In the recent past

Rap

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping(1) at my chamber door.
‘Tis some visitor,’ I muttered, ‘tapping at my chamber door -
Only this, and nothing more.’

Edgar Allen Poe’s famous lines from his 1845 work “The Raven”, utilizes the verb rapping (2, a) by one of its oldest meanings: as in a quick, light blow, a meaning recognized from at least the 14th century. However, Poe’s metrical verse could easily become a component of the newest extraction of the word rap. That is rap as it applies to the cadenced spoken word over-layering the rhythmic beat of Rap (17) music.

Through an evolution of use, usually slang driven, the word rap has several current definitions, as well as a few all but forgotten ones. Despite the fact that some uses of rap have fallen from favor, the word’s contextual continuity can be traced from the 1300’s up through today (Hypedictionary).

In conjunction with this text, the accompanying diagram, located on page two, traces rap from left to right through several major functional shifts and vertically through the resulting varied usages. Also, page any notes and indexes any morphology applied to the word rap.
Rap's Semantic slide
Rappa

1. A quick, sudden strike, N

2. to strike, V

3. Strike on knuckles, V

4. punish, V, N

5. crime, N

6. blame, N, V

7. to denounce, V

8. the sound of striking, N

9. sudden vulgarity, V

10. A serious one on one talk, N, V

11. A group discussion, N

12. a hustle, N

13. a way one expresses oneself, V

14. The Rap, N

15. repeated, auditable taps, N, V

16. percussive rhythmic musical sounds, V

17. Rap music, N, Adj

18. “rap” performer, N

Applied Morphemes:
(a) V, present participle {-ing}  (b) V, 3rd-person singular {-s}  (c) N, plural {-s}
(d) V, past tense {-ed}  (e) N, possessive {-s}  (f) N, derivational morpheme {-er}

(Notes) Words that appear to be related, but in which a direct link to “rap” was not established;

Comment [DM3]: Consider “y”
Instead...
The noun *rap* (1) was originally adopted from a similar sounding Swedish word, *rappa*, meaning a quick, light blow (Hypedictionary). An idiom for punishment: to “*Rap* (3) across the knuckles” based on a quick punitive hit on the hand, led to one branch in the semantic slide of *rap*. As a result, someone that has been unfairly punished can often be heard to say: “Hey! I took the *rap* (4) for you!”, meaning they took the punishment for another’s actions. Related uses, such as *rap* (5) sheet, are used in criminal justice to describe a person’s criminal record. The associated term, “That’s a bum *rap* (6)” (Slang) is used when someone takes the blame for somebody else’s actions. Also, recently, newspapers have carried a related shift of *rap*. Many headlines in the current Presidential campaign have carried phrases similar to “Clinton *raps* (7, b) Obama on immigration.” *Rap* has again drifted, this time to a term of denouncement (Boston).

However the onomatopoeiaic nature of *rap* (8) led to a drift in semantic shift in two directions which eventually recombined to give an all new meaning.

The first change occurred in the mid 18th century, when *rap* came into use as the meaning of a quick verbal outburst of opinion, as in: “The horse stepping on his foot caused the coachman to *rap* (9) a line of curses” (Slang). This verbal nature of *rap* (10), over time, shifted the word to mean a serious one on one talk, and soon after, an informal free flowing group discussion. This latter form of the word came to prevalence in the 1960s with the term *rap* (11) session and statements such as: “Like man, those two chicks, Rainbow and Starlight, split the *rap* (11) session to *rap* (12) about the Man” (Slang).

