

Drill Music – text A

Name _____ Date _____

Adapted from: Why Digga D, a British Drill Artist, is Banned from Using Violent Lyrics by Ed Clowes, Jan. 11, 2021. The New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/arts/music/digga-d-drill-music.html>



Source A

The Police Are Listening...

Recent court rulings require officers to keep watch over artists' rap lyrics, which prosecutors say celebrate gangs and violent crimes. Drill's violent lyrics have led the police and lawmakers to accuse the genre of fuelling knife crime, which is currently at a 10-year high in England.

In 2018, London Drill artist, Digga D was sentenced to a year in prison for conspiracy to commit violent disorder, after a court case in which music videos by the masked rapper were presented as evidence. In sentencing Digga D, whose real name is Rhys Herbert, the judge also issued an order banning him from releasing tracks that describe gang-related violence. He must notify the police within 24 hours of releasing new music, and provide them with the lyrics. If a court finds that his words incite violence, he can be sent back to prison.

Rebecca Byng, a spokeswoman for the London police's violent crime unit, said in an email that these criminal behaviour orders are an important tool to "steer young people away from violence."

"We are not targeting music artists, but addressing violent offenders," she added.

Yet the London police has recently stepped up its efforts to remove drill music videos from YouTube. In 2020, the video platform removed 319 music videos at the force's urging, according to a police report obtained through a Freedom of Information request. That is more than twice the number it took down in 2019. In total, YouTube has removed more than 500 music videos over the past three years, the report says.

A new dawn for Drill?

As a growing number of drill artists fall foul of the criminal justice system, efforts are being made to make songs without violent lyrics.

Potter Payper, a 25-year-old drill musician, was jailed on drug-related charges. He has been in prison 14 times, and, like Digga D, his music videos have formed part of the evidence used to convict him. His latest track "Training Day 3" is his first to keep within the law and not feature gangs, guns and drugs.

Stormzy, perhaps Britain's most commercially successful rapper, was performing on the main stage at the Glastonbury Festival, and Payper could hear fellow inmates in nearby cells listening to the rapper's performance. After Stormzy named him onstage as one of his influences, the other prisoners started banging on their doors, yelling Payper's name.

After that, he wrote nearly 30 new songs, he said. "There's more in my heart that I would like to speak about and show," he said. "My creativity is flowing and I can't wait to make new songs."

Drill Music – text B

Name _____ Date _____



Adapted from: Music saved my life. Banning drill takes hope away from black British kids.
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/13/music-banning-drill-black-british-kids-violence>
By UK Drill artist Konan, 13 June 2019. The Guardian.

Source B

Music saved my life.

Creativity is my way out of the violence that surrounded me. It's deprivation, not music, that devastates communities. Banning Drill will take away the hopes and dreams of millions of young people.

I grew up in Thornton Heath, south-east London. Although raised by a good family in a close community, I was exposed to violence and violent crime throughout my childhood and young adult life. I've seen people beaten and stabbed and shot.

In 2011, I was involved in an incident where my mum was shot in front of me and my stepfather was shot and killed. I myself spent several years committing crimes, running from the police and, at one point, I went to jail.

Watching other artists make it out of "the ends" and on to our TV sets was a huge inspiration to me. They didn't rap about butterflies and happy days; they rapped about a life that was like mine. Hearing their lyrics didn't make me want to go out and hurt people, sell drugs and go back to jail. It made me even more empowered to make my life successful in a positive, legal, creative way. After being in a music crew for a couple of years, I formed a duo with my friend, Krept, in 2009, and I can honestly say that music saved my life. Before music, there was just jail, gangs and getting arrested. Without music, I do not know if I would be alive today. Best-case scenario, I'd be in prison.

Since Krept and I started making money from music, we've opened our own after-school programme – Positive Direction – and our own restaurant, Crepes and Cones, in Croydon. We employ around 50 people at any one time. These are people from our local community, some of whom could otherwise be leading very different lives right now. Many successful black musicians try to give back to their community; Stormzy is even funding Cambridge Scholarships!

This is positive action directly impacting communities that most need the support. When I grew up, we all wanted to be "the top shotta", now, young kids aren't looking up to gang leaders, they're looking up to me and Krept and Stormzy.

The police see poor young people running around stabbing and beating each other and instead of trying to help, or tackle the real causes – they blame rap music. How is that fair?

There are no youth clubs, no schemes, no support. Education is failing kids; the healthcare system is failing us all. Rappers, musicians and actors are actively trying to help, don't ban us... buy our music and support our youth!