**A2 : A brief history of Punk**

How original and influential the first punk rockers were !

The original punk music scene was like many Punk stars : burning brightly for a short time before crashing to the ground in flames.

It was supposed to shock the established order and it began in the early 1970s.

One of the most common ideas is that punk was more a state of mind than a musical genre. It also gave birth to a fashion style movement.

The first groups to take on the recognisable attitude and style were the New York Dolls and Television, who both emerged from a small New York scene.

The New York Dolls, befriended by future Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren, were outrageously dressed, and delighted in disgusting people by doing Nazi salutes and vomiting in front of photographers.

McLaren saw something special in Television too - especially their bassist, Richard Hell, whose spiky hair and ripped clothes were taken back to London by McLaren and have been seen on thousands of punks since.

On both sides of the Atlantic, more and more young disillusioned white teenagers were looking for an escape from the boredom and constraints of society, with unemployment, racial tensions and social upheaval providing fuel for their fires.

Punk remained an underground scene until 1976, when two bands - The Ramones and The Sex Pistols - made the Punk style famous.

Not only did they become hugely successful in their own right, but they also provided an inspiration to people who realised you did not need to be able to play an instrument to be in a band - you just had to have something to say.

The Sex Pistols went on to cause tabloid outrage and the punk explosion disgusted as many as it inspired.

Groups like The Clash, The Buzzcocks, Joy Division and The Stranglers followed, and the punk influence has carried through to current rock bands like Green Day, Rancid and Blink 182.

Nowadays, the old punks are considered as pioneers who kicked down musical and social barriers, making anything seem possible.

By Ian YOUNGS. BBC News World Edition. Monday December 23rd 2002.