Following the definition, as prescribed by the NSW Society and Culture syllabus, hip hop clearly satisfies the four distinguishing characteristics. Just to dispel a common misconception, hip hop did not evolve out of rock n roll, but rather started organically as a blend of late 60's jazz poetry, the influx of Caribbean migrants (and their musical influences) and the 1960's and 70's political and gang cultures of inner city New York. Hip hop's local roots can be traced back to the mid seventies when it started as gatherings of youth getting together for what they called 'bloc parties'. Hip hop initially unified many of New York's minorities and created inter racial harmony, on a small scale and only for a short time. Borrowed from New York's gang culture's was spray painting. Hip Hop turned gang tags into aerosol art, and thus another facet of Hip hop culture was born.

Hip hop's rise to global acceptance was extremely quick. It went from local 'bloc parties' in the late seventies, to national recognition in the early 80's with independent artists and labels recording hip hop for the first time. Finally in the mid eighties when Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five went global with *The Message* and Run DMC and Aerosmith went number one around the world with *Walk This Way*, hip hop had become global and mainstream.

The evolution from local to national and global also saw hip hop fulfill another key characteristic of the syllabus' definition. Through its rise from local, national, global hip hop showed continued evolution. Initially hip hop involved the sampling of old jazz and funk beats mixed with percussion breaks. Music was spun by DJ's and due to the unsophisticated equipment there was no smooth transition from song to song. Step forward, the MC (rapper). Initially the role of the MC was to entertain the audience during the short breaks when the DJ was changing records. This eventually lead the MC's to start joking and interacting with the audience, that lead to short autobiographical raps, and lastly to what we know today as rap music.

Hip hop has evolved from bloc parties to main stream acceptance on a world wide scale. 2006 saw hip hop's last obstacle crossed when hip hop artists won an Oscar for best song, "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp" (Hustle & Flow), thus bringing us to the next stage of the four characteristics; associated products/paraphernalia.

Throughout hip hop's rise to global acceptance, products and trends have followed hip hop's evolutionary journey. From the back to front and inside out attire of Chris Cross, to the oversized brightly coloured pants of MC Hammer, hip hop has truly become commercialised and associated with consumer products. Like other forms of popular music, hip hop has the usual associated products, such as CD's, DVD's, concerts and concert shirts etc. Where it does
differ from other forms of popular music is the clothing lines (stores dedicated just to hip hop lines of clothing, found in Bankstown and Lane Cove), shoes, Play station games (50 Cent Get Rich or Die Trying), associated with the products. Companies have been able to exploit hip hop like no other form of popular music thus far. The range of associated products, endorsements and sponsorships are unmatched, and the attitude of many of the artists seems to exacerbate this relationship to capital.

Hip hop's purists have been faced with a problem due to the contemporary format that hip hop has taken. Many feel that artist have 'sold out'. Selling out though raises the previous argument about artist's relationship to capital. Is it the fault of the artist or are they just a reflection of modern day society? Money hungry, sexist and individualist, the total opposite of where hip hop was when it originated, collectivist, grassroots and pouring out of the 60's & 70's civil rights culture.

Hip hop is divided into three clear categories thus fulfilling the syllabus definition of popular culture as, constantly changing and evolving. Hip hop's early years from the late 70's-1986. This stage is categorised with block parties, live music, and unsophisticated rhymes/raps, "A hip hop a hippin to the hop, a hoppin to the hop and you just don't stop". Lyrics such as these dominated the scene, until grandmaster flash's highly controversial song, the Message.

...Broken glass everywhere
People pissin' on the stairs, you know they just don't care
I can't take the smell, can't take the noise
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
Junkies in the ally with a baseball bat
I tried to get away but I couldn't get far
'Cuz a man with a tow truck repossessed my car.
Don't push me 'cuz im close to the edge
I'm trying not lose my head
Uh huh ha ha ha
It's like a jungle some times
It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under.

The next era of hip hop is known as the golden age (1986-93). This period is marked by highly political lyrics from New York, and saw the emergence of gansta' rap from the west coast. Taking up the message of the message, New York artists such as KRS-One dominated the scene, with highly rhythmic and political lyrics. He caused controversy when he used a famous image of Malcolm-X standing behind a window with a gun. The image was changed to him standing beside the window and instead of holding an M-1 assault rifle; he had a Mack-10 automatic (commonly used in drive by shootings and by gang members). From very early on artists including KRS-One have been concerned by the associated image of hip hop as rap, and the commercialisation of it.

