

## Critical Make 1: Analysis of Slang in a Song

**Due Date:** By class time Friday 09/30

**How to Submit:** On Sakai under Assignments, please paste your website URL. When ready to get your URL in Adobe Spark, click "Publish and Share Link."

### Overview

In this unit, we discuss how slang is an undervalued source of linguistic renewal and rhetorical invention, often mined from minoritized communities to appropriate and divorce it from cultural and political contexts. This unit is about the importance of *communication context*.

For this assignment, each student is asked to analyze slang in a song of their choice, i.e. the use of "stan" in Eminem's "Stan." According to *Dictionary.com*, slang is "[v]ery informal usage in vocabulary and idiom that is characteristically more metaphorical, playful, elliptical, vivid, and ephemeral than ordinary language, i.e. *Hit the road*."<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this assignment is to *challenge the hierarchy of what is considered the best form of communication*. Slang words have huge impact on pop culture, public discourse, and everyday communication, even while often not acknowledged formally by dictionaries until years after they begin circulation. As we read in class, "The Largest Vocabulary in Hip-Hop" by Matt Daniels tracks the inventiveness of hip-hop vocabularies and lyrics.<sup>2</sup>

### Structure & Content

The analysis will be a visual analysis on a web page on Adobe Spark, a free online desktop software. We will go over the software together as a class. To begin with the software, go to <https://spark.adobe.com/sp/> and login with your PLU Gmail account. From there, click "Begin Project" and click "Website."

Your analysis should include the following:

1. A title and your name as the author
2. An overview description of the song, its genre(s), & why it is important to analyze
3. A biography of the artist(s)
4. (*Largest section*) Main claims and written/visual analysis about how slang impacts the meaning of the song *and* public discourse (look into how the word has traveled). You may use segments of the music video and lyrics. Quote from the lyrics.
5. A synthesis at the end of the page and a list of references used (APA) and additional resources for people to explore beyond your analysis

### Examples

- Professor's work: <https://spark.adobe.com/page/LQWaYfSOnt0AL/>
- Student work [removed]
- Student work [removed]

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<sup>1</sup> "slang, n." *Dictionary.com*, accessed September 2, 2022, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/slang>.

<sup>2</sup> Matt Daniels, "The Largest Vocabulary in Hip-Hop," *The Pudding*, January 21, 2019, <https://pudding.cool/projects/vocabulary/index.html>.

COMA 101, "Introduction to Communication," Fall 2022

M. Ritchie

**Presentation**

You are asked to please present your work to the class. Your presentation should be between 5-6 minutes in length, to ensure everyone has a chance to speak.

Here are the presentation dates. Please let me know if you have a conflict.

M 09/26	Presentation Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [removed]</li></ul>
W 09/28	Presentation Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [removed]</li></ul>
F 09/30	Presentation Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• [removed]</li></ul>

### **Assessment**

#### **Website**

Value: 100 points

Project 1 will be assessed on the basis of the following:

- *Overview, Biography, Synthesis Content (25 points)*: web page includes all elements of the overview, biographical details, and summative content
- *Analysis (35 points)*: analysis includes close reading of lyrics; analysis expounds the implications of the lyrics for the overall meaning of the song; claims supported with evidence (uses external academic resources when necessary and cites them)
- *Visual Style (25 points)*: web page is visually pleasing; the web page includes basic design principles (symmetry, balance, a color story, readable text, etc.); overall cohesive
- *Mechanics/References (15 points)*: easy to follow structure; references formatted in APA or close to APA

#### **Presentation**

Value: 50 points

Project 1 Presentation will be assessed on the basis of the following:

- We'll make a class rubric together after reading Vanessa Beasley's essay on disability and the rhetorical tradition together; we will consider how to assess speech in not only a non-ableist framework but an anti-ableist framework.