

1. 1. DEMONSTRATION: HOW TO WRITE A SONG By: Torri Wiley
2. [2.](#) MY VIEW ON SONGWRITING I have always said that “A song with lyrics is nothing more than poetry accompanied by music. Poetry is simply words spoken from the heart.” Poetry doesn’t always rhyme, so in my opinion, songs don’t always need to rhyme, but rhyming definitely helps the impact of the song as long as it makes sense.
3. [3.](#) WHY DO I WRITE SONGS? Songwriting can be more than just a hobby. For some people, it’s how they make a living. Songwriting is the best way for me to express my emotions in a positive and productive manner. Songwriters and poets alike can agree that creative writing is the best way to reveal one’s true self when spoken words are not enough. Most of the time, creative writers don’t talk about their problems. They use their writing in order to let the heart do the talking, not the
4. [4.](#) WHAT MAKES A GOOD SONG? To me, a good song requires several important factors. The first is that in order to touch listeners, it should be about a subject to which people can relate. The second is that it can send a message. I’ve heard songs that sound nonsensical on the surface, but there are typically deeper meanings hidden within the lyrics.
5. [5.](#) WHAT MAKES A GOOD SONG? (CONT.) The third factor is emotion. A good song has enough emotion in both the music and the lyrics that the listener can often feel and understand how the artist felt. Emotion can also determine how much heart the artist put into their composition. The fourth factor is figurative language. Song lyrics should not just be taken at a surface view, as they typically have a hidden meaning. Figurative language also makes the lyrics more interesting and helps to add the feeling to a song. An example of this is Garth Brooks’s song “The Thunder Rolls”. Some of the lyrics are “The Thunder rolls, and the lightning strikes. Another love grows cold on a sleepless night. As the storm rolls on out of control, deep in her heart, the thunder rolls.” In this stanza, the setting is established as a stormy night. However, the stormy night is not only the setting, but it also helps provide the mood and a deeper meaning. In this song, the subject is driving home after spending time with a woman. As he drives home, his wife holds on to the hope that it’s the bad weather that has kept him out all night. Deep down, she knows that he’s been cheating on her, but she isn’t willing to accept it until she knows it for a fact. Her emotional turmoil is mentioned in the line “Deep in her heart, the thunder rolls.”
6. [6.](#) HOW DO I WRITE SONGS? First, I think of something that inspires me. This can be anything from life experiences to simple emotion, sometimes even spur-of-the-moment. My songs always start out as poetry. The methods vary with different people. For some,

the music comes first, and for others, the lyrics come first. Style and form varies with every artist. My most commonly used rhyme schemes are ABCB or AABB. My songs typically consist of a chorus between each verse with a bit of a twist toward the end.

7. [7.](#) TYPICAL SONGWRITING FORMULA A common way to write a song is to begin with Verse 1. Verse 1 typically sets the mood. After Verse 1 comes the chorus, which usually summarizes the message that the artist is trying to convey. The chorus should be kept simple and repetitive. Verse 2 can be added to tell a story. Another chorus follows Verse 2. After Chorus 2, a bridge is often included to regain the listener's attention. The bridge can be a solo or instrumental break. Verse 3 follows the bridge and is often different from the previous verses so the song is not seen as repetitive or predictable. A third chorus typically succeeds this verse, and the song is then wrapped up with an ending that also sounds or feels different than the previous lyrics.
8. [8.](#) MOST CURRENT COMPOSITION (WORK IN PROGRESS) "I gaze from my window one October eve/To see the sunset's fading rays/They seem to speak to my lonely heart/In the sorrowful song of the dying day/Fire in the sky/Brings tears to my eyes/As the wind softly echoes my name/ Day draws to a close/But I won't be verbose/For I know I must wait to begin again. The night which I pine for has finally begun/The burning sky gives us the moon and stars/ As I count Nature's lights shining up and above/My eyes fall to the forest and I wonder how far/Does Nature reach?/I have no speech/To remotely describe my current emotion..." I began writing this piece in this class on October 30th after witnessing a particularly beautiful sunset.
9. [9.](#) SONG EXAMPLE: YOU THINK THIS IS YOUR HOME BY BLAIRE WOODS  
(<http://www.jostens.com/apps/jostens/Yearbook/dvd/dvd-content/tracks.asp> To listen to this file, click the link and search for the title "You Think This Is Your Home" by Blaire Woods.) Verse 1: "Looking at these whitewashed walls you see, Time has left its mark while we've been here, but we've never stopped to notice. Fingerprints upon the keys, cracks upon the walls and ceiling, streaks of rain and dirt upon the window." This includes imagery to give a sense of what the artist sees as she gazes at the familiar environment.
10. [10.](#) SONG EXAMPLE (CONT.) Verse 2: "Now the room is packed and put away, still you feel there's so much left to say to the people you are leaving. Looking at the place you've come to know, it's nothing much, but you've made it your own, you'll lock the door, and leave it all behind you. Walk down your street once more. Time to venture out into the cold." In this verse, the artist is referring to the fact that everyone must at some

point move on from what they've known. This makes the song easy to relate to. Woods uses a metaphor with the line "Time to venture out into the cold" to mean that one must venture into unfamiliar territory in order to progress through life.

11. [11.](#) SONG EXAMPLE (CONT.) Chorus: "You think this is your home, but it won't be for long. And you cannot take with you what you have to leave alone. Here at 1512, we can all be ourselves, but everyone keeps moving on and on." The chorus is simple and basically self-explanatory. She talks about being herself with her loved ones (ie. friends and family), but she knows that she must move forward with her life, making the observation that everyone else is already doing so.
12. [12.](#) SONG EXAMPLE (CONT.) Verse 3: "Remember what they say. Soon enough the faces fade away to the days that are kept waiting. Take a step down this familiar ground, one last chance to take a look around before you walk to the edge of what you know. You never realized this before, but you'll never walk this path anymore." This verse, in my opinion, says that we should make the most of the time we have. People seem to think they have all the time in the world, but when the time draws near for them to have to move on, they need to live life to the fullest because once they must move forward, there is no chance of ever going back.
13. [13.](#) SONG EXAMPLE (CONT.) Bridge: "You think this is your home, but it won't be for long, „cause everything starts changing just as soon as you belong. You'd rather lose with all than ever win as one. You'd rather cry with many than smile on your own." This verse initially seems to be another chorus, but the lyrics, among other things, are actually different. This is to grab the listener's attention and ultimately make the point known.
14. [14.](#) SONG EXAMPLE (CONT.) Ending: "Here at 1512, we can all be ourselves, but everyone keeps moving on and on. " This is used to bring the song to a close, but again, the message is summarized one final time before the song ends. She knows that she can be herself with her loved ones, but at the same time, she also knows that she must let go of what she's known for however long this period of time may be. It shows that people change as they move on, and it encourages the listener to take advantage of the time he/she has and to make the most of it.
15. [15.](#) SUMMARY Four factors of a good song: Ability to relate, deeper message/ meaning, emotion, creative language. To write a song, speak with the heart, not with the mind. Find something that truly inspires you.
16. [16.](#) QUESTIONS? Thank you for your time