"Rap is something you do; hip hop is something you live.
The difference is kids nowadays, they got
Also prominent was Public Enemy. The highly confrontational group again dominated, picking up the social issues prominent in the African American ghetto communities. Public Enemy caused controversy with Flavour Flav wearing a clock around his neck, symbolising that now is the time. The era also saw the emergence of gansta rap or G-funk. The sound was made mainstream when west coast rap crew NWA (nigga's wit attitude) released their debut album, straight outta Compton (1988).

The next era just simply called The Modern Era (93-present), saw the west coast rappers and the west coast scene dominate, sparking rivalry between the east and west coast. This rivalry peaked with the controversy surrounding the deaths of Tupac and Biggie Smalls. The era also saw new sounds from the south, and north of America, but more importantly saw the emergence of hip hop artists around the world, rather than just exported American artists.

Access, the final requirement of the syllabus, is similar to most other pop cultures. What must be mentioned here though is the ethnocentric view of what constitutes most pop culture. Access revolves around technology, and money. Therefore very few can truly be pop culture, because just how attainable or accessible are popular culture's to the third world? Unfortunately global really refers to the first world.

Hip hop and its consumption was initially a contentious issue. Initially for artists to succeed they had to conform to a 'commercial' sound. During the 80's African Americans lobbied MTV for air time. An hour a week was dedicated to the new fad of hip hop. In order to be heard artists needed a sound that would accommodate a predominately white and black middle class audience. This paved the way for the non-confrontational, party sounds of hip hop. Lyrics had little substance, and like so many other popular genres of music, had manufactured images and sounds. But with the advent of new technologies, and emerging alternate labels, hip hop fought back, and the media and powers that be were unable to stop the onslaught of hip hop's political and gansta' rap movements. This leads to the next point, and is probably more relevant to today's music more so than ever: just who controls hip hop/ popular music?

Throughout hip hop's emergence and evolution, there was a clear line even within commercial/ successful acts of those with a political nature, and those with just an old school party sound. Within contemporary hip hop, what has been removed on a commercial level has been the success of artists/ acts with that social and political message.

Who shot biggy smalls if we dont get them
they gonna get us all
I'm down for runnin on them (blured) in
they city hall
We ride for yall all ma dawgs stay real
Dont thank these record deals goina feed
your seeds and pay your bills
Because they not
Mcs get a little bit of love and think they hot
Talkin bout how much money they got
All yall recods sound the same
Im sick of that fake thug r&b rap scenerio
tall day on the radio
Same scenes in the video, manatamis material
Yall dont hear me tho
These record lables slang our tapes like dope
You could be next in line to sign and still
be writtin rymes and broke
Youd rather have a lexus or justice
A dream or some substance
A beemer or necklace or freedom
Niggaz like me dont playa hate i just stay awake
Its real hip hop, and it dont stop till we get
the po po off the block
(Dead Prez Lets get Free)

These lyrics demonstrate the struggle between the artists to have individual freedom yet the reality of the struggle between company and recording artists. The Dead Prez are highly critical of commercial hip hop and its tried formulae. Dead Prez are a very well respected crew, but because of the highly political and confrontational nature of their music remain "behind the curtain". They have toured Asia, Europe and Africa, and had plans to come to Australia. They are the perfect example of control by big corporations and the media. They have been shut out of popular music because of their highly critical stance on popular music.

A perfect case study for control of Hip hop music and Hero's and Villains and Mythology is to examine the short career of Tupac. Tupac's short career saw him covered in controversy, yet he still remains as popular today, ten years after his death.

In the eyes of youth Tupac is more than a rap star, he is a thug, he is a musician, he is a social commentator, a poet, and he is relevant. Love him or hate him, Tupac brought the confrontational political nature of Hip Hop back into the mainstream. American authorities attempted to ban Tupac's first two albums, as his mother's Panther legacy came shining through his song lyrics. Tupac talked about confronting police harassment and bullying, drugs and crime, and of course social issues relevant to not just disenfranchised African Americans, but many of the world's poor and disenfranchised. Songs like "Brenda's got a baby" talked of the struggles of a teenage mother, and her having to come to grips with the reality of her situation. The song is based on events reported in a newspaper in America,

