Chapter 1: The Dream

1. Read and find out about the main character in this story:

   1. his first name
      Sal
   2. his family name
      D'Angelo
   3. his stage name
      Sal D
   4. his birthplace
      San Francisco
   5. his father's native country
      Mexico
   6. his mother's native country
      Puerto Rico
   7. the type of music he likes
      rap

2. Look at your notes and recap orally about this character.

3. Read the chapter again and pick out:

   1. the reasons why he loves rap
      He loves the sounds of words.
   2. the main obstacle to his success
      Being a Latino.

4. Make a list of the American rap singers you know.
Chapter 2: Middle-Class Rap?

1. Listen to track 2 and tell the class:
   1. what rap music is usually about  
   Life in the ghetto
   2. what Sal’s rap is about  
   Middle-class

2. Highlight the places mentioned in the chapter:
   - Ellis Island
   - Los Angeles Bay
   - Oakland Bay Bridge
   - Treasure Island
   - Alcatraz Island
   - Angel Island
   - Golden Gate Bridge
   - Albany Hill

3. Now look for a map of San Francisco and spot the places you have ticked.

4. Let’s work in groups.

Take notes about the advantages of kids living in Albany City.
Pick out as much information as you can about:
   - the houses
   - the clothes
   - the schools
   - the parents
   - the hobbies
5. Now the two groups discuss the advantages and the drawbacks of living in a place like Albany City.

6. Why is Albany City called “a place with a million-dollar view”? Because you can see San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge.

7. What other cities do you know in the state of California? Make a list. San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz...

Chapter 3: A Rough Scene

1. Listen and tick [✓] the correct informations.
   - [ ] 1. Sal has never taken part in a rap battle.
   - [✓] 2. Rap battles are often dangerous.
   - [✓] 3. Sal doesn’t like violence.
   - [ ] 4. Sal’s mother encourages him to take part in rap battles.
   - [✓] 5. Sal is not sure judges are always fair in rap battles.
2. Look at your notes and recap orally.

3. Is a “rap battle” a fight or a competition? 
   a competition

4. Read again to find out why it is dangerous.
   Sometimes they get angry when they lose.

5. “Taking part in a rap battle was a ladder to success… You had to climb that ladder to the top.” Write a paragraph to explain why Sal thinks so. Remember about his dream.

   Sal thinks so because he wants to become a famous rapper, a superstar, and he has the talent and he’s willing to work hard to achieve his dream.

6. Match the words with their synonyms:

   - audience: spectators
   - winner: opposed to prize
   - prize: award
   - warning: champion
   - against: advice
Chapter 4: Rapping for the English Teacher

1. Listen and tick ✓ the correct informations.

✓ 1. Sal works hard to improve his skills.
✓ 2. His style is aggressive and violent.
✓ 3. Mrs Hudson really likes his lyrics.
✓ 4. At first, Sal is not sure about doing a rap at school.
✓ 5. His classmates loved the performance.

2. Recap orally about Sal’s song. What’s so surprising about it?

3. Why are his classmates so enthusiastic about the performance?

Because they are surprised, they didn’t expect it on a Monday morning.

4. What do you know about Spice 1 and Coolio? Look for information about one of them on the internet. Prepare a presentation for your classmates. Speak about his music and his life. Show pictures to your friends and play or sing one of his songs in class.

5. It’s your turn to rap for your English teacher! Work with a friend(s) and write your own rap song. You need a title, two verses (couplets) and a chorus. Then perform it at home or in class.
Chapter 5: Alonzo and Shelly

1. Pick out information about Alonzo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>his family name</th>
<th>Russell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>his stage name</td>
<td>Big Zo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his age</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his physical appearance</td>
<td>He’s tall, good-looking, young, Afro-American, with a ghetto-look.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Answer these questions.

