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# The Rap Lyrics Guide for 2026

A rap is built from bars, verses and a hook. This guide shows how a rap is put together, which style to pick, a simple way to write a verse, the rhyme tricks rappers use, and a checklist before you record.

## How a rap is built

1. **A bar** is one line, about one measure of the beat. Say it out loud: it should fit the beat without rushing.
2. **A verse** is usually 8 or 16 bars. It tells the story or makes the point.
3. **The hook** (or chorus) is 4 to 8 short lines that repeat between verses. It is the part people remember.
4. **A simple song shape:** Verse 1, Hook, Verse 2, Hook. Add a short intro or a third verse when you need more time.

## The six styles and when to use them

| Style | Sounds like | Best for |
|---|---|---|
| Old School | Boom-bap, steady flow, complex rhymes | Showing lyrical skill |
| Trap | Short punchy lines, bouncy triplets | Catchy hooks and modern beats |
| Freestyle | Spontaneous, wordplay, punchlines | Practice and cyphers |
| Drill | Dark, cold, sliding delivery | Gritty stories told as a character |
| Storytelling | A plot with a character and an ending | Songs that tell a real-feeling story |
| Battle Rap | Setups, disses and punchlines | Friendly battles and contests |

## Write a verse in five steps

1. **Pick one message.** One idea per verse: the hustle, a hard year, a city, a win.
2. **Write the punchline first.** Your best line goes near the end of the verse, so build towards it.
3. **Choose a rhyme sound.** Pick a sound with many rhymes (like "-ame": game, name, flame, same) and keep it for 2 to 4 bars.
4. **Count the beat.** Clap four beats and say each bar over them. Cut words that make you rush.
5. **Read it out loud.** Change any line that feels hard to say. A bar that flows beats a bar that only looks clever.


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## Rhyme tricks rappers use

1. **End rhymes.** The last words of two bars rhyme. The simplest and the most common.
2. **Internal rhymes.** Words inside the same bar rhyme too, which makes a line sound tight.
3. **Multisyllable rhymes.** Two or three syllables rhyme together, like "hold the line" and "fold in time".
4. **Wordplay.** One word with two meanings, so the line works two ways.
5. **Setup and punchline.** One bar sets up a picture, the next bar flips it with a surprise.

## Checklist before you record

- Every bar fits the beat when you say it out loud.
- Each verse makes one clear point and ends on a strong line.
- The hook is short and easy to repeat after one listen.
- The lyrics are your own: change lines until they sound like you.
- Clean or explicit, the words fit where you will share the song.

## Plan your own rap

| | |
|---|---|
| **Topic** | |
| **Style and tone** | |
| **Rhyme sound** | |
| **Hook line** | |
| **Bar 1** | |
| **Bar 2** | |
| **Bar 3** | |
| **Bar 4** | |
| **Punchline** | |


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