

Music and Lyrics: An Educational Presentation on Songwriting in the Classroom

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Why Songwriting?:

In this section we'll discuss some of the useful things about songwriting as an educational tool. Look for:

- The emotional connection to songs
- High interest/low vocabulary texts for struggling readers/writers
- The listening/speaking/reading/writing connection
- Building transferable cognitive skills

Song Structure:

We'll discuss some of the basic parts of a song. Conventional songwriting structure, all the working parts of a song. Key vocabulary:

- Verse
- Chorus
- Bridge
- Pre-Chorus
- Hook

We'll also do a dive into the function of each of these song parts, and how they tie into an educational framework.

Hooks and Titles:

The **Hook** is the main part of the song, the big "payoff". Here we'll discuss writing hooks, and listening for them. We discuss the process of writing to a title. Songs referenced in this section are

- R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Aretha Franklin)
- Layla (Eric Clapton)
- Natural Woman (Carol King)
- Halo (Beyonce)
- Wild Horses (The Rolling Stones)
- Despacito (Justin Bieber)
- Brown Eyed Girl (Van Morrison)
- Dock of the Bay (Otis Redding)

Key ideas: The hook is the main idea of the song, the heart.

Melody, Harmony, and Rhythm:

This section offers a quick look at the function of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Songs are made of melodies that repeat. The melody is the simple tune. Harmony surrounds the melody. Often in the form of chords, but sometimes counter-melody. Look for:

- Scales
- Chords
- Beat making

Tools (for songwriting):

We discuss some easy to use tools for songwriting that are available for free.

- Garageband (iOS/Mac) - a digital audio workstation (DAW), a one stop, free recording studio
- Roli NOISE free app (iOS/Android) - sort of like a DAW, but useful mainly for putting together beats and melodies. **SUPER EASY TO USE.**
- Circle of Fifths app (iOS/Android)

Other tools not discussed

- Logic Pro X (iOS) - DAW
- Beat Maker apps
- A plain ol' tape recorder, or phone recorder

It's worth noting, there are numerous free apps available that will be beyond helpful in creating music with little or no experience. Youtube tutorials are a lifesaver!

Songwriting in the Classroom:

A deeper discussion of songwriting as an educational tool and some ideas for practical teaching. Look for:

- A review of the song parts and Structure
- Teach hook writing to strengthen understanding of main idea
- Fixed language with high buy in for low level/struggling readers
- Small Group vs. Whole Group activities
- Interdisciplinary use
- The social studies aspect (folk songs, blues, and hip hop)
- Sensory language and metaphor
- And Much more.

Bonus Songwriting session:

Here I do a mini-songwriting session showing some of the things we've learned in action.

Spotify Playlist for MAC Winter Conference 2021

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1ignY6hTy8UR0YZkGxveRv?si=Zr8KOmlWRGaU8vmzM9l1tg>

Suggested reading/resources:

Writing Better Lyrics, Pat Pattinson

[Writing Better Lyrics: Pattinson, Pat: 0035313646447: Amazon ...www.amazon.com ›](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0035313646447)

[Writing-Better-Lyrics-Pat-Pattinson](#)

The War of Art, Steven Pressfield

[War of Art, The: Steven Pressfield, George Guidall ...www.amazon.com ›](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1591450110)

[War-Art-Winning-Creative-Battle-...](#)

The Addiction Formula: A Holistic Approach to Writing, Friedemann Findeisen

[The Addiction Formula: A Holistic Approach to Writing ...www.amazon.com ›](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1591450110)

[Addiction-Formula-Captivating-C...](#)

The Songwriter's Idea Book, Sheila Davis

[The Songwriters Idea Book: 40 Strategies to Excite Your ...www.amazon.com ›](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1591450110)

[Songwriters-Idea-Book-Imaginatio...](#)

Videos:

Ralph Murphy: How to Be Successful at Songwriting

<https://youtu.be/8wBOUJ5Mbrk>

Holistic Songwriting (Youtube Channel)

https://youtu.be/sjnz002F_bA

Youtube is your friend!