1. What does Shelly say about Sal D?
   He’s very talented.

2. What is Alonzo’s reaction?
   A sudden flash of anger.

3. Play the scene from “Alonzo was sitting at his regular table” (page 17, line 8) until the end. One of you can record a video of the scene to observe and comment on it later with your teacher.
Chapter 6: Big Zo’s Anger

1. Listen to the whole chapter and find out about:

   1. the characters
      Alonzo, Shelly

   2. the place
      The school cafeteria

   3. the topic of their conversation
      Who is better (Sal or Big Zo)

   4. their feelings
      Big Zo is angry and Shelly takes everything she said back because she’s scared

2. What’s wrong with Sal’s song according to Alonzo?

   - the music
   - the topic

3. Which adjective is not appropriate to qualify Alonzo in this chapter? Cross the odd one out!

   angry, self-confident, nervous, tolerant, upset, confused, offended, bitter, mad
4. Find the wrong information in this summary. Make the necessary corrections and write it out again.

Alonzo and Shelly are having lunch in a restaurant. Shelly tells Alonzo about Sal’s rap performances at school. Sal’s song is about a girl who is in love with a boy from her school. She has a nervous breakdown because the boy doesn’t love her. Alonzo thinks rap songs shouldn’t deal with that kind of topic. He decides to spread the word that Sal doesn’t know what rap is about.

Chapter 7: Confrontation

1. Read and pick out information about Minna’s:

1. What is it?
   San Francisco’s hot spot for rappers.

2. Where is it?
   In San Francisco

3. What is going on there?
   A rap battle

4. When do the rap battles take place?
   In the evening
2. Concentrate on Sal:

1. Pick out the words which show how the audience greets him.
   «By a wave of boos and shouts»

2. Now, deduce the meaning of the expression: “a wave of boos and shouts”.
   Not encouraging him, against him.

3. How was Sal’s performance? Suggest a synonym for “brilliant”.
   Great

4. Why do you think he wants to talk to Alonzo? He says “we’ve got a lot in common”: explain why.
   They’re both rappers, he wants to make peace.

5. Alonzo challenges Sal: pick out what Alonzo says. Why does he call it “A BLACK DAY”? Why is it written in big block letters in the text?
   To sound aggressive / To make him panic.

3. Sal or Alonzo? Write down the name in each case.

1. He spreads rumours. Alonzo
2. He has his friends in the audience. Alonzo
3. He did the best performance. Sal
4. He is surrounded by friends. Alonzo
5. He doesn’t want to talk. Alonzo
6. He tells his girlfriend to wait outside. Alonzo
4. Now highlight the words or sentences in the text to justify your choice.

5. Sal tells his mother about Alonzo’s attitude towards him. Write the dialogue between Sal and his mother in which he explains his feelings and his desire to become friends with Alonzo.

6. Work with one or two friends and create a poster on a rap battle at Minna’s between Sal and Alonzo. Don’t forget to mention the place, the day and the names of the rappers. Find a catchphrase to invite people to come and see the battle.
Chapter 8: Sal D and Big Zo

1. Perform the conversation between Sal and Alonzo. One of you can record a video of the scene to observe and comment on it later with your teacher. The body language is very important!

2. Circle the words you hear about fighting.

- kick
- stab
- grab
- push
- fight
- hit
- bruise
- injury
- punch
- butt

3. What is Sal’s mother’s reaction to the fight?

- 1. She thinks Sal needs bodyguards.
- 2. She wants him to move to another city.
- 3. She wants him to leave the rap scene.

4. Who says “Leave him alone!”?

- 1. Sal’s mother.
- 2. One of the bodyguards.

5. Give a definition of the word “bodyguard”.

A strong person who protects someone.

A strong person who protects someone.
6. Now look for the words from the activity 2 in the word square:

```
CHHQBDERZSFCTRMO
ROMQTKSSNOYKRM
FGHHOPLSIPUNCHM
QZGGNUTYUZHSP
WUIWBPBUTTRYXXI
FKZGYTHUABTTT
PKARJQRZKBUDGT
YWANCUJOAIEXXR
LJBAALJSLRZCVSA
QXVFZPNWYMAXKCP
OEAVIDOMGNSEFR
LZGJHRLFWDYTHBP
YSXWPLUDKTQARMQ
YTIEKLKNCIOBOXS
NLBTVDUHKHODZUM
```

7. Focus on the bodyguards and find out about:

1. their names
   Marty and George

2. what they look like
   They’re big, strong boys, called ‘the giants’.

