

*When the Beat Was Born*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Preview the cover and title with students. Have students make predictions about what makes this “changemaker” unique.
- As a class, listen to some excerpts of DJ Kool’s music on YouTube. Ask students to identify any similarities and/or differences to music styles they are familiar with.
- Introduce some content specific vocabulary: *record, turntable, microphone, hip hop*

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- How does Clive feel about music? How do you know?
- Why did Clive adapt the nickname “Kool Herc”?
- How does Herc become “DJ Kool Herc”?
- In what ways does Herc use his memories of Jamacia in his DJing?
- How does Herc engage his community in his music?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- What makes DJ Kool Herc a unique changemaker? Use details from the story.
- **Extend:** Have students choose a music artist that they like. Modeled after the timeline in the back of the book, have students create their own timeline of the evolution of a music style and/or artist of their choice. Encourage them to choose at least five important events to include on their timeline.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.
- Explore RIF’s [Changemakers Collection](#) for more stories about influential people throughout history.