

How rap became the sound of mainstream

Notes & Cues:	<p>Article:</p> <p>When Philadelphia rapper Lil Uzi Vert was 20 years old, he uploaded a few songs to SoundCloud, a free music-sharing platform. In just three years, Lil Uzi Vert has accumulated over a billion Spotify streams and nabbed a Best New Artist Grammy nomination.</p> <p>Uzi’s rise is impressive. But this year, he’s just one in a crowd of hip-hop stars who are dominating the mainstream. Nearly half of the songs on Jan. 27’s Billboard Hot 100 chart were rap or incorporate elements of hip-hop.</p> <p>So what changed? It’s now easier than ever for rappers to make music—create a beat on a computer and drop in a voice note and you have the beginnings of a song. Add the power of streaming platforms, which makes it easier for fans to discover emerging voices, and it’s no surprise that hip-hop has been given a new and lasting way to shine.</p> <p>In a national moment of deep division, it’s apt that people—especially young people of color—are turning to music to find an outlet. The barriers to entry, either as a fan or an artist, are lower than they’ve ever been; the visibility of those who have made it is, thanks to social media, higher than ever before.</p> <p>For kids, to become the next Lil Uzi Vert, rising from the streets to hip-hop royalty, is a new American Dream.</p>
Summary:	