8. Sal asks Marty and George to be his bodyguards. Write the conversation. Sal explains the reason why he chose them and what he expects them to do.
Chapter 9: Under Contract

1. Listen and tick ☒ the correct informations.
   1. Sal is very focused and is winning battles regularly.
   2. He is late for the meeting with Mr Silverton.
   3. Mr Silverton wants Sal to quit school.
   4. Sal’s mother finally doesn’t sign the contract.

2. Read and find out about:
   1. Mr Silverton’s job
      He’s a music agent, a talent scout.
   2. what Mr Silverton says about Sal’s rap
      «You’ve got great potential»
   3. the name of a famous café in which he is going to perform
      Hard Rock Café.

3. Visit this website to learn more about the Hard Rock Café:
   www.hardrockcafe.com

4. Read again and highlight the names of famous people.

5. What do you know about them? Look for information about one of them on the internet and present it to the class. Speak about his music and his life, show pictures to your friends and play or sing one or two of his songs in class.
Chapter 10: An Unusual Conversation

1. Listen and tick ✓ the correct informations.

☐ 1. Sal doesn’t have enough songs for the concert.
☐ 2. Sal works on his new songs in his bedroom.
✓ 3. School is not his first priority.
☐ 4. Sal’s mother tells him to stay away from girls.

2. Finish the sentences:

1. Sal works hard on his music because he wants to get off to a good start.
2. Sal’s first performance at the Hard Rock Café is in a month and a half
3. His friends think he is off to another world
4. His mother warns him because he’s taking it a bit too far so she’s worried

3. Match the characters with their actions.

Sal

- is drinking milk
- is worried about his schoolwork
- is having a cup of coffee
- writes new songs
- thinks music shouldn’t take over life
- wants to know about girls

Sal’s mother
4. Look at the title of the chapter “An Unusual Conversation”. How can you qualify the relationship between Sal and his mother? What is unusual about their conversation?

5. Sal meets Mr Silverton again to talk about the contract. Mr Silverton wants to know what his mother thinks about it. Write their conversation.

Chapter 11: Testing Shelly

1. Listen and pick out information about:

   1. the characters
      Sal, Shelly, Mr Hurley

   2. the place
      in the woods behind the school

   3. the time
      during Phys Ed lesson

2. Listen again and note down the words or sentences which show…

   1. Sal’s feelings
      grin, nervously, 'please, stay', his heart did a flip…

   2. Shelly’s feelings
      hesitated, worried, her eyes lighted up…
3. Choose the best summary for this chapter:

☐ **SUMMARY 1:** Sal wonders about Shelly's true feelings. Does she care about him or is she not interested in him? Is she afraid of Alonzo? He decides to talk to her during his Physical Education lesson and find out more. Actually, she likes him but she doesn’t dare to tell him because she is afraid of Alonzo.

☑ **SUMMARY 2:** Sal wonders about Shelly’s true feelings. Does she care about him or is she not interested in him? Is she afraid of Alonzo? He decides to fake an injury during his Phys Ed lesson. She goes towards him and wants to help him but says she doesn't want to get into trouble with Alonzo.

4. Sal writes an email to his bodyguards about what happened during the Phys Ed class. He focuses on what he feels for Shelly and on his hopes.
Chapter 12: Alicia’s Party

1. Before reading this chapter, look at the title and speak about it. Who could Alicia be? Who do you think is invited? What is going to happen?

2. Now read the chapter and check your answers.

3. Find the wrong information in this summary. Make the necessary corrections and write it out again.

Sal is invited because he is Alicia’s friend and because they know each other very well. She is disappointed to see him with Marty and George because she wanted to talk to him. She goes to Sal and tells him she gave a party because she wanted to organize a rap battle between Sal and Alonzo at her place.