A separate branch of *rap’s* (e) semantic slide to representing forms of verbal expression, evolved by the late 19th century, into a term of how someone portrays themselves in a social situation. “Bully, he’s got a great *rap* (13). The natives fall for it every time” is an example (Slang). In lower class urban American slang, and its derivatively employed use by the embryonic counter-culture of 1950’s, *rap* became a term of how one expresses themselves.
in a social situation. “Sam raps (14, b) differently at home then he does at school” is an example of this usage. (Smitherman). By the 1960’s, due in part to the civil rights movement, rap was taking on meaning in African-American vernacular English for the powerful, socially significant poetry gaining prevalence in that community. This dramatic and forcefully delivered form of poetry carried with it enough influence to be referred to with a definite article determiner as “The Rap” (15) (Smitherman).

The final pathway that the rapidity (#) of the rap (15) produced a semantic shift is in its 1500’s rooted representation of a quick percussive sound, such as “Your Highness, the rapping (15, a) of your fingers on the throne, is lovely.” (Hypedictionary). Early in the 1900s usage shifted rapping (16, a) to mean beating on the strings of a guitar or banjo, creating somewhat harsh and rhythmic music. This sound was later borrowed for the most current refinement of rap (17)

Starting in the 1970s this convergence of rhythmic musical rap (16) instrumentation and driven, metrically performed and socially conscious poetry of “The Rap” (15) developed into the originally African-American derived, rap (17) music as performed by today’s rappers (18, f, c) (Pederson). This is a substantial semantic slide of rap that continues to achieve cross-cultural popularity today.

Interestingly the old idiom “I don’t give a rap (#)” does not originate from the root rap as used in this paper. Although the idea that this phrase arose from the current slang term “crap”, meaning feces, might be appealing, the truth lies elsewhere. In this context “a rap (#)” refers to a nearly useless counterfeit token used in 19th century England (slang).

Over time slang driven derivations have created a number of functional shifts of the word rap, including many that are still in use. A mix of current uses of the word rap could be demonstrated in this mainly true conversation between a generation 70’s father and his 17 year old daughter’s serious boyfriend. The conversation went something like this: “Turn off that
rap (17) your listening to, cop a squat, and talk to me for a couple of minutes. I don’t want to rap (7) you, but my wife has asked me to have a serious rap (19) with you about the growing maturity of your relationship with my daughter. Now, there is no reason that you should take the rap (6) for bad relationships that have come before in her life. However, I have heard seemingly good raps (12, c) from smooth talkers in the past. Before you two rap (15) the head boards, I want you to think. Frankly I don’t give a rap (#) about anything but emotional maturity, respect, and safety. You’re both old enough that you won’t take a rap (4) if you take your relationship farther; however you could get a bum rap (7) with your friends that could follow both of you a long time. OK? This didn’t take long, so stop rapping (15, a) your fingers. Remember what we rapped (10, d) about or I’ll have to rap (1) you upside your head.

<< Works cited page was less than exemplary, so I have deleted it… >>

<< follow MLA style >>
10 Awesome paper

- WOWs the reader...
- fully addresses the topic chosen
- includes evidence from class/text discussion, academic & other sources AND
- meaningfully synthesizes reading material and personal experience/opinion
- worth pursuing as a potential conference presentation or journal publication

9 Great paper
- excellence at a level to be expected of college sophomores but lacking the polish of an “A+” paper
- original and interesting treatment of topic (development of your own idea, built on the foundation of class, text & articles, but not just a summary)
- specifics (detailed description and real-life examples)
- supports all general statements; balanced introduction and conclusion; transitions between sections and paragraphs; varied sentence patterns; appropriate word choice
- no problems with grammar, mechanics, or usage

8 Good paper
- thorough treatment of the topic with some originality of thought (perhaps more summary than synthesis, but trying...)
- examples provided, but may not be smoothly integrated or may not capture the full scope of the issue discussed
- writing style is acceptable, but not exemplary; perhaps some problems in grammar, mechanics, or usage, but not problems which distract from meaning

7 A paper
- summary of an issue with superficial content (indicates some comprehension)
- examples are tossed in without clear evidence of a depth of understanding
- may not relate concepts from the textbook/class discussions to the issue
- logic &/or grammar of the paper may be somewhat distracting