



# Songwriting 101: The Top 3 Things Every Hit Chorus Has in Common



This week I'd like to take you into the wonderful world of lyrics. For some people, mostly musicians-turned-songwriters, lyrics are hell on a stick. Making dope melodies and tracks is easy peasy. But writing an interesting yet simple lyric that people can identify with and remember? That hasn't already been done a million times before? Kill me now.

I feel your pain, amigo. I grew up on instrumental classical and jazz music, and English isn't my first language. I didn't care about lyrics at all until I went to Berklee College of Music at age 22, and then fought for three more years against the fact that lyrics are super important! Without a good lyric, your song will never become a hit. Period.

## Titles

Titles are important because they're first thing you see when you scroll through the new record you downloaded/torrented. Between the "I Love You, Baby"s and "Baby, Don't Go"s, you'll find a title that says, "Man, I Feel Like a Woman."

Any person would say, "Wow, I wanna know what that's about!" That's the power of a good title. It sparks your attention. Other random good titles include:

- "Umbrella"
- "Beauty and a Beat"
- "The Hills"
- "Stitches"
- "Uptown Funk!"
- "Antidote"
- "Trap Queen"
- "White Iverson"

See a pattern? They're visual, different, interesting. They make you pay attention.

## Concept

Now, titles alone aren't everything. It's about how you use those titles that make or break a song. An interesting yet simple concept is probably the most important element of a lyric. Most songs talk about the same few broad subjects: I love you, I hate you, let's party, I miss you, etc. The question is, how do you separate your lyrics from the competition if everybody's songs are about the same few subjects? Concepts, bro.

How do you create a good concept and, therefore, a good chorus? Write a chorus that has an interesting visual, tells the whole emotional story in a few lines, and has the title repeated in there a lot.

For example:

"Wildest Dreams" by Taylor Swift



Subject: I will miss you

Chorus:

Say you'll see me again

Even if it's just in your

Wildest dreams

Wildest dreams

"La La La" by Naughty Boy

Subject: I hate you

Chorus:

I'm covering my ears like a kid

When your words mean nothing, I go la la la

"Can't Feel My Face" by The Weeknd

Subject: I love you

Chorus:

I can't feel my face when I'm with you

But I love it, but I love it, oh

Just to repeat, these are the three things to pay attention to when writing your chorus:

1. The subject matter is broad, but the imagery is interesting
2. The whole emotional story is condensed in a few lines
3. The title is in the chorus and usually gets repeated a lot

Point two is especially important to me because a lot of starting writers don't notice they don't do this. The chorus has to make sense without the context of the verse. You can get fancy with story and imagery in the verses, but your chorus, and therefore your concept, has to be its own little condensed story. What's happening? What does it look like? How do you feel about it?

If you want to write pop songs, and pop lyrics especially, understand that it's the art of condensing to the ultimate maximum. Can you tell your story with less words? Then do it. That leaves more room for the title to be repeated.

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