



A Dance Breakthrough

Before Reading Poll

What do you think about this quote from Lynda Barr?

"Any kind of dancing is better than no dancing at all."

Agree

Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did.

Article

NEW YORK, New York (Achieve3000, March 24, 2021). "B-boys and b-girls go down!" For some dancers, that's the signal to bust out their best moves. First, they set the tone with funky footwork. Then they drop to the ground where they pull off some power moves like spinning on their backs, performing a "jackhammer" or a "windmill," and whirling on their heads like a human cyclone. They finish it all off with a cool "freeze," pausing in a gravity-defying pose.

Recognize those signature spins and stylish stunts? These dexterous dancers are breakers. Breaking is an athletic, energetic dance style that's a fundamental part of hip-hop culture. It's sometimes called "breakdancing." But most of its practitioners, known as *breakers* or *b-boys* and *b-girls*, prefer the term *breaking* or *b-boying*.

Today, b-boying is beloved by fans around the world. It all started in the 1970s in the Bronx, a borough of New York City. According to hip-hop historians, a lot of the credit goes to DJ Kool Herc. He had an idea that led to a pop culture breakthrough (see what we did there?). When playing music at parties and dance clubs, this groundbreaking deejay used two turntables to mix sounds from two records.

Why? Kool Herc used that technique to extend the length of the *break*. In the lingo of popular dance music, this is a section of a song when most of the instruments drop out and the percussion continues. Because a break is all about the beat, it's a good time for dancers to showcase their showstopping moves. During Kool Herc's prolonged breaks, some dancers came up with creative maneuvers. They drew inspiration from martial arts, gymnastics, and the onstage feats of rock-and-roll legend James Brown.

The new dance style, which was dubbed *breaking*, caught on in New York, especially among Black and Puerto Rican teens. The dancers teamed up to form crews that faced off in informal competitions, or *battles*. One at a time, breakers took turns strutting their stuff. Sometimes the audience determined the victor, delivering their decisions via cheers and applause. While the performers went all out to upstage each other, an actual stage was not required. The match-up could take place at a city park, party, or roller rink.

Soon breaking made it to the big screen. Dancers showcased their talents in movies like *Wild Style* (1982), *Flashdance* (1983), *Beat Street* (1984), and others. Breakers also performed in music videos and live concerts. It wasn't long before the dynamic dance style became an international phenomenon. It thrived in countries thousands of miles from its birthplace, including Japan, Brazil, France, and South Korea. Competitions cropped up around the world and are still going strong. In today's formalized battles, dancers aren't just contending for bragging rights and street cred. These days, victors emerge with official recognition and cash prizes. Meanwhile, breaking continues to be a pop culture presence, showing up in TV shows, movies, commercials, and even video games.

In 2020, there was some major breaking news for b-boys, b-girls, and the many fans who appreciate their spunky style and acrobatic artistry. The International Olympic Committee announced that breaking will be an official event in the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. It's a bold decision that's part of the group's efforts to attract younger audiences. At a prestigious venue in downtown Paris, b-boys and b-girls from around the world will "go down"—and go for the gold!

Dictionary

borough (*noun*) one of five parts of New York City



Photo credit: Little Shao/Red Bull Content Pool

B-girl Logistx from the USA competes at the World Urban Games. Breaking is an acrobatic type of dancing, sometimes called breakdancing.

dexterous (*adjective*) skillful

dynamic (*adjective*) constantly active or changing

lingo (*noun*) the language and speech, especially jargon or slang of a particular field, group, or individual

prestigious (*adjective*) thought very highly of

Activity

PART 1

Question 1

The Article primarily discusses _____.

- (A) the bold decision to make breaking an official Olympic event in an attempt to attract younger audiences
- (B) the popular style of dance known as breaking that allows dancers to showcase athletic and creative moves
- (C) how the break in music is when most of the instruments drop out and breakers perform showstopping moves
- (D) how breaking was featured in movies like *Flashdance* and continues to be a pop culture presence today

Question 2

Which of these had **not** yet happened when this Article was written?

This question asks about when events happened. It does not ask where in the Article the events appear. Reread the Article for clues, such as dates.

- (A) DJ Kool Herc played music at dance clubs using a technique that extended the length of the music break.
- (B) Dancers showcased their breaking talents on the big screen as well as in music videos and at live concerts.
- (C) B-boys and b-girls from around the world competed in Paris, France, during the Summer Olympics.
- (D) Breaking competitions cropped up around the world with dancers contending for recognition and cash prizes.

Question 3

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *prestigious*?

- (A) distinguished
- (B) historic
- (C) tremendous
- (D) modest

Question 4

According to the Article, how are informal battles and formal competitions different?