"...Brenda didn't know what to throw away and what to keep; she wrapped the baby up and threw it in the trash heap..."
But his social commentaries extend to songs about police harassment, drugs, violence and life in the poorest of America's black neighbourhoods. "Keep ya Head Up" is a song dedicated to African American women, and the hardships they face due to sexism and racism, but the list goes on... "White Mans World" is another song Tupac writes for his black sisters critiquing the system, "... every woman in America especially black, bear with me can't you see that we under attack..." But it also contains autobiographical recollections of his childhood, "... Mama why they keep on calling me nigger, keep my hate up, and I wait up, pay em back when I'm bigger..." In many respects, Tupac attempts to 'get them back', but by attacking the system, no doubt again, due to his Black Panther heritage.

No other Hip Hop artist has had Dan Quail, the former Vice President of the United States try to have their music banned, or to suggest a senate inquiry should be undertaken. It did fail, but it saw two senators: white, Christian, conservative and Republican and a black liberal Democrat and female leading the charge in the media to have Tupac's music banned. Also Tupac's music was burnt and pulled from shelves in more conservative parts of the country, demonstrating his hero and villain status. This shows how the perception of popular culture is interlinked with the status of hip hop artists as both hero's and/or villains. It also demonstrates the extent to which institutional power can still influence our perception, access and control of popular culture.

Finally Tupac can also be used to investigate mythology. The nature of his career and his early death are perfect examples of how mythology is created around certain popular cultures. The best example of mythology is the east coast, west coast rivalries, or the rap wars. Tupac, born on the east coast but who later moved to California, was allegedly shot by artists from the New York scene. This created mythology, and competition between the east and west coast of America. A clear line was drawn and fans started to align themselves with either artists from the East or West Coast. This demonstrates the control the media can exercise over popular culture as the rivalry was only between Tupac and Biggy Smalls, but because of media hype, it became a rivalry between two major labels, and then two rival scenes for control of the US and world Hip Hop scene.

Hip Hop and its associated cultures have had huge impacts on society. What has become accepted on a global scale is African American culture. Hip Hop has evolved to become a global culture, and has become a voice for many oppressed people throughout the world. The negative image of women perpetuated in some hip hop lyrics and video clips has been an on-going negative surrounding hip hop culture. What has been apparent throughout the last decade, but cannot be solely attributed to hip hop is the regression of society's perceptions of women. Hip hop has helped to objectify women as sex objects, and has made it extremely difficult for women rappers to 'make it'. The lack of examples and lyrics from female hip hop artists in this piece of writing is testament to this.

So where does the future lie for hip hop? This is a difficult question to answer as new technologies are impacting on popular culture faster than before. The creation of "myspace.com" has meant that artist and possibly new genres of music can go from local to national to global with the push of just one button. The increase of free downloads will mean the emergence of a true global sound of hip hop. 2006 saw the emergence of Latin hip hop onto the global stage with Daddy Yankee. It also saw the emergence of artists from the Caribbean make it
onto the global stage, with Rihanna selling millions of records world wide and dominating the Australian album charts for much of the year. It also saw two tours to Australia for her. What must be mentioned though is she is regarded as an 'R 'n' B' singer, which is predominantly dominated by women, as opposed to rap or hip hop which is totally dominated by men, but this is an entirely different discussion though and best reserved for another occasion.

What has also become evident is the emergence of a strong local hip hop scene receiving justly deserved air time on commercial radio. The snobbery usually shown to "skip hop" was broken a few years ago by Melbourne crews like 1200 Techniques, and the Latin jazz styles of the Cat Empire. What this demonstrates is with the ever increasing acceptance of hip hop on the global scale, it has strengthened the local scenes, and lead to skip hop's national acceptance. This year will also see the first skip hop crew attempt to take on the global market as the Hilltop Hoods (easily 2006's stand out hip hop artists and Australia's most successful crew) attempt to capture parts of the Asian market.

Hip hop differs slightly from other genres of popular music as it does go from local to national to global in America, but it seems to go in reverse in Australia. Australia's national scene had to wait for recognition until Aussies truly embraced their local scene. Much of this could relate to the rise of nationalistic sentiments spurred on by the hosting of the Olympics and the Rugby World Cup, the Cronulla riots, and who can forget elections based on Race, Discrimination, Refugees, National Security, War and Islam, not to forget 10 years of a conservative Liberal National Coalition Government.