

## From Grass to Grace (WIZKID)

Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, popularly known as WIZKID, is the first african musician to score seven billboard nominations, the youngest african to get a Grammy nomination, and the first Nigerian to win three Billboard Music Awards. He was born on the 16th of July 1990 in Surulere, a small suburb in Lagos State, Nigeria, in West Africa. Even though he was born and raised in Nigeria's most active and affluent city, he was not fortunate enough to be part of a wealthy family. In this composition, I will share the story of how he went from being very poor to becoming one of the most famous musicians from the continent of Africa.



Wizkid attended primary and secondary schools but could not graduate from the university. His father married three wives, and he grew up with twelve siblings, so life was tough for him. Growing up, WIZKID listened to a lot of music, had a great passion for music and decided he wanted to be a musician.

His stage name was Li'l Prince until 2006 when he changed it to "Wizkid". Due to his perseverance, he always went to a recording studio located in Surulere, where some major singers and producers came to work. He tried to get their attention but no one would give him an opportunity to show his talent. So he slept outside the studio for a long time, watching other musicians go in and out as they got their business done. Nigeria was a country where you might not have a change if you don't have the money and the right connections.

One fateful day, they got tired of seeing him day and night and he got the opportunity to prove himself, which he effortlessly did, and that was the beginning of a successful career. Wizkid started recording his debut album in 2011, which was in English (since that is the official language) and Yoruba, the major dialect in Nigeria. He is also Yoruba. His first single video was nominated for the Most Gifted Newcomer Award. The Album was called "Superstar" and incorporated Afrobeat, R&B, Dancehall and Reggae elements. The album had collaborations with top Nigerian musicians back then and won the Best Album of the Year Award at the 2012 Nigerian Entertainment Awards and many other top awards and nominations.

Between 2012 and 2014, he started touring, first to London and then to North America, where he performed in several cities like Houston, Toronto, Chicago, Atlanta, New York, etc. Wizkid released his second Album, "Ayo" in 2014, which became an enormous success. In February 2014, he became the first Nigerian musician to have over one million followers on Twitter. In The following year, he released a music video, "Ojuelegba", a song that highlights his struggles in the early years of his recording career. He had a collaborative single with Chris Brown and He also featured on Drake's song, "One Dance", which became an international smash hit, topping the charts in fifteen different countries like the UK, Canada, Australia, France and Germany.

Wiz, as he is fondly called by his fans, became the first Afrobeats artist to appear in the 2018 Guinness World Records for contributing to “One Dance”. His song, “Soco” became his first Afrobeats Single to be certified Golden in Canada in the middle of 2019, he also featured in Beyonce’s song “Brown Skin Girl”, one of the most popular songs from the Lion King soundtrack because it encouraged people of colour to take pride in their heritage and their beautiful God given looks.

Despite the fact that Wizkid had his life challenges while growing up, he never gave up on his dreams. He was committed to his passion and very hardworking. Even after he became famous, he used his popularity to bring the government’s attention and the whole world to his hometown, through his music. We all can gain inspiration from Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun, his story and strive for our goals in life. We too can grow from grass to grace.

Written by

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Wizkid- Come Closer ft. Drake

Scan me with your phone’s camera

