**From Hip-Hop to Mash-Up: Remix Culture & Copyright Law**

*Developed by Justin Young*

**MODULE: STUDENT VERSION**

**Module Texts**

Chang, Jeff. “Making a Name: How DJ Kool Herc Lost His Accent And Started Hip-Hop.” *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, St. Martin’s Press, 2007, genius.com/Jeff-chang-excerpt-from-chapter-4-making-a-name-how-dj-kool-herc-lost-his-accent-and-started-hip-hop-cant-stop-wont-stop-annotated.

Ferguson, Kirby. “Everything’s A Remix Remastered.” *Vimeo*, 2015, vimeo.com/139094998.

Granados, Nelson. “How Online Piracy Hurts Emerging Artists.” *Forbes,* 2016, www.forbes.com/sites/nelsongranados/2016/02/01/how-online-piracy-hurts-emerging-artists/#1aedc97a7774.

Lessig, Lawrence. “In Defense of Piracy.” *Wall Street Journal*, 2008, www.wsj.com/articles/SB122367645363324303.

Murray, Ben. “Remixing Culture and Why the Art of the Mashup Matters.” *Tech Crunch,* 2015, techcrunch.com/2015/03/22/from-artistic-to-technological-mash-up/.

Tortoriello, Dexter. “The Dirty Business of Corporate Remix.” *Pitchfork*, 2014, pitchfork.com/thepitch/562-op-ed-the-dirty-business-of-the-corporate-remix/.

**Reading Rhetorically**

**Preparing to Read**

**Activity 1: Getting Ready to Read & Watch**

* Where have you heard the word “remix” before? What do you think it means?
* Have you ever produced a remix yourself?
* Is it ever okay to sample someone else’s work for your own piece of writing/song/video? If so, what needs to be done to make sure sampling is ethical and legal?
* When and where did hip-hop begin? How do you think hip-hop music was originally made?

**Activity 2: Exploring Key Concepts**

Think about and try to define the following keywords. Discuss your answers with your neighbor or an assigned group. Collaboratively develop a working definition of each keyword and be ready to share your definition with the class.

Discuss and try to define these concepts:

* hip-hop
* remix
* DJing
* Sampling

**Activity 3: Making Predictions and Asking Questions**

Can you come up with examples of remix in the music that you like to listen to? What about your favorite movies or television shows? Can you think of any technological devices that remix the features of previous devices?

Work in your group to write down as many examples of remix that you can come up with. Be ready to discuss how and why each song, movie, or piece of technology involves remix.

**Activity 4: Creating Personal Learning Goals**

Think about the learning goals of the module. Then think about these questions:

* What do I find interesting about the topic of this module?
* What do the learning goals for the module mean to me?
* How does this topic relate to the learning goals of the module?
* How might the practice of remix relate to writing in college?

Write down your answers so you can return to them later.

**Text 1 – Ferguson, “Everything’s a Remix Remastered**

**Reading Purposefully**

**Activity 5: Reading/Watching for Understanding – “Everything’s a Remix Remastered”**

Take notes as you watch “Everything’s a Remix Remastered”:

1. Write down three examples of remix that you found cool, interesting, or surprising.
2. Note at least one example of a remix from a) music, b) movies, c) technology.
3. List two to three words that you think are important for understanding remix. Think of these words as vocabulary words, or, what we will call “remix keywords.”

Student Self-Assessment:

After watching the video, and learning more about remix, write down a movie, video, show, or song that you like, and that you think involves remix. Describe the example, and why you think it involves remix.

Be ready to share and discuss the notes you took with the class.

**Text 2 – Chang, “Making a Name: How DJ Kool Herc Lost His Accent and Started Hip-Hop**

**Activity 6: Reading for Understanding (Chang)**

Read the text quickly. When you finish, think about how the text affected you. Write about the following questions:

1. What is this historical story primarily about?
2. What happens in this story? Where and when does it take place?
3. What are the motivations of the “characters” in this true story? What did each person want to accomplish? What did they do to accomplish it?

Clive Campbell:

Cindy Campbell:

Keith Campbell:

Share your responses with your group and then report out to the rest of the class.

**Activity 7: Examining the Structure of the Text (Chang)**

Now read the text again, paragraph by paragraph. With a partner, discuss and write down answers to the following questions:

1. What are the major events in this narrative?
2. Identify each place in the text where you find a shift forward or backward in time.
3. Sort each major event in chronological order. What happens (in time) first, second, third, etc.?

