

## Beginners Guide to song Writing \*

The following are some Basic notes I've put together, these are my own views and thoughts on the subject of song writing and believe them to be relevant and hopefully will get you started and be helpful to both lyricist and musicians in pencilling their first song

First question to ask is where I start, everybody has their own views on this subject, one of the first decision to make is deciding what style/genre do you want you song to fall in to, be it pop, rock, soul, blues EDM the list goes on. Coming up with a new style / genre of music could possible see you on to a winner

Another key element is deciding on the Song structure, chord structure/key (there will be times when you will have to change the key of the song to suit a singer) the tempo, beat , BPM, pop songs are usually 100 to 116 bpm and are ideally 3 minutes 20 seconds long, if you're looking to get radio airplay

### **BPM**

<b>Hip Hop</b>	<b>70 - 108</b>	<b>House</b>	<b>116 – 132</b>	<b>Techno</b>	<b>120 – 150</b>
<b>Dubstep</b>	<b>130 –140</b>	<b>Electro pop</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>Blues</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>EDM</b>	<b>120 - 150</b>	<b>Alternative Rock</b>	<b>120</b>		

Before we get onto the song writing let's have a look at a basic song structure, ideally a good one to start off with would be. verse one, chorus, verse 2, chorus , a middle 8 or bridge, chorus, the abbreviation for this is ABABCB, the length of verses and chorus are usally between 8 and 16 bars long , this also depends on the genre of song, if you need

them to be any longer than I usually work in units of 4 bars

You could also have a pre chorus, this in effect lifts the verse, building it up into the chorus. If you were thinking of having an instrumental in your song a good place to have this would be as your bridge/middle 8, these are usually around 8 bars long

The bridge is similar to the pre chorus, its aim is to link two parts together. Use this transition to bring something new into your song, taking the song into a new direction, bringing a bit of fresh air and life into the song. A key change would be a good place to start, what we are trying to do is to build the song up into the last chorus. You could also consider if you have been using major chords, changing to minor chords,

## SONG STRUCTURES

Verse, pre chorus, chorus, verse, pre chorus, chorus, bridge, chorus

Verse, chorus, verse, chorus, instrumental, chorus, end

Intro, verse, pre chorus, chorus, bridge/solo, outro

Verse, chorus, verse, chorus

## CHORD STRUCTURES / KEY

KEY	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
<b>C</b>	Cmaj	Dmin	Emin	Fmaj	Gmaj	Amin	Bdim
<b>D</b>	Dmaj	Emin	F#min	Gmaj	Amaj	Bmin	C#dim
<b>E</b>	Emaj	F#min	G#min	Amaj	Bmaj	C#min	D#dim
<b>F</b>	Fmaj	Gmin	Amin	Bbmaj	Cmaj	Dmin	Edim
<b>G</b>	Gmaj	Amin	Bmin	Cmaj	Dmaj	Emin	F#dim
<b>A</b>	Amaj	Bmin	C#min	Dmaj	Emaj	F#min	G#dim
<b>B</b>	Bmaj	C#min	D#min	Emaj	F#maj	G#min	A#dim

A couple of common chord progressions in the KEY / **C D E F G A B**

I – IV – V      I – vi – IV -V

## KEY CHANGE CHART

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
D	E	F+	G	A	B	C+	D
E	F+	G+	A	B	C+	D+	E
F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>	C	D	E	F
G	A	B	C	D	E	F+	G
A	B	C+	D	E	F+	G+	A

## The story

Verses will usually have different lyrics and will try to portray the story that we are trying to tell. The chorus I personally think is the back bone of any song and usually the part of the song we find ourselves singing along to and remembering, So when working on choruses try to make them more intense than the verses, with a lot more going on, use more harmonies, instruments or sounds, a stronger beat, backing vocals and main vocals possibly in a higher register, but keeping some surprises for the last chorus could be a good idea

Sometimes a chorus can just be some key phrases taken from the verse which could just be the songs hook repeated over and over again. Our main aim is to keep trying to build the song up until the end. We don't want the song to be strong at the beginning only to go downhill towards the end. Choruses are usually the same throughout the song with same

lyrics and melody repeated with end choruses being doubled up. What you do need to do though is be careful that you don't over produce the track and it becomes too busy

What comes first, the music or lyrics, some songwriters find it easier to write the lyrics first then compose the music to fit the lyrics, others may put down a basic beat first, work out a chord structure, and then work on lyrics, melody and hook, I also believe that a key element in any song is coming up with a hook that is going to get remembered, the one that you will find yourself humming and can't get it out of your head you're on the right track.

