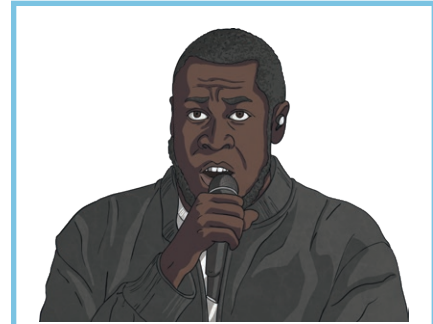


# Stormzy

## Early Life

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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 did very well at school where he achieved six A\* GCSEs. His teachers wanted him to go to a top university but things didn't quite work out that way!



## Did You Know...?

Stormzy starred in a film in 2016!

## Career

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 he won Best Grime Act at the MOBO awards (MOBO stands for Music of Black Origin). He was the first unsigned rapper to appear on a TV programme called 'Later... with Jools Holland', and he also worked with other famous rappers.

In 2015, Stormzy came third in the BBC's 'Introducing Top 5' on Radio 1. He released a few singles and he became the first ever freestyler to reach the top 40 in the UK. After one of his songs hit 17 million views online, he took on 'The X Factor' in a battle for a Christmas Number 1. It eventually reached number 8, making it the rapper's most successful track ever.

Stormzy loves social media and often posts photos and messages but in 2016 he took a complete social media break. He returned in early 2017 when he released his long-awaited new album, which reached number one on the UK Albums Chart.

Along with the two MOBOs, Stormzy has won lots of other awards in his short career. He won 'British Male Solo Artist' and 'British Album of the Year' at the 2018 BRIT Awards.

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

**Glossary**

**Grime** – A type of music that is a mixture of UK garage, drum 'n' bass, and dancehall.

**Freestyle rap** – Rapping where you make up the words as you go along.

# Questions

1. Where was Stormzy's family born? Tick one.

- Manchester
- Thornton Heath
- Ghana
- USA

2. What is Stormzy's real name?

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3. How tall is Stormzy?

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4. Why do you think record companies wanted to sign Stormzy after he released his first song?

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5. What do you think Stormzy's teachers thought of him? Give reasons for your answer.

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6. Match these events up with the dates.

Stormzy was born.

2018

Stormzy released his first song.

1993

Stormzy stars in a film.

2014

Stormzy signs for Atlantic Records.

2016

7. What two awards did Stormzy win at the BRIT Awards?

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8. Find and copy one word which suggests that Stormzy's fans eagerly expected his new album.

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# Answers

1. Where was Stormzy's family born? Tick one.

- Manchester  
 **Thornton Heath**  
 Ghana  
 USA

2. What is Stormzy's real name?

**Stormzy's real name is Michael Omari.**

3. How tall is Stormzy?

**Stormzy is 6 foot 5 inches.**

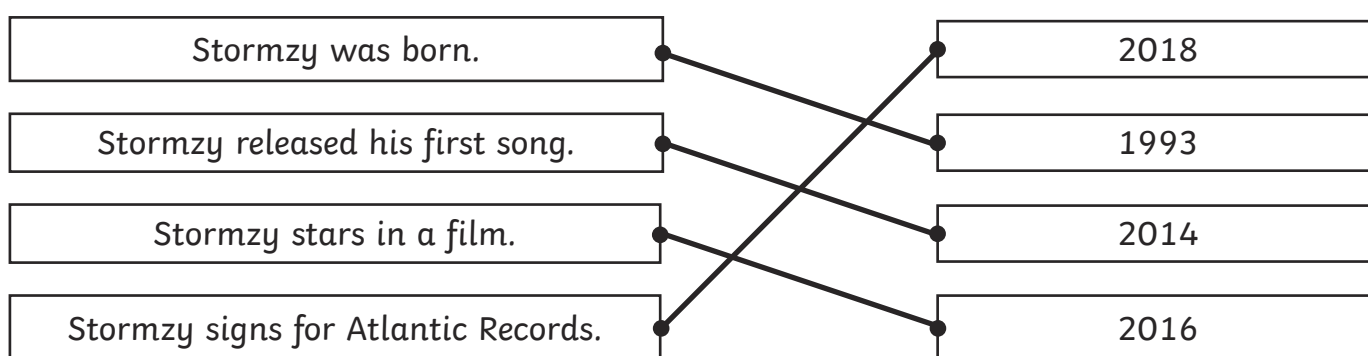
4. Why do you think record companies wanted to sign Stormzy after he released his first song?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think record companies wanted to sign Stormzy after he released his own song because they must have liked his music and wanted him to make more music for their company.**

5. What do you think Stormzy's teachers thought of him? Give reasons for your answer.

**I think Stormzy's teachers thought he was intelligent and wanted him to go to university because he achieved 6 A\* GCSEs.**

6. Match these events up with the dates.



7. What two awards did Stormzy win at the BRIT Awards?

**At the 2018 BRIT Awards, Stormzy won 'British Male Solo Artist' and 'British Album of the Year'.**

8. Find and copy one word which suggests that Stormzy's fans eagerly expected his new album.

**long-awaited**

# 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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'?

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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.**

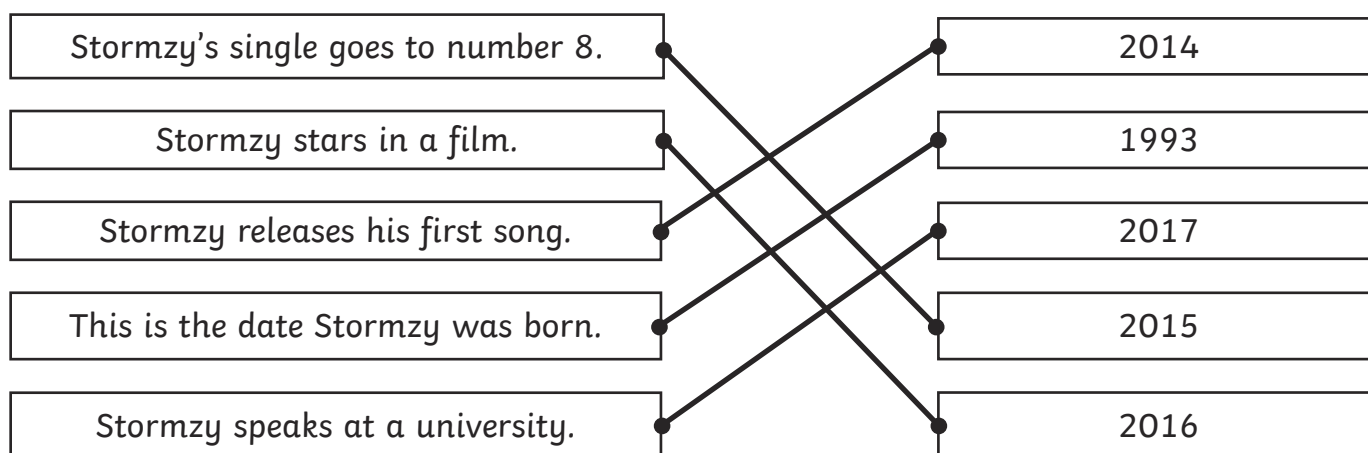
2. What do you think Stormzy means by being a bit of a boffin?

**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:



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.**

# Stormzy

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

Stormzy (real name Michael Ebenazer Kwadjo Omari Owuo, Jr) is proud of his Ghanaian roots but 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 and he had his heart set on a career in engineering but, despite spending two years working on an oil refinery in Southampton, 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 debut EP and soon, record companies wanted to sign him up. The song 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 the BBC’s ‘Later... with Jools Holland’ - and he even found time to work alongside 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



## 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 has lots of nicknames, such as ‘Big Mike’!

He once donated £9000 to British-born Ghanaian, Fiona Asiedu, as she couldn't afford to study for a Master's Degree at Harvard University in America.

uploaded more freestyles. One of his tracks was the first ever freestyle tune to reach the top 40 in the UK. After Stormzy performed the song live at Anthony Joshua's British heavyweight title fight against Dillian Whyte on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 (he freestyled the lyrics as Joshua came on into the ring), he decided to release it as an official track. It hit 17 million views online. Stormzy then took on 'The X Factor' in a monumental battle for a Christmas Number 1. After a huge social media campaign, it eventually reached number 8, making it the rapper's most successful track to date.

Stormzy is a self-confessed lover of social networking and often posts photos and messages on various sites but in 2016, he took a complete social media hiatus. After a year of silence, he returned in early 2017 when he released his highly anticipated new album on 24<sup>th</sup> February. It reached number one on the UK Albums Chart.

In his relatively short career, Stormzy has racked up an impressive number of awards and personal achievements. Along with the two MOBO awards, he has 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.

Following Stormzy's huge rise to stardom and the success of his freestyling tunes, the grime MC finally joined a major record company in January 2018 when he signed for Atlantic Records. Expect lots more 'grimes' 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. Where was Stormzy born? Tick one.

- Southampton
- Ghana
- South London
- USA

2. Why do you think things didn't quite work out for Stormzy with his career in engineering?

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3. Write three things that show Stormzy's debut EP was successful.

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4. Why do you think one of Stormzy's nicknames is 'Big Mike'?

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5. Reread the sentence below and explain what you think unsigned means?

**Later that month, he became the first unsigned rapper to appear on the BBC's 'Later... with Jools Holland'...**

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6. Why do you think Stormzy helped Fiona Asiedu?

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7. Link the dates to events in Stormzy's life.

26th July, 1993	Stormzy releases his debut EP.
early 2000s	Stormzy was born.
2011 onwards	Stormzy signs for Atlantic Records.
July 2014	Stormzy's song reaches number 8.
December 2015	Stormzy begins performing grime music.
2016	Stormzy starts freestyling online.
2017	Stormzy's cousin is nominated for BBC 'Sound of 2017'.
January 2018	Stormzy appears in a film.

8. Why do you think Stormzy is known as the 'frontman of grime'?

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9. Reread the sentence below and explain what you think hiatus means.

**...in 2016, he took a complete social media hiatus.**

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10. Would you like to freestyle? Give reasons for your answer.

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# Answers

1. Where was Stormzy born? Tick one.

- Southampton
- Ghana
- South London**
- USA

2. Why do you think things didn't quite work out for Stormzy with his career in engineering?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Stormzy's career in engineering didn't work out because, although he achieved good qualifications and spent two years working on an oil refinery, Stormzy had been freestyling online since 2011 and his music career took off instead.**

3. Write three things that show Stormzy's debut EP was successful.

**Accept any three of the following: Record companies wanted to sign him up; Stormzy won Best Grime Act at the MOBO awards; He was the first unsigned rapper to appear on 'Later... with Jools Holland'; He worked with fellow rappers, Chip and Shalo.**

4. Why do you think one of Stormzy's nicknames is 'Big Mike'?

**I think one of Stormzy's nicknames is 'Big Mike' because he is really tall as it says he is 6 foot 5 inches and his real name is Michael (Mike). Plus he sings/raps using a microphone, which sounds like Mike.**

5. Reread the sentence below and explain what you think unsigned means?

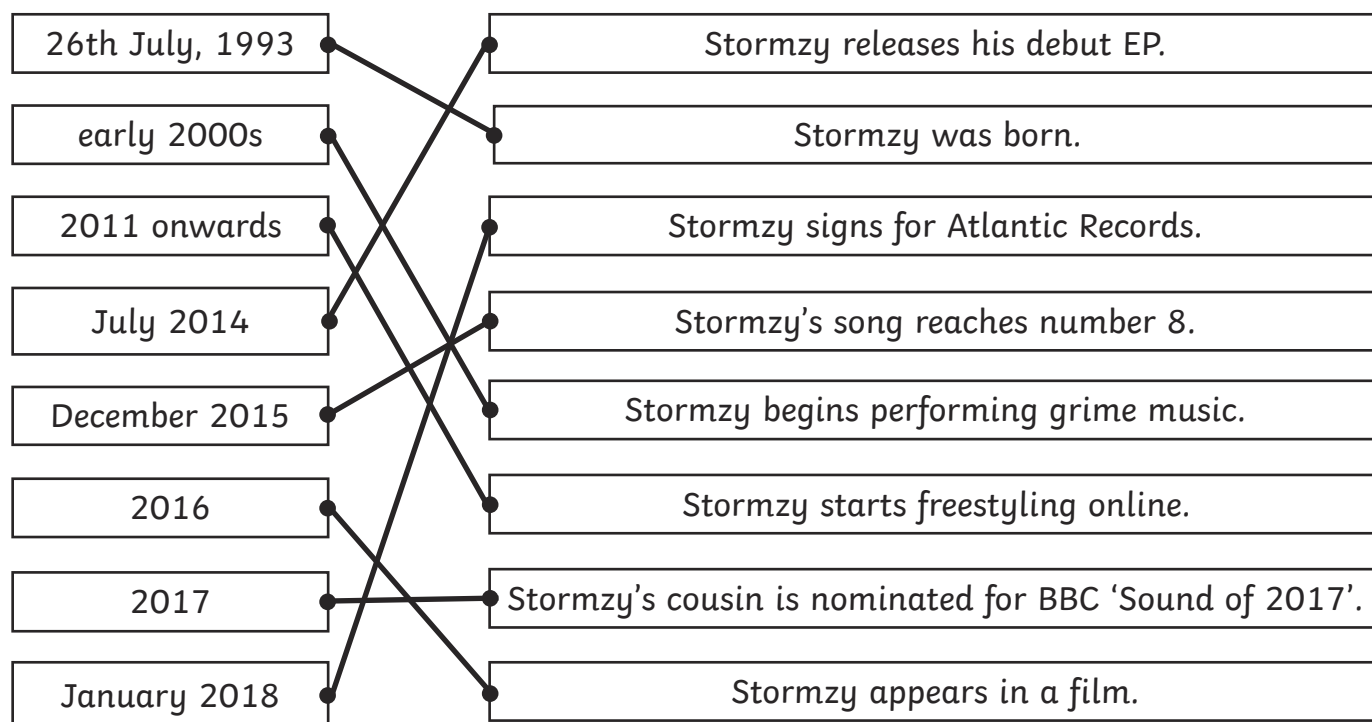
Later that month, he became the first unsigned rapper to appear on the BBC's 'Later... with Jools Holland'...

**Accept any suitable answer, such as: I think unsigned means a record label have not signed him up, or he performs independently/without an agent.**

6. Why do you think Stormzy helped Fiona Asiedu?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Stormzy helped Fiona because he is kind and generous and wanted to use his money for good causes.**

7. Link the dates to events in Stormzy's life.



8. Why do you think Stormzy is known as the 'frontman of grime'?

**Accept any suitable responses, such as: I think Stormzy is known as the frontman of grime because 'frontman' means 'leader' or 'best man' and Stormzy is one of the best rappers in grime.**

9. Reread the sentence below and explain what you think hiatus means.

...in 2016, he took a complete social media hiatus.

**Accept any suitable definition, such as: I think hiatus means a pause, or break.**

10. Would you like to freestyle? Give reasons for your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I wouldn't like to freestyle because I wouldn't be able think of the words quickly enough.**