- (A) Informal battles are judged by the audience, while formal competitions are always judged by the Olympic Committee.
- (B) Informal battles reward dancers with cash prizes, while formal competitions reward dancers with bragging rights.
- (C) Informal battles reward dancers with bragging rights, while formal competitions reward dancers with cash prizes.
- (D) Informal battles are judged by the Olympic Committee, while formal competitions are always judged by the audience.

Question 5

According to the Article, why did DJ Kool Herc use two turntables to mix sounds?

- Ⓐ Dancers requested a lengthy break in the music to showcase their creative maneuvers.
- Ⓑ It allowed him to extend the length of the break in music when most instruments drop out.
- Ⓒ It allowed him to mimic the onstage feats of rock-and-roll legend James Brown.
- Ⓓ Dancers needed a signal to know when to drop to the ground and begin their routines.

Question 6

Which question is **not** answered by the Article?

- Ⓐ How did the audience deliver their decisions on the winners of the informal breaking battles?
- Ⓑ What prestigious venue in downtown Paris will breakers compete at during the Olympics?
- Ⓒ What are some of the moves b-boys and b-girls perform when breaking on the dance floor?
- Ⓓ How did DJ Kool Herc's groundbreaking turntable technique lead to the breaking style of dance?

Question 7

The Article says:

In today's formalized battles, dancers aren't just *contending* for bragging rights and street cred. These days, victors emerge with official recognition and cash prizes.

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *contending*?

- Ⓐ communicating
- Ⓑ competing
- Ⓒ contributing
- Ⓓ conforming

Question 8

Based on the Article, the reader can predict that _____.

- Ⓐ breakers will not be successful in attracting younger Olympic audiences.
- Ⓑ breaking will be suspended after the Summer Olympics in Paris.
- Ⓒ breaking will be a popular addition to the Summer Olympic events.
- Ⓓ breakers will be judged at the Olympics via applause from the audience.

After Reading Poll

Now that you have read the article, indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

"Any kind of dancing is better than no dancing at all."

Agree

Disagree

Explain why you voted the way you did. Then read and respond to what others have to say.

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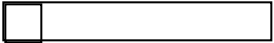
Thought Question

Suppose you had just watched a breaking competition. Use details from the Article to write a fictional journal or blog entry describing the event.

Poll Results

OPINION STATEMENT: "Any kind of dancing is better than no dancing at all."

BEFORE READING	AFTER READING
HOW YOU VOTED	
Agree	Agree
Disagree	Disagree

WORLDWIDE RESULTS					
Agree		84%	Agree		87%
Disagree		16%	Disagree		13%

6% changed their opinion after reading the article.

Stretch Article

NEW YORK, New York (Achieve3000, March 24, 2021). "B-boys and b-girls go down!" For some dancers, that's the signal to bust out their best moves. First, they set the tone with frenetically funky footwork, then they drop to the ground, where they pull off some power moves like spinning on their backs, performing a "jackhammer" or a "windmill," and whirling on their heads like a human cyclone. They finish it all off with a cool "freeze," pausing in a precarious, gravity-defying pose.

Recognize those signature spins and stylish stunts? These dexterous dancers are breakers. Breaking is an athletic, energetic dance style that's an integral part of hip-hop culture. It's sometimes called "breakdancing," but most of its practitioners—who are known as *breakers* or *b-boys* and *b-girls*—prefer the term *breaking* or *b-boying*.

Today, b-boying is beloved by fans around the world, but it all started in the 1970s in the Bronx, a borough of New York City. According to hip-hop historians, a lot of the credit goes to DJ Kool Herc, who had an idea that led to a pop culture breakthrough (see what we did there?). When playing music at parties and dance clubs, this innovative deejay used two turntables to mix sounds from two records.

Why? Kool Herc used that technique to extend the length of the *break*, which—in the lexicon of popular dance music—is a section of a song when most of the instruments drop out and the percussion continues. Because a break is all about the beat, it's a good time for dancers to showcase their showstopping moves. During Kool Herc's elongated breaks, some dancers came up with creative maneuvers, drawing inspiration from martial arts, gymnastics, and the onstage feats and daring brilliance of rock-and-roll legend James Brown.

The new dance style, which was dubbed *breaking*, caught on in New York, especially among Black and Puerto Rican teens. The dancers teamed up to form crews that faced off in informal competitions, or *battles*. One at a time, breakers took turns strutting their stuff. Sometimes the audience adjudicated, delivering their decisions via cheers and applause. While the performers went all out to upstage each other, an actual stage was not required. The match-up could take place at a city park, party, or roller rink.

Soon breaking made it to the big screen. Dancers showcased their talents in movies like *Wild Style* (1982), *Flashdance* (1983), *Beat Street* (1984), and others. Breakers also performed in music videos and live concerts. It wasn't long before the dynamic dance style became an international phenomenon, thriving in countries thousands of miles from its birthplace in the Bronx, including Japan, Brazil, France, and South Korea. Competitions cropped up around the world and are still going strong. In today's formalized battles, dancers aren't just vying for bragging rights and street cred. These days, victors emerge with official accolades and cash prizes. Meanwhile, breaking continues to be a pop culture presence, showing up in TV shows, movies, commercials, and even video games.