My preferred option is to write the lyrics first and then try to fit them to a song structure, then on a keyboard work out the chords before working on a melody line following the lyrics toplining. This is mainly due to the fact that I am not a singer, I actually can't sing to save my life. There have been times where I have written too many lines and the lyrics don't fit the structure so alterations have to be made to rectify this

### **It's time to put pen to paper**

What theme or subject is the song going to be about? I think one of the easiest topics to write about and many of us do including myself is about love, other topics could be about Friendship, Girlfriends, Boyfriends, Relationships, Happiness, Dreams, feelings, Holidays, Memories, Emotions, Heart break, Life, Fantasies, Growing up, Identity, Loneliness, The world, Fun, the list goes on

During this lockdown I have been working on a new Album "Out Of Lockdown" and will be back in the studio shortly,

If you're having trouble coming up with ideas, draw on experiences you or your family, friends, colleagues have experienced, basically you can basically write about anything that comes to mind

Once you have decided on a topic you're ready to pencil your first song,

when I'm starting on a new song I personally find one of the best ways to start is to write a number of random one line sentences down about anything connected to your chosen subject, when I've got around 10 to 15 lines written down I go through them to see if I can match any of them up together to tell a story and repeat this process until I've usually got a verse and chorus mapped out, you could compare it to a puzzle, you've got to find all the pieces to make a picture, Once you're in the flow of things ideas will come into your head and you'll find you will be filling in the blanks. I also try to make the end of each line rhyme, flow into each other wherever possible

The following are some random lines taken from two of my songs which came about by using the above method

The first one is from a love song the second from a holiday song

+ My tears cascade upon your face, Washed away with my love, some  
ware along the way

+ Of with the shirts, of with the ties, shorts and sandals, and a clear blue  
sky,

Golden beaches waves rushing in, ride the waves, ride them high, touch  
the

sky has it passes by, you never know when you will come up with ideas,  
lyrics or a melody for a song, they could pop into your head at any time  
be it night or day, a good ideal is to write them down as soon as  
possible, carry a small note book around with you or use your phone  
because you could easily forget them before you get a chance to write  
them down.

When working on your song you might find after a while you're not  
making any headway with it, take a rest from it and come back to it with  
a clear fresh head later

If you do find yourself in a situation where you are having trouble finding

it hard to write a song by yourself maybe a collaboration with another songwriter, friend or colleagues might be an avenue to consider.

### **COLLABORATION**

A famous documented collaboration is that between Reginald Dwight who on May 7<sup>th</sup> 1972 changed his name to Elton John and Bernie Taupin, this came about back in 1967 when they both answered an advert placed in the New Musical Express by A&R man Ray Williams at liberty records looking for new talent, the rest is history

You may be a lyricist who can't play any form of instruments, or you may be a musician who has trouble writing lyrics, if this is the case then a collaboration would be the avenue to go down, there are a number of sights out there on the internet for musicians and songwriters to place wanted adverts on

We have now got to the stage where we have our finished song. play it to your friends and colleagues to get feedback from them, all feedback be it positive or negative is helpful at this early stage of your song writing, go back to the table and turn any negatives in to positives.

Now we have our finished song and you are happy with it the next step would be to get it recorded, technology has come along way and now it's possible to get great results from a home recording set up , alternatively there is the option of going into a recording studio which in its self is a great experience

Use the internet/search engines, there is a lot more information out there on the internet that could be helpful to you on your song writing journey

Finally good luck, Netartist51

The following song is one which I penciled using the above method, to

write a number of random one line sentences down about anything connected to your chosen subject

<https://youtu.be/wUmSogFDGUg>



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