students feel comfortable rapping or chanting with a rhythm in front of the group. Some students will feel shy so let students know they can use the example verses if they need. Alternatively students can take a few minutes to write their verse before you play the game.

### **Playing with couplets;**

This is a brainstorming activity that will support students' rap lyric writing. This activity can be done as a whole class, in pairs or individually. See the example below. Consider following the steps as a class before breaking students into groups.

Topic - food

Word - Cheese

Words that rhyme - please, fees, knees, squeeze, freeze, peas

Sentence one needs to end with – cheese

Sentence two needs to ends with – please

I was feeling pretty hungry and I wanted some **cheese**

My friend had some in their lunch box, I said yes **please**

**Steps:**

- Pick a topic.
- Each student writes down one associated word.
- They add words that rhyme with this word.
- Students choose their two favourite words and try to make a rhyming couplet.
- When everyone has a rhyming couplet bring the group together.
- Play a beat for the group using the Beat Example audio track (more beats can be found through music software or music sharing sites).
- Have the class try and say each rhyming couplet along with the beat.
- Talk about how the words feel with the beat. Could the phrasing change or a word be dropped to create a smoother flow?
- Show them some examples at the start or try and come up with an example as a class first. It is good for students to eventually have a go at this on their own so that the shy students have a chance to come up with some of the lyrics.

**Share and reflect****Reflection;**

- Did they find it easy to come up with words on the spot?
- What makes improvisation challenging?
- Does it help writing things down?
- Do they have a rap song idea that they would like to develop?

This lesson is designed to spark students writing process, consider including follow up sessions to support students to develop their ideas into a whole rap song.

Want more related activities?

[Part 2, Represent!](#)