

Songwriters Workshop

Parts of a Song

The Intro – Warms up the listener and alerts them for the lyrics – attention getter

Song Examples with Different Kinds of Intros:

Bass & Drums intro - “Love Song” by Sarah Bareilles

Melody Intro - “100 Years” by Five for Fighting

Chords Only Intro - No Melody - “Call me Maybe” by Carly Rae Jepsen

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that have a strong intro to a song?

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that don't have a strong intro to a song?

The Verse – Sets the stage – Think of it as props & set for a movie (paints a picture) Maximum 30 seconds (you don't want it too long or with too much information)

Song Examples with Clear Verses:

“Let it Go” from Frozen

“Love Song” by Sarah Bareilles – Each verse builds a story

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that tell a story with their verses?

The Hook – Most important part of the song! Usually the theme and usually in the title.

It is sometimes a play on words. Short phrase or

Fun fact: Hooks can't be copyrighted; that is why you hear them over and over again (rap music).

For full effect you want it repeated AT LEAST 6 times per song

Song examples with a good hook:

“I want you back” by Jackson 5 (this song has been remade several times by other artists)

“Born in the USA” by Bruce Springsteen

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that have a strong hook?

The Chorus – Repeated part of the song

Needs to be:

- Catchy, so people can sing-a-long to it
- Easy to remember
- More general and abstract than the verses
- Moral of the story

Song examples with a strong chorus:

- “Flashlight” by Jessie J
- “Hakuna Matata” from Lion King

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that have a clear and strong chorus?

The Bridge – Transitional element found near the end of a song. It is a break from the repeated sections to keep the attention of the listener.

- Musically and lyrically different from other sections – something extra
- Different: Melody, chords, tempo, rhyme scheme
- Precedes final chorus and leads into it.
- Isn't always necessary – you might want an instrumental break instead (guitar solo)

Song examples with Bridges:

- “Count on me” by Bruno Mars
- “Another on bites the dust” by Queen

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that have a clear bridge that is different from the rest of the song?

The Ending - The ending of the song wraps everything up! You have a lot of options with the ending.

- Repeat intro
- Chorus repeat and fade
- Sudden Stop

What songs do you know by your favorite artists that use one of these endings?

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Song Example

Don't Stop Believin' by Journey

Source: Genius.com

Songwriters: Steve Perry/Jonathan Cain/Neal Schon

Don't Stop Believin' lyrics © Global Music Rights

[Instrumental Intro]

[Verse 1]

Just a small-town girl
Livin' in a lonely world
She took the midnight train goin' anywhere
Just a city boy
Born and raised in South Detroit
He took the midnight train goin' anywhere

[Instrumental Break]

[Verse 2]

A singer in a smoky room
The smell of wine and cheap perfume
For a smile, they can share the night
It goes on and on and on and on

[Pre-Chorus]

Strangers waitin'
Up and down the boulevard
Their shadows searchin' in the night
Streetlight people
Livin' just to find emotion
Hidin' somewhere in the night

[Verse 3]

Workin' hard to get my fill
Everybody wants a thrill
Payin' anything to roll the dice just one more time
Some will win, some will lose
Some are born to sing the blues
Oh, the movie never ends
It goes on and on and on and on

[Pre-Chorus]

Strangers waitin'
Up and down the boulevard
Their shadows searchin' in the night
Streetlight people
Livin' just to find emotion
Hidin' somewhere in the night

[Guitar Solo]

[Chorus Repeat Ending]

Don't stop believin'
Hold on to that feeling
Streetlight people
Don't stop believin'
Hold on
Streetlight people
Don't stop believin'
Hold on to that feeling
Streetlight people

Can you identify the Parts of a Song?

A great way to learn more about songwriting is to take a popular song you know and identify the different parts of the song. Can you do it?

Mine by Taylor Swift

Source: Genius.com

Songwriters: Taylor Swift

Mine lyrics © Taylor Swift/Big Machine/Universal Music Group

Song part: _____

You were in college working part time waitin' tables
Left a small town, never looked back
I was a flight risk with a fear of fallin'
Wondering why we bother with love if it never lasts
I say "Can you believe it?"
As we're lying on the couch
The moment, I can see it.
Yes, yes, I can see it now

Song part: _____

Do you remember, we were sitting there, by the water?
You put your arm around me for the first time
You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter
You are the best thing that's ever been mine

Song part: _____

Flash forward and we're taking on the world together
And there's a drawer of my things at your place
You learn my secrets and you figure out why I'm guarded
You say we'll never make my parents' mistakes
But we got bills to pay
We got nothing figured out
When it was hard to take
Yes, yes, I thought about

Song part: _____

Do you remember, we were sitting there, by the water?
You put your arm around me for the first time
You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter

You are the best thing that's ever been mine

Song part: _____

Do you remember all the city lights on the water?
You saw me start to believe for the first time
You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter
You are the best thing that's ever been mine

Song part: _____

Oh, oh, oh
And I remember that fight, Two-thirty AM
Yes, everything was slipping right out of our hands
I ran out crying and you followed me out into the street
Braced myself for the goodbye 'cause that's all I've ever known
And you took me by surprise
You said, "I'll never leave you alone"

Song part: _____

You said, "I remember how we felt sitting by the water
And every time I look at you, it's like the first time
I fell in love with a careless man's careful daughter
She is the best thing that's ever been mine"
You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter
You are the best thing that's ever been mine
Do you believe it?
Going to make it now
I can see it
I can see it now