

Musicians: Drake

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Drake performs onstage during the Final Stop of 'Aubrey & The three Amigos Tour' at State Farm Arena on November 18, 2018 in Atlanta, Georgia. Photo by: Prince Williams/Wireimage via Getty Images

Canadian musician Drake is always in the spotlight. He first became famous on the teen TV show "Degrassi: The Next Generation" before becoming one of the most famous rappers in the world.

Musical — And Jewish — Upbringing in Toronto

Drake was born Aubrey Drake Graham on October 24, 1986, in Toronto, Canada. He grew up in a musical family. His father, Dennis Graham, was a drummer for the rock star Jerry Lee Lewis. Other family members were also in music.

Drake has a mixed background. His father is an African-American Catholic. His mother is a white Canadian Jew. Drake said he feels more a part of black culture but called being Jewish a "kind of cool twist."

Drake's parents divorced when he was 5 years old, and he was raised by his mother. Drake had a Jewish upbringing. He felt lonely, though, at Forest Hill Collegiate Institute, his mostly white high

school. He has said that "nobody understood what it was like to be black and Jewish." Drake added, though, that "being different from everyone else just made me a lot stronger."

"Degrassi: The Next Generation"

In 2001, Drake joined the Canadian teen drama series "Degrassi: The Next Generation," and was on the show for seven years. The show followed the lives of a group of teenagers at Degrassi High School. Drake played the part of Jimmy Brooks. Brooks is a basketball star who becomes permanently wheelchair-bound. Being on "Degrassi" made Drake famous in Canada.

From "Degrassi" To Signing With Lil Wayne's Music Label

While still on "Degrassi," Drake also released mixtapes. Mixtapes are recordings of original and cover songs. He ended up attracting the attention of famous performer Lil Wayne with his song "Replacement Girl." The song had some of Wayne's music but Drake's own lyrics.

Drake was dropped from "Degrassi" in 2008, but luckily Lil Wayne asked him to join his concert tour.

In 2009, Drake released his third mixtape. The recording had the song "Best I Ever Had," which became the No.2 song in the United States. Later in 2009, he signed a record deal with Lil Wayne's Young Money Entertainment. The company would put out Drake's album.

"Take Care" Wins Grammy

On June 15, 2010, Drake released his first full studio album, "Thank Me Later." A studio album is all original music. When the album came out, it sold more than 1 million copies. It was the No.1 album in the U.S. and Canada. Soon, Drake was a hip-hop star. He tried to stay connected to his past, though. On the cover of Vibe magazine in 2009, he wore a diamond covered Chai, a symbol worn by Jewish people. It was a nod to his Jewish roots.

In November 2011, he released his second studio album, "Take Care." Critics and fans loved the album. It won the 2013 Grammy award for best rap album. Greg Kot described why Drake was so popular in a review for the Chicago Tribune newspaper. He said Drake's songs were about different subjects. His music had an emotional honesty that made him different.

Feuds With Chris Brown, Meek Mill

Although his career was doing well, Drake faced some personal problems. In 2012, he fought with performer Chris Brown because they both wanted to date singer Rihanna. Several onlookers were hurt, and they sued both entertainers.

In 2012, Drake's old girlfriend Ericka Lee also sued him. She wanted credit for co-writing the song "Marvin's Room." Drake reached an agreement with her. He also fought with rapper Meek Mill. Mill said Drake did not write his own lyrics. Drake may have also had problems with performers such as Kanye West and Jay-Z.

"Views" Album Tops Charts

Drake's problems never seemed to hold him back for long.

Drake released his fourth studio album, "Views," in the spring of 2016. The recording was an instant success. The album included the single "Hotline Bling." The song earned the artist Grammy wins for best rap song and best rap/sung performance in early 2017. Drake was annoyed though, because "Hotline Bling" is not a rap song. He thought the Grammys put him in the wrong category because of his race.

His music career continued to move forward. In May 2017, Drake took home 13 Billboard Music Awards. He won more awards than any other artist in one night.

On June 29, 2018, Drake released his fifth studio album, "Scorpion." Millions streamed "Scorpion" on Apple Music and Spotify over its first 24 hours. Drake became the first artist to top 1 billion streams in one week with his studio release.

Quiz

- 1 Read the section "Degrassi: The Next Generation." Which sentence from this section describes the character that Drake played on "Degrassi"?
- (A) In 2001, Drake joined the Canadian teen drama series "Degrassi: The Next Generation," and was on the show for seven years.
 - (B) The show followed the lives of a group of teenagers at Degrassi High School.
 - (C) Brooks is a basketball star who becomes permanently wheelchair-bound.
 - (D) Being on "Degrassi" made Drake famous in Canada.
- 2 When did Drake break a record for doing something no other musician had done before? How do you know?
- (A) In 2009; Later in 2009, he signed a record deal with Lil Wayne's Young Money Entertainment.
 - (B) In 2010; On June 15, 2010, Drake released his first full studio album, "Thank Me Later."
 - (C) In 2017; The song earned the artist Grammy wins for best rap song and best rap/sung performance in early 2017.
 - (D) In 2018; Drake became the first artist to top 1 billion streams in one week with his studio release.
- 3 The article is mostly organized using chronology. Why do you think the author chose to organize the information this way?
- (A) to describe important events in Drake's life and career in the order that they happened
 - (B) to highlight Drake's most well-known albums before highlighting less popular albums
 - (C) to discuss Drake's career before discussing his personal life
 - (D) to compare Drake's TV career with his later music career
- 4 How is the structure of the section "Take Care Wins Grammy" similar to the structure of "Views Album Tops Charts"?
- (A) Both sections describe why fans love Drake's music.
 - (B) Both sections describe what Drake's songs are about.
 - (C) Both sections describe problems that Drake has had.
 - (D) Both sections describe awards that Drake's music has won.