4. Who do you think will win the rap battle? Explain why.

5. Imagine the loser’s feelings.

Chapter 13: Rap Battle

1. Listen and tick [✓] the correct informations.

- [ ] 1. Sal wins the toss and goes first.
- [✓] 2. Sal takes some time to concentrate before start rapping.
- [ ] 3. Alonzo congratulates Sal after the battle.
2. Listen again to Sal’s song and focus on what it says about:

1. Alonzo’s clothes: his jeans, his trainers and the brands he wears. What does Sal mean?
   - [ ] Alonzo’s clothes are expensive like gold
   - [x] Alonzo’s clothes are not fashionable

2. Alonzo’s heart. What is it compared to? Say why.
   - To the sun, the rings and things, because it shines.

3. Pick out the sentence in which Alonzo speaks about taking his revenge. ‘I’m going to blow you away’.

4. About Alonzo, Sal sings: “Gold on the outside, gold on the inside”. What does he mean?

5. Match each word with its French equivalent:

   feather → des applaudissements
   trainers → des vêtements
   brand → évident(e)
   heavyweight → un cœur
   clothes → une plume
   obvious → des baskets
   applause → un poids-plume
   featherweight → une marque
   heart → un poids-lourd
Chapters 14 and 15: Peace? / Heavy Talk

1. Read chapter 14 and highlight:
   1. what Sal finds on his locker door  a white feather
   2. what symbol he thinks of  symbol of peace
   3. what he decides to do  to have a talk with Alonzo

2. Read chapter 15 and concentrate on the two boys’ ideas about rap. Who says what? Write down the name in each case.
   1. Rap is about life in the ghetto.  Alonzo
   2. Rap is a huge industry.  Alonzo
   3. Rappers often talk about clichés.  Sal
   4. Rapping about middle-class life is stupid.  Alonzo

3. Explain in your own words what they mean when they say:
   1. “It’s your roots”
      Your origins.
   2. “You and I have a lot in common”
      Both are rappers, from the same social class...
   3. “Rappers are into things guys can identify with”
      Rappers speak about subjects that guys can understand.
   4. “Their raps are full of stereotyped ideas about ghetto life”
      Full of clichés, typical ideas about the ghetto.

4. Write the dialogue between Sal, Marty and George. Sal tells them about his conversation with Alonzo, expresses his feelings about the rap battle and asks Marty and George to come and be there with him. Later, act the dialogue with two friends.
Chapter 16: For Shelly

1. Listen to the passage from the beginning down to “and began” (page 53, line 17) and pick out the keywords (the nouns, the verbs and adjectives about the rap battle). Look at your notes and recap orally.
   
crowd, stage, perform, row, judges, confronting, winner…

2. How many rounds does the MC announce? What sport comes to mind?
   3 / boxing

3. Listen from “This is Sal D” (page 53, line 18) to “a big winner’s grin on his face” (page 55, line 17) and answer the questions:

   1. What is Big Zo's song about?
      About Sal getting into the San Francisco rap scene, too big for him

   2. What is Sal’s song about?
      About the contradictions he feels in Albany

   3. Who wins the round?
      They are not sure, but Big Zo thinks he has won.

4. Listen from “Knowing he would go first” (page 55, line 18) to “This one’s for you” (page 58, line 2):

   1. Give four keywords about Sal’s song. Then write a full sentence to explain what it is about.
      About Big Zo pretending to be bad and scary but being actually mild

   2. What is Big Zo’s song about?
      About Sal pretending to be good and quiet, but his irony shows he is not

   3. The winner is…
      They don’t know.
5. Listen to the second round from “His thoughts came to a sudden end” (page 58, line 3) to the end:

1. Write two sentences about the topics of the songs.
   - Big Zo’s song is about Sal’s lack of personality, being just like everybody else.
   - Sal’s song is about Big Zo’s rapping about a ghetto he doesn’t know.
2. The winner is...
   - Big Zo

6. Who do you think deserves to win the battle?

Chapter 17: The Winner

1. Listen and tick [✓] the correct informations.

   - [✓] 1. The judges declare Big Zo the winner.
   - ⬜ 2. The crowd agrees with the judges’ decision.
   - [✓] 3. Alonzo gets angry when the crowd boos the decision.

2. How does the rap battle end? The crowd boos the judges’ decision and Big Zo gets angry.

3. Do you think it is acceptable for a music competition to end in violence? Say why / why not.

4. Turn chapters 16 and 17 into a comic strip. You can use large sheets of paper to pin them up in your classroom. Here are some tips to help you about what to draw:

   1. The characters
   2. Sal and Alonzo’s conversation
   3. The three rounds of the rap battle
   4. The fight after the battle