

Common Music Genre Structures

Understanding the structure of music genres can be helpful for composing, analyzing, or simply enjoying music. Below, we outline the basic structures for several common genres, including their typical components such as verse, chorus, and pre-chorus, and their arrangement in a song. Additionally, we specify whether each section is instrumental or contains lyrics.

1. Pop Music

Pop music is known for its catchy melodies and straightforward structure. The typical structure includes:

- **Intro:** Short instrumental section, sets the mood (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Introduces the story or theme of the song (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Pre-Chorus:** Builds tension, leading into the chorus (4-8 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Chorus:** The most memorable part, often the song's hook (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Bridge:** Provides contrast, often emotional or dynamic (8-16 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Concludes the song, often a repetition or fade-out (4-8 bars). *Instrumental or Lyrics*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Pre-Chorus → Chorus → Verse 2 → Pre-Chorus → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus (repeat/fade) → Outro

2. Rock Music

Rock music often emphasizes energy and instrumentation. A typical structure is similar to pop but may include extended instrumental sections:

- **Intro:** Often guitar-driven, sets the tone (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Builds narrative or emotion (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Chorus:** Powerful and anthemic (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Solo/Instrumental:** Guitar or other instrumental solos (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Often climactic or abrupt (4-8 bars). *Instrumental or Lyrics*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Chorus → Verse 2 → Chorus → Solo → Chorus (repeat) → Outro

3. Hip-Hop/Rap

Hip-hop and rap focus on lyrical flow and rhythm. Songs often have:

- **Intro:** Sets the beat or mood (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Lyrical storytelling or wordplay (16-32 bars). *Lyrics*

- **Chorus/Hook:** Catchy and repetitive, anchors the song (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Bridge:** Optional, adds variety (8-16 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*
- **Outro:** May feature spoken word or repeated hook (4-8 bars). *Instrumental or Lyrics*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Chorus → Verse 2 → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus → Outro

4. EDM (Electronic Dance Music)

EDM is structured for dancing, with builds and drops being key features:

- **Intro:** Establishes rhythm and energy (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Build-Up:** Gradually increases intensity (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Drop:** Climactic, high-energy section (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Breakdown:** Reduced intensity, often melodic (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Wind-down or fade-out (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*

Typical Structure: Intro → Build-Up → Drop → Breakdown → Build-Up → Drop → Outro

5. Blues

Blues has a predictable 12-bar structure:

- **Verse:** Often a repeating 12-bar progression, divided into three 4-bar sections. *Lyrics*
- **Solo:** Improvised instrumental based on the 12-bar progression. *Instrumental*
- **Outro:** A final verse or riff (4-8 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*

Typical Structure: 12-bar Verse 1 → 12-bar Verse 2 → 12-bar Solo → 12-bar Verse 3 → Outro

6. Country Music

Country music often tells a story and features acoustic instrumentation:

- **Intro:** Sets a nostalgic or melodic tone (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Tells a narrative or emotional story (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Chorus:** Reiterates the central theme or hook (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Bridge:** Provides a reflective or contrasting moment (8-16 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Often fades with a repeating chorus or riff (4-8 bars). *Instrumental or Lyrics*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Chorus → Verse 2 → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus → Outro

7. Jazz

Jazz emphasizes improvisation and complex harmonies:

- **Intro:** Often features a head melody (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*

- **Main Theme:** Played by the ensemble or lead instrument (8-16 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Solo Sections:** Improvised solos over the chord changes (variable length). *Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Return to the head or a coda (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*

Typical Structure: Intro → Main Theme → Solo 1 → Solo 2 → Main Theme → Outro

8. Reggae

Reggae features offbeat rhythms and socially conscious lyrics:

- **Intro:** Establishes the groove (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Develops the song's narrative or message (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Chorus:** Repetitive and often uplifting (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Bridge:** Adds variation or highlights the theme (8-16 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*
- **Outro:** A smooth fade-out or repetition of the chorus (4-8 bars). *Instrumental or Lyrics*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Chorus → Verse 2 → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus → Outro

9. Classical Symphony

Classical symphonies are divided into movements, each with its own structure:

- **Movement 1:** Often in sonata form with exposition, development, and recapitulation. *Instrumental*
- **Movