

# Songwriting Lyrics — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into practice. You will map the structure of songs you love, harvest titles from everyday speech and generate hooks in bulk, build a chorus around a placed title, scan lyric lines against a melody to fix prosody, repair forced rhymes with the rhyme family, convert abstractions into concrete images, run a full revision pass, and close a co-write with a signed split sheet. The templates give you reusable trackers for song-structure analysis, a hook-and-title bank, a prosody-and-rhyme checker, and an industry-standard split sheet.

## Song Structure and Form

Name the sections, assemble them into standard forms, and reverse-engineer the architecture of songs you admire.

### Exercise: Label the Sections of Three Songs

Choose three songs you love. Play each through and write down, in order, the name of every section from intro to outro (verse, prechorus, chorus, bridge, post-chorus, outro). Do not transcribe the words; you are charting the skeleton only. Then state the form of each on one line.

- What sequence of sections did each song use, written as one line?

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- Which job was each section doing: informing, lifting, paying off, or surprising?

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- Did any chorus carry verse-grade detail it should not have, or any verse give away the climax too early?
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### Exercise: Map a Hit With a Stopwatch

Pick one successful song and analyze its pacing with a stopwatch. Note the timestamp where each section begins, how long the intro runs before the first sung word, the timestamp the first chorus hits, the number of lines per verse, and how many times the chorus and title repeat.

- How long was the intro before the first vocal, and how soon did the first chorus arrive?

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- Where in the chorus did the title land (first line, last line, or both)?

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- What pacing lesson can you borrow for your own song without copying any words?
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### Worksheet: Form Decision Sheet

For a song idea of your own, decide the form before drafting. Choose between verse-chorus and AABA, justify the choice by what the song is doing, and lay out the full section order and rough line counts.

Song working title

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Chosen form (verse-chorus / AABA) and why

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Full section order (e.g. V1, PreC, Chorus, V2, PreC, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus)

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Where the title/hook will live

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Approximate line count per verse and per chorus

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Target timestamp for the first chorus

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### Checklist: Structure Readiness Check

- I can name every section of a song by its function, not just its position.
- I can write any song's form on a single line using section names.
- I can choose between verse-chorus and AABA based on what the song is doing.
- My chorus is the emotional peak and repeats with the same words.
- My first chorus arrives early enough to hold a streaming listener.

## Hooks, Choruses, and Titles

Harvest titles from everyday language, generate hooks in quantity, and build a chorus that pays off its title.

### Exercise: Mine Twenty Titles

Spend a day collecting candidate titles from conversations, films, books, and headlines. Capture at least twenty short, conversational, emotionally loaded phrases. For each, note which title move it uses: fresh image, double meaning, twist on a cliché, or bare emotional statement.

- Which five titles feel strongest, and why?
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- Which title move appears most often in your list?
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- Which of these titles is concrete and loaded enough to hold three minutes of song?
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### Exercise: Generate Fifteen Hooks, Then Sing Them

Take your best title and write fifteen short hook candidates around it (three to seven words each). Do not judge while generating. Then sing every candidate aloud and rank them on how singable, repeatable, and emotionally loaded they are.

- Which hooks sat on strong, open, singable vowels?
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- Which were awkward to sing and therefore dead on arrival?
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- Which single hook best holds the song's whole feeling in a few syllables?
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### Worksheet: Chorus-Around-the-Title Builder

Build a chorus from the title outward. Lock the title and its placement first, then write the surrounding lines so they broaden to the universal feeling rather than adding new detail.

Title line (the hook)

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Title placement (first line / last line / both)

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The other three to five chorus lines

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What universal feeling the chorus broadens to

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Any verse-grade detail to cut from the chorus

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Could this chorus stand alone as the song's emotional summary? (yes/no + fix)

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### Checklist: Hook and Chorus Check

- [ ] My hook is three to seven words and sounds like something a person would say.
- [ ] The hook sits on strong, open vowels and bears repeating two or three times.
- [ ] The title sits in a power position: the chorus's first line, last line, or both.
- [ ] The chorus broadens to a universal feeling instead of adding new narrative detail.
- [ ] The chorus could stand alone and still convey the song's core emotion.

### Prosody: Marrying Words to Music

Match stresses to strong beats, widen rhyme with the rhyme family, and shape the rhythm so the lyric grooves.

#### Exercise: Scan a Line Against Its Melody

Take one lyric line and its melodic phrase. Mark the syllables you naturally stress in speech, then mark the melody's strong beats. Line them up, find every clash where a light syllable lands on a strong beat or a heavy one on a weak beat, and rewrite the words (not the tune) until the stresses agree.

- Where did natural word stress clash with the melody's strong beats?

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• Did the syllable count fit the phrase, or was there cramming or stretching?

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• After rewriting, can you sing the line without wrenching any word?

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#### Exercise: Repair a Forced Rhyme With the Rhyme Family

Write a couplet whose second line is forced or cliché (fire/desire, heart/apart). Repair it by rhyming on the most important word and trading down the rhyme dial: try a family rhyme, an additive rhyme, or an assonance rhyme until a fresh, natural pairing appears.

- What was the true last important word the line should rhyme on?

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• Which rhyme type freed you from the cliché: family, additive, or assonance?

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• Does the repaired couplet read as natural English with no twisted syntax?

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### Worksheet: Rhythm and Phrasing Pass

Take one verse or chorus and shape its rhythm deliberately. Speak it over a metronome or simple beat with no melody, and log line lengths, breath placements, and whether each line lands on the downbeat or leads in with a pickup.

Section (verse / chorus)

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Line lengths (long setup vs short payoff pattern)

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Where breaths or rests fall

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Lines that start on the downbeat vs lines with a pickup

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Where the words stumbled or ran out of breath over the beat

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Revision to make the section groove

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## Checklist: Prosody Readiness Check

- [ ] Stressed syllables in my lyric land on the strong beats of the melody.
- [ ] No word has to be mis-stressed or wrenched to fit the tune.
- [ ] Each line's syllable count fits its melodic phrase without cramming or stretching.
- [ ] My rhymes use the full family, not only cliché perfect rhymes.
- [ ] The lyric grooves when spoken over a bare beat with no melody.

## Lyric Craft and Co-Writing

Make feelings concrete, lock point of view and arc, revise hard, and close a co-write with a split sheet.

### Exercise: Convert Abstractions to Images

Take a draft lyric and circle every abstract emotion word (sad, love, pain, forever, heart). For each, write a concrete image that shows the feeling without naming it (the cold coffee, the empty side of the bed, the unworn jacket). Rewrite the lines using the images.

- Which abstractions were doing no work and could become images?

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- Which concrete image most changed how the line lands?

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- Is the point of view (first, second, or third person) consistent throughout?

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### Worksheet: Point of View and Arc Planner

Before finishing a lyric, lock its point of view and plot its emotional movement. Decide who is singing to whom, and map how the situation develops and turns across the song.

Point of view (first / second / third person)

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Who is singing, and to whom

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Verse 1 situation

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What develops or changes by verse 2

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The turn or realization (often the bridge)

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The universal feeling the chorus delivers

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### Exercise: Run the Revision Pass

Take a rough draft and run the full revision sequence: read it aloud and mark weak lines, convert abstractions to images, cut all filler, fix any prosody clashes, and strengthen weak rhymes. Then sing the whole thing end to end.

- Which lines were filler (oh baby yeah, you know) that you cut?

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- Which placeholder or dummy lyric finally got replaced?

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- What clever line did you have to kill because it did not serve the song?

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## Checklist: Co-Writing and Finish Check

- [ ] I came to the session prepared with titles, hooks, or musical ideas.
- [ ] I built on others' ideas and served the song over my own lines.
- [ ] We agreed the ownership split in the room on the same day.
- [ ] A split sheet is signed with each writer's legal name, percentage, and PRO.
- [ ] Every final line is true, concrete, singable, and necessary.

## Your Action Plan

1. Start a running title list in a phone note and capture every striking conversational phrase you hear.
2. Label the sections of three songs you love and write each song's form on one line.
3. Map one hit with a stopwatch, logging intro length, first-chorus timestamp, and title repeats.
4. Mine twenty candidate titles from speech, films, and headlines, tagging each title move.
5. Pick your best title and generate fifteen hook candidates, then sing and rank them.
6. Build a chorus from the title outward and confirm it could stand alone as the song's summary.
7. Scan your lyric lines against the melody and rewrite any line where the stresses clash.
8. Repair every forced or cliché rhyme by trading down to a family, additive, or assonance rhyme.
9. Convert the abstractions in a draft into concrete images, then run the full revision pass aloud.
10. Co-write one song with a partner and close the session with a signed split sheet.









