Stormzy

Stormzy is a British musician who specialises in grime and hip-hop. He shot to fame with a series of freestyle raps on YouTube. He was born on the 26th July, 1993, in Thornton Heath and started rapping at the age of eleven.

Stormzy's real name is Michael Omari and his family come from Ghana, in Africa. He was brought up in south London, often battling MCs much older than himself for fun. He admits to being a "bit of a boffin" at school and left with six A*s, three As and five Bs in his GCSEs! His teachers wanted him to go to a top university but after spending two years working on an oil refinery, things didn't quite work out that way!

From 2011 onwards, Stormzy started freestyling online and soon had a large following. He performed more hip-hop to begin with but soon he started experimenting in grime. In July 2014, the six-foot-five-inch rapper released his first song and soon, record companies wanted to sign him up. He was so successful that by October that year, Stormzy had won Best Grime Act at the MOBO awards (an achievement he repeated the following year in 2015)! Later that month, he became the first unsigned rapper to appear on a TV programme called 'Later... with Jools Holland'. He then worked with fellow rappers Chip and Shalo, which gave him an invaluable insight into the professional world of rapping.

2015 saw Stormzy go from strength to strength. He came third in the BBC's 'Introducing Top 5' on Radio 1, released two new singles and uploaded more freestyles. One of his tracks was the first ever freestyle tune to reach the top 40 in the UK. After hitting 17 million views, Stormzy decided to release it as an official track and took on 'The X Factor' in a battle for a Christmas Number 1. After a huge social media campaign, the song eventually reached number 8, making it the rapper's most successful track ever.

Did You Know...?

Stormzy is an actor! He starred in a film in 2016.

He is the cousin of BBC 'Sound of 2017' nominee and fellow rapper, Nadia Rose.

Stormzy isn't all about the music! In 2017, he held an intense Q&A session with 300 students at Oxford University, where he talked about life, grime... and his mum!

Stormzy loves sharing posts, photos and messages but in 2016 he took a complete social media break. After a year of silence, he returned in early 2017 when he released his long-awaited new album, which came out on 24th February. It reached number one on the UK Albums Chart.

Stormzy has been incredibly successful in a relatively short space of time. Along with the two MOBO awards, the 'front man of grime' also won 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year', 'Best Artist of the Year, 'Best Solo Artist of the Year', and 'Best International Act' from a number of different award events. He also won 'British Male Solo Artist' and 'British Album of the Year' at the 2018 BRIT Awards.

Stormzy finally hooked up with a major record company in January 2018, when he signed for Atlantic Records. Expect lots more tunes to come!

Glossary

Grime – A type of music that started out in England in the early 2000s. A mix of UK garage, drum 'n' bass, and dancehall.

Freestyle rap – A type of rapping in which rap lyrics are made-up on the spot.

MOBO – Music of Black Origin.

Questions

1. At what age did Stormzy start rapping?

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2. What do you think Stormzy means by being a **bit of a boffin**?

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3. Who is Nadia Rose?

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4. Match these years to key events in Stormzy's life:

Stormzy's single goes to number 8.	2014
Stormzy stars in a film.	1993
Stormzy releases his first song.	2017
This is the date Stormzy was born.	2015
Stormzy speaks at a university.	2016

5. What was special about Stormzy appearing on the TV programme 'Later... with Jools Holland'?

_____

6. How do you think Stormzy felt about his track that made it to number 8 in the charts?

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7. Why do you think Stormzy took a social media break in 2016?

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8. Which awards had Stormzy won prior to 2018? Tick three.