In 2020, there was some major breaking news for b-boys, b-girls, and the many fans who appreciate their audacious style and acrobatic artistry. The International Olympic Committee announced that breaking will be an official event in the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France, a bold decision that's part of the group's efforts to attract younger audiences. At a prestigious venue in downtown Paris, b-boys and b-girls from around the world will "go down"—and go for the gold!

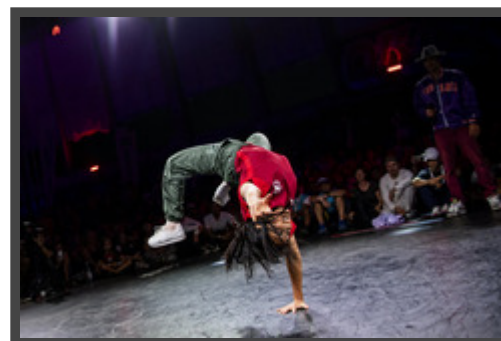


Photo credit: Little Shao/Red Bull Content Pool

B-girl Logistx from the USA competes at the World Urban Games. Breaking is an acrobatic type of dancing, sometimes called breakdancing.

Dictionary

accolade (*noun*) an award or praise

audacious (*adjective*) daring; bold

frenetic (*adjective*) very busy, moving in a fast way

Stretch Activity

PART 1

Question 1

The Article primarily discusses _____.

- Ⓐ the bold decision by the International Olympic Committee to make breaking an official event in an effort to attract younger audiences
- Ⓑ the style of dance known as breaking that allows dancers to showcase athletic and creative moves and is beloved by fans around the world
- Ⓒ how breaking was featured in movies like *Flashdance* and *Beat Street* and continues to be a pop culture presence today
- Ⓓ how the break in music is when most of the instruments drop out and is a good time for breakers to come up with showstopping moves

Question 2

Which of these had **not** yet happened when this Article was written?

This question asks about when events happened. It does not ask where in the Article the events appear. Reread the Article for clues, such as dates.

- Ⓐ Dancers showcased their breaking talents on the big screen as well as in music videos and at live concerts.
- Ⓑ B-boys and b-girls from around the world competed at a prestigious downtown venue in Paris, France, during the Summer Olympics.
- Ⓒ Breaking competitions cropped up around the world with dancers vying for accolades and cash prizes.
- Ⓓ DJ Kool Herc played music at parties and dance clubs using an innovative technique that extended the length of the music break.

Question 3

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *accolade*?

- Ⓐ commendation
- Ⓑ contempt
- Ⓒ privilege
- Ⓓ relic

Question 4

According to the Article, how are informal battles and formal competitions different?

- (A) Informal battles are judged by the audience via cheers and applause, while formal competitions are always judged by the International Olympic Committee.
- (B) Informal battles are judged by the International Olympic Committee, while formal competitions are always judged by the audience via cheers and applause.
- (C) Informal battles reward dancers with accolades and cash prizes, while formal competitions reward dancers with bragging rights and street cred.
- (D) Informal battles reward dancers with bragging rights and street cred, while formal competitions reward dancers with accolades and cash prizes.

Question 5

According to the Article, why did DJ Kool Herc use two turntables to mix sounds?

- (A) Dancers requested an elongated break in music to showcase their creative maneuvers inspired by martial arts and gymnastics.
- (B) Dancers needed a signal to begin their intricate routines that started with funky footwork and ended with a gravity-defying pose.
- (C) It allowed him to extend the length of the break in music when most instruments drop out as the percussion continues.
- (D) It allowed him to mimic the onstage feats of rock-and-roll legend James Brown when playing music at parties and dance clubs.

Question 6

Which question is **not** answered by the Article?

- (A) What prestigious venue in downtown Paris will breakers compete at during the Olympics?
- (B) How did the audience deliver their decisions on the winners of the informal breaking battles?
- (C) What are some of the moves b-boys and b-girls perform when breaking on the dance floor?
- (D) How did DJ Kool Herc's innovative turntable technique lead to the breaking style of dance?

Question 7

The Article says:

In today's formalized battles, dancers aren't just *vying* for bragging rights and street cred. These days, victors emerge with official accolades and cash prizes.

Which is the closest **synonym** for the word *vying*?

- (A) contemplating
- (B) consulting
- (C) converging
- (D) contending

Question 8

Based on the Article, the reader can predict that _____.

- Ⓐ breakers will not be successful in attracting younger Olympic audiences.
- Ⓑ breaking will be a popular addition to the Summer Olympic events.
- Ⓒ breaking will be discontinued after the Summer Olympics in Paris.
- Ⓓ breakers will be judged at the Olympics via applause from the audience.