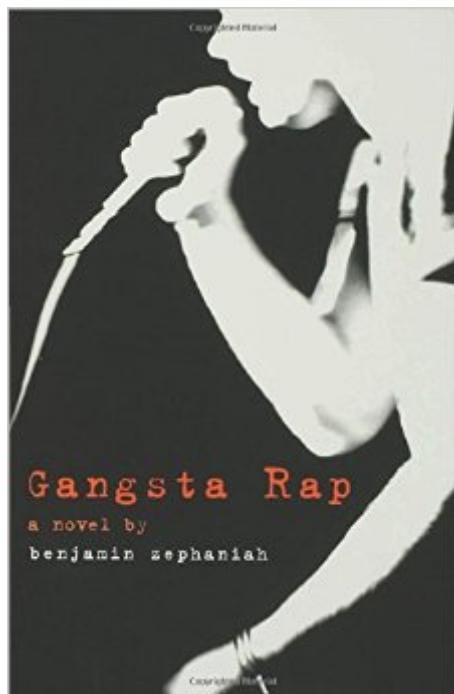


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# Gangsta Rap (Teen's Top 10 (Awards))



## Synopsis

Ray has trouble at home and trouble at school. When Ray and his friends Prem and Tyrone are permanently suspended from school, their headmaster decides to give them a second chance, a chance to live their dream of forming a rap group... School, what school? My name is X-Ray-X So be careful how you flex I used to freestyle in my bedroom But my daddy got me vex The teacher kicked me out of the classroom Now I'm rapping in The Rex. Ray has trouble at home and trouble at school. When Ray and his friends Prem and Tyrone are permanently suspended from school, their headmaster decides to give them a second chance, a chance to live their dream of forming a rap group. Through a specialized social program, the boys are taught about the business and the music industry, what it takes to record an album, and how to lay down a track. Within weeks they have become the Positive Negatives and within a few months they have signed a record deal and are on their way to the top. But their dream soon turns into a nightmare as violence escalates around them. Suddenly, not only their careers but their very lives are at stake. But Ray and the Positive Negatives are determined to prove that you don't need to be a gangster to be a great rapper. Reviews "Zephaniah paints a vivid picture of the hip-hop music scene and related gang warfare in London." --Publishers Weekly "A fairy tale of hip-hop success . . . teens will enjoy the thrilling music fantasy, while many will identify with the smart, talented boys who grow up quickly and rescue themselves." Booklist "Swift-moving and engaging . . . it's hard not to cheer Ray on." The Horn Book About the author Benjamin Zephaniah is a performance poet who travels on literary world tours for the British Council. He is the author of Refugee Boy and Face. He lives in London.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Fifteen-year old Ray is living in a life of turmoil. He's constantly fighting with his parents --- especially his father --- in their East London flat. At school, it's even worse. His best friends, Tyrone and Prem, have been kicked out. Then Ray threatens a staff member, and he too is "permanently excluded." The only happiness the boys have is listening to music and spending time at the local music shop. The store is run by an older Jamaican, who they affectionately call "Marga Man." Once the boys are no longer in school, they get into even more trouble on the streets. The reality of their situation hits hard when they are thrown in jail for fighting in a public park, which only angers their parents further. When the school board contacts their families, it seems as if there is only one solution. The boys have been invited to join an alternative education program targeted towards what interests them most: music. All of their studies will be focused on music and the music industry. As part of this experience, they are to work in an actual recording studio. Although some of their parents are hesitant at first, the boys give it a shot. With Marga Man as their manager, the boys create a rap group called the Positive Negatives. They are swept up into the music industry and become superstars practically overnight. They record an album, perform on television, and are selling out live concerts. At this point, the plot seems to go off track, like a train running out of control. In the first part of the book, the reader is drawn in slowly by the characters of Ray, Tyrone and Prem. As the music takes over their lives, the plot speeds up on overdrive, and the subtleties of each teen are lost. And then, in an odd and almost confusing twist of events, the issue of gang warfare comes into the story. The Positive Negatives are first being harassed and then attacked by unknown gang members. Now, they struggle to deal with both their fame and the world of the cruel streets. Author Benjamin Zephaniah is a poet and performing artist in England. His poetry is displayed in the rap lyrics that are scattered throughout this work. If you want to learn more about the world of the rap music industry, then GANGSTA RAP is the book for you. --- Reviewed by Kristi Olson (zooey24@yahoo.com)

This book definately sets the tone as a great comparison to 8 Mile. Parents should know that this book has strong language but provides an excellent storyline of three boys entering the wonderful and at points violent world. A grreat novel!

Our story begins with a shouting match between Ray and his dad. This scene displays the anger, tension and miscommunication that propels Ray and his friends Prem and Tyrone to act irrationally and rudely. RaLater tht morning, Ray explodes on his teacher and threatens him, I guess carrying on the anger from home. Ray is permanently excluded from school as Prem and Tyrone already have been. We don't really get to the root of Ray's anger. We know that his dad drinks a lot, has a temper and doesn't understand his son. We know that his mom does everything she can to hold the family together. At a final meeting before the boys are given their walking papers, they're given the option of attending an alternative school. It's a very new school, the mothers are skeptical, but it is seems to be their only hope of getting a diploma for their sons. This school will build a curriculum around students career interests and for these boys, it's hip hop music. At this point, it's easy to think that the boy's main problem is a lack of male presence. While a poor relationship with their dad is a crucial part of the story (because little is more important to young men than their relationship with their dad) there is an abundance of men supporting these boys. Manga Man, a local record shop owner is their surrogate dad and manager. School administrators, business people and musicians all work with the boys to help them finish their education while they begin a hip hop career. Despite all that is being done to help them, the boys manage to maintain rather surly attitudes. Almost too quickly, the boys release a successful CD. While they don't get the glamour and bright lights that most Americans expect, they do begin to get attention and realize they have to surround themselves with people they can trust. They've been educated about the music business and are aware of contracts, obligations and all the work involved with maintaining success. They are also well read on hip hop, knowing its origins, messages and format. They want to be true British hip hop stars. The down sounds of the industry are presented, as the boys are dangerously used just for the money they generate. This bit of suspense is good for moving the story along. I didn't really like these boys. I was glad to see them successful and did see them grow up a little bit, but they were not developed enough for me to understand and accept them. I would like to think that young people can be successful without having to limit their development by focusing on a career that may or may not be successful and I found their poor attitudes towards every adult unjustified. I do think the story will give young people a lot to consider and more than that, it will give them hope of succeeding with their own dreams.

My book was called Gangsta Rap. Over all I think it was a good book, a lot of drama, comedy and action. The book was about three kids in high school who got expelled for being yelling and cursing at all the teachers. All three of the kids are friends who want to be famous rappers. After there

expelled they get a chance to become real rappers. They ask there older friend, Marga Man, to be there manager and producer, he agreed. They get to use a real recording studio to make there music. After a couple of weeks, they have there first concert. After the concert they about to leave when a bunch of hooded men approach them, and start to tell them that they suck and there music sucks too. This started a war between the east side and west side of London. A group from the west side starts to call the east side rap group and make threats. Throughout the whole book the east and west side is in a huge fight. The book was a very good book to read and I would suggest this book to anyone who likes rap and living in the streets.

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