○ 'Front Man Of Grime'

○ 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year'

○ 'Best Solo Artist of the Year'

○ 'Best International Act'

○ 'British Male Solo Artist'

○ 'British Album of the Year'

9. How do you think Stormzy would have done at university if he had studied for a degree? Give reasons for your answer.

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Answers

1. A what age did Stormzy start rapping?
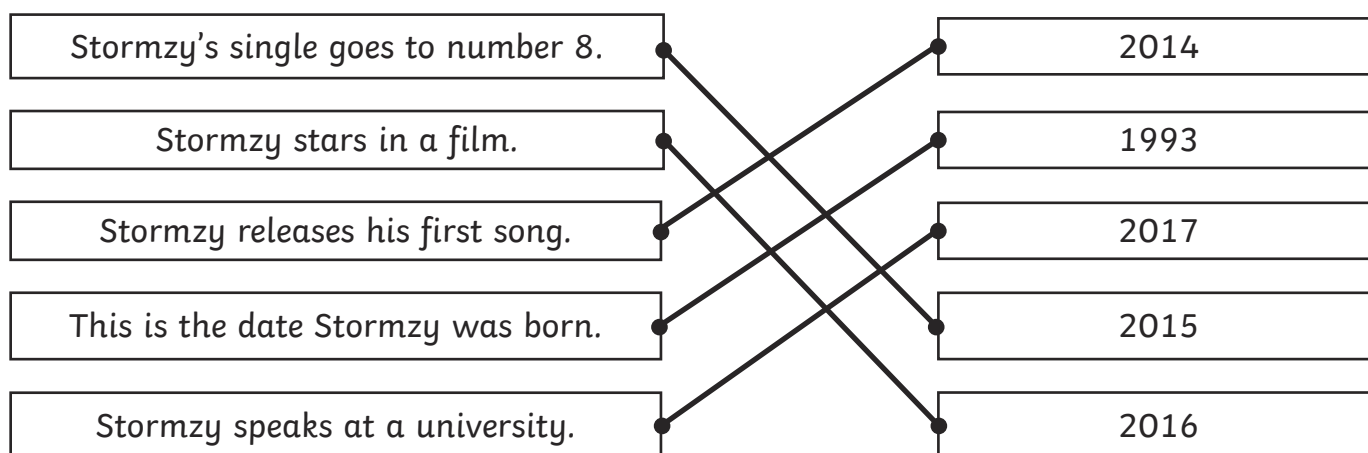
   Stormzy started rapping at age eleven.

2. What do you think Stormzy means by being **a bit of a boffin**?
   Pupils' own responses, such as: It means he thought he was quite clever at school and enjoyed learning new things/studied hard/did well in exams.

3. Who is Nadia Rose?
   Nadia Rose is Stormzy's cousin. She's also BBC 'Sound of 2017' nominee and a fellow rapper.

4. Match these years to key events in Stormzy's life:

Stormzy's single goes to number 8.	2014
Stormzy stars in a film.	1993
Stormzy releases his first song.	2017
This is the date Stormzy was born.	2015
Stormzy speaks at a university.	2016

5. What was special about Stormzy appearing on the TV programme 'Later... with Jools Holland'?

   Stormzy's appearance on the TV programme was special because he was the first unsigned rapper to appear on it.

6. How do you think Stormzy felt about his track that made it to number 8 in the charts?
   Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Stormzy was pleased and also proud when his track reached number 8 because it hit 17 million views online, battled 'The X Factor' for the Christmas Number 1 and reached number 8 in the charts, making it Stormzy's most successful track ever.

7. Why do you think Stormzy took a social media break in 2016?

   Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Stormzy took a social media break because he wanted to help build up excitement/anticipation for his upcoming album.

8. Which awards had Stormzy won prior to 2018? Tick three.

   ○ 'Front Man Of Grime'
   ⊘ **'Breakthrough Artist of the Year'**
   ⊘ **'Best Solo Artist of the Year'**
   ⊘ **'Best International Act'**
   ○ 'British Male Solo Artist'
   ○ 'British Album of the Year'

9. How do you think Stormzy would have done at university if he had studied for a degree? Give reasons for your answer.

   Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Stormzy would have done really well because his teachers wanted him to go which means they thought he would do well, plus he scored high marks in his GCSEs.