Prepare to share your work with the rest of the class.

**Activity 8: Considering the Rhetorical Situation (Chang)**

Freewrite a paragraph long response to the prompt below:

Based on your analysis of this text, what is this story primarily about? What is the purpose of the story—why did the author write it, and why would someone want to read it? Where and when does the story take place, and why this story important?

Be ready to share your writing during class discussion.

**Preparing to Read**

**Activity 9: Getting Ready to Read**

Freewrite answers in response to the questions below. Don’t pause to make corrections or revise anything you’ve written, just get your ideas down on the page!

* Where have you heard the word “copyright” before? What do you think it means?
* What does the word “piracy” mean in general? What do you think online piracy means?
* Is downloading a song, video, or movie from the Internet ever okay?
* Do you believe that DJ Kool Herc was a pirate musician? Where there any artists in “Everything’s a Remix Remastered”that you believe are “pirates?”

Your teacher may ask you to share your responses to these questions.

**Activity 10: Exploring Key Concepts**

Consider and define these concepts: **copyright, intellectual property, online piracy**.

Write your definitions of each keyword, discuss in small groups, and report out to the class the definition your group agrees upon.

**Activity 11: Making Predictions and Asking Questions**

In partners, discuss the questions below. Take notes on your answers that will be turned into your teacher.

* How do you think the terms copyright, intellectual property, and online piracy are related?
* What do you think remix has to do with copyright law and online piracy?
* What about hip-hop and copyright?
* The title of one of the articles you are about to read is called “In Defense of Piracy” − what possible arguments might the author make in support of online piracy?

During the whole class discussion, share your responses with the class.

**Text 3 – Lessig, “In Defense of Piracy**

**Activity 12: Reading for Understanding (Lessig)**

Read the text quickly. When you finish, think about the main point of the text and how the text affected you. Write about the following questions:

1. What do you think is the author’s central claim (or thesis statement)? What is the main thing that the author is arguing?
2. Does the article change your mind about something? What is it?
3. Does it make you want to do something? What is it?

Get into an assigned group and share your responses.

**Activity 13: Examining the Structure of the Text (Lessig)**

Map the organization of “In Defense of Piracy” by taking the following steps:

1. Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there several introductory paragraphs? Is it in the middle of a paragraph? How do you know that the text has moved on from the introduction?
2. Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How do you know that the text has reached the conclusion?
3. Discuss in your group why you drew the lines where you did.
4. Now draw lines between the other parts of the text. Look for shifts where the writer moves from making one part of his argument to making another. Discuss in your group and come to an agreement about where the lines belong. Number each chunk of the text.
5. Collaborate in your groups to write Says/Does statements on a separate sheet of paper using the numbers that correspond to the chunks. Assign one person to read the chunk out loud, the second person to write the “Says” statement, and the third person to write the “Does” statement. Everyone in the group needs to come to an agreement. Be as precise as possible as you describe what the text actually is saying and doing.
6. At the end of the text, describe the overall content and purpose of the text.

**Activity 14: Considering the Rhetorical Situation (Lessig)**

Discuss in small groups and write down a collaboratively produced response to each question below:

* Based on your analysis of the structure of this text, what does the article argue? What is the article’s central claim (or thesis)?
* What is the purpose of the article − why did the author write it, and why would someone want to read it?

Share your answers with the class.

**Text 4 – Granados, “How Online Piracy Hurts Emerging Artists**

**Activity 15: Reading for Understanding (Granados)**

Read the text quickly. When you finish, think about the main point of the text and how the text affected you. Write about the following questions:

1. What do you think is the author’s central claim (or thesis statement)? What is the main thing that the author is arguing?
2. Does the article change your mind about something? What is it?
3. Does it make you want to do something? What is it?

Get into an assigned group and share your responses.

**Activity 16: Examining the Structure of the Text (Granados)**

Map the organization of “How Online Piracy Hurts Emerging Artists” by taking the following steps:

1. Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends. Is it after the first paragraph, or are there several introductory paragraphs? Is it in the middle of a paragraph? How do you know that the text has moved on from the introduction?
2. Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins. Is it the last paragraph, or are there several concluding paragraphs? How do you know that the text has reached the conclusion?
3. Discuss in your group why you drew the lines where you did.
4. Now draw lines between the other parts of the text. Look for shifts where the writer moves from making one part of his argument to making another. Discuss in your group and come to an agreement about where the lines belong. Number each chunk of the text.
5. Collaborate in your groups to write Says/Does statements on a separate sheet of paper using the numbers that correspond to the chunks. Assign one person to read the chunk out loud, the second person to write the “Says” statement, and the third person to write the “Does” statement. Everyone in the group needs to come to an agreement. Be as precise as possible as you describe what the text actually is saying and doing.
6. At the end of the text, describe the overall content and purpose of the text.

**Activity 17: Considering the Rhetorical Situation (Granados)**

Discuss the questions below in assigned groups and write down a collaboratively produced response to each question.

* Based on your analysis of the structure of this text, what does the article argue? What is the article’s central claim (or thesis)?
* What is the purpose of the article—why did the author write it, and why would someone want to read it?

Share your answers with the class.

**Questioning the Text**

**Activity 18: Summarizing and Responding**

For this activity, you will be required to write a **summary** and personal **response** to each article.

A **summary** is a restatement of what another text is about. To write a summary, you don’t need to include your own ideas or perspectives, you only need to inform the reader about the text itself. Most simply, for this assignment, you need to write a paragraph for each article that answers the question: what did this article say?

Choose one of the articles, and write a few ideas that you had in response to the article, using the questions below to guide your response. You don’t need to write a full paragraph for this part of the activity, just jot down a few ideas, or feelings, that you had after reading the article.

Summarize the articles of Lessig and Granados, writing one paragraph for each article.

What is your initial response to the two articles? What did they make you think about or feel?

Be ready to share your responses in the next activity.

**Activity 19: Thinking Critically**

In your assigned group, take turns reading your summary paragraphs and personal responses aloud. Then discuss in groups and work together to write responses to each question below:

1. What is the central claim (thesis) of each article? What are the key pieces of evidence each writer uses to support their thesis?
2. How does each article use evidence to support their claims? Do you find the evidence compelling? Why or why not?
3. Whose position on remix and copyright do you agree with at this point—Lessig or Granados? Why?

Choose one group member as a recorder, as you will turn in the written responses your group came up with to your teacher. Choose another group member to be the presenter, as you will need to report out your answers to the rest of the class.

**Activity 20: Synthesizing Multiple Perspectives**

Respond in writing to the questions below (compose two to three complete sentences for each).

1. How does each writer describe the situation they hope to address in their article? What keywords do they use to describe the situation and why?
2. Lessig uses the term remix throughout his article; Granados does not. Why do you think this is the case?
3. What do you think is the most convincing evidence the two writers use in support of their arguments? Why is it effective?
4. Which article do you think the author (Jeff Chang) and subject (DJ Kool Herc) of “Making a Name” would agree with? Why?

Turn in your written answers to these questions to your teacher.

**Preparing to Respond**

**Discovering What You Think**

**Activity 21: Considering Your Task and Your Rhetorical Situation**

You’ve now read two articles that represent two different positions on the issue of remix, online piracy, and copyright law. You’ve also read and viewed texts about the origins of remix culture at the beginning of hip-hop. Your two tasks are:

* 1. Investigate in teams what kinds of remixes are happening **now** in music, film, video, and art in general, and give a visual presentation of an analysis of a text that you believe is a **current** example of remix,

AND

* 1. Work individually to write a researched argument that supports either Lessig’s or Granados’ position on piracy and copyright in the digital age.

**GROUP PRESENTATION OF A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF A REMIX (TASK 1)**

**Purpose**

For many courses in college, as well as in most professional jobs, you will need to be able to work in teams to conduct analyses and present information clearly and creatively. For this project, you will practice analyzing a text and presenting the results of that analysis in a visual presentation.

**Task**

For this assignment, you will work in teams to produce and present a paper poster OR digital visual text that provides an analysis of a remixed text. Each team member will also be responsible for producing a one-page analysis that explores some element of the remix that your team has analyzed visually. For this presentation assignment you can:

* Create and present a paper poster using analog or digital tools (such as InDesign or PowerPoint).

OR

* Create and present a digital visual text using software tools (such as Keynote, Prezi, PowerPoint, iMovie).

**Presentation Criteria for Success**

This visual presentation should

* Identify the texts that were sampled and combined in order to create the remix you are analyzing
* Analyze how remix methods were used to create a transformed text
* Identify and discuss the purpose of the remixed text (e.g., to inform, argue, entertain, satirize)

Each group member should have a speaking role in the presentation.

**Written One-Pager Criteria for Success**

Each group member must also produce a written one-pager (about 250 words) about the remix. This written page can

* Contextualize and/or analyze a specific “sample” or textual element used in the remix, OR
* Discuss how remix techniques were used to create a new text, OR
* Make an argument about the quality of the remix, OR
* Describe how the remix satirizes artistic or political norms.

**RESEARCHED ARGUMENT ESSAY ASSIGNMENT (TASK 2)**

**Purpose**

Throughout the academic and professional environment, you will need to be able to ask relevant questions, find and evaluate information, and present clear arguments supported by the analysis and synthesis of appropriate evidence. For this project you will practice finding, analyzing, and synthesizing evidence, and making a creative argument on the basis of that evidence.

**Task**

For this assignment you will sample, combine, and remix primary and scholarly sources to make an argument in support of either Lessig’s or Granados’ position on piracy and copyright in the digital age.

This researched argument essay should be produced remixing your own analysis of scholarship about remix (aka, secondary sources). Your final version of this research-based text must make a clear and creative argument that articulates and supports your position on piracy and remix.

**Criteria for Success**

Your paper should:

* Sample and remix credible sources to build a unique argument.
* Explore a research question related to remix practice or theory.
* Make an argument about remix culture supported by the analysis of textual examples of remix (primary sources) and synthesis of scholarship about remix (secondary sources).
* Begin with an introduction that contextualizes and introduces your argument.
* Offer a unique or creative thesis.
* Develop your argument logically and clearly, supporting all claims with evidence.
* Consider and respond to the plausible reactions to your argument in your essay.
* Include proper documentation of all outside sources.
* Use logical organization and structure to paper.
* Incorporate peer and instructor feedback in the final version.
* Use effective grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, and other sentence-level strategies.
* Include a logical conclusion that raises questions for further study on this topic.
* Include a Works Cited page using MLA format.

Please consider these additional questions:

1. Have you established a clear context for your argument?
2. Is your argument significant? That is, have you established that your topic, and your position on it, contribute to an ongoing academic conversation in the field remix studies?
3. Are your premises and claims supported by credible reasons and academic evidence?

Did you establish a clear thesis and provide a roadmap for your readers so they can easily follow your argument?

**Texts 5 and 6 – Murray, “Remix Culture and Why the Art of the Mashup Matters” and Tortoriello, “The Dirty Business of Corporate Remix**

**Activity 22: Gathering Relevant Ideas and Materials & Develop a Position**

Your instructor will provide two additional articles to provide you more information and additional perspectives on the topic of remix:

* “Remix Culture and Why the Art of the Mashup Matters”
* “The Dirty Business of Corporate Remix”

**Read these articles carefully, in order to help you decide what you think about this issue.**

* These two articles will also provide current examples of remixed films, songs, and videos. You can use the readings to help you find a current remixed text to analyze for your presentation.
* You will also be able to use these articles as “outside” sources to establish ethos and support the claims you make in your argument essay.

**Writing Rhetorically**

**Composing a Draft**

**Activity 23: Negotiating Voices**

Consider the ways in which composing a researched argument is like producing a remixed song. Before you start writing your argument essay, write brief responses to these questions:

* What authors will you sample and combine to create a new text?
* What are the varying perspectives on your topic that will you sample and combine to create a new text?
* What examples of remixed texts will you sample (through description and citation) in order to provide context or evidence for your argument?
* What will you need to do to be sure that anything you sample is cited appropriately?

Turn in your written responses to your teacher.

**Activity 24: Gathering and Responding to Feedback**

Read your draft argument to a partner. Listen carefully to his or her feedback. Do they understand your argument? Do they get the point? How can you remix your paper to incorporate the feedback of others?

**Activity 25: Reflecting on Your Writing Process and Your Learning Goals**

Now that you have composed and revised an argumentative essay, reflect in writing on the ways in which this process is similar and different from the process of producing and remixing a song or video. What are the steps of remix? How is the reading, research, and writing process like this process, and how is it different? Write a paragraph-long reflection on your own writing process for this assignment, and turn it into your instructor. To help you get started, go back to the responses you wrote for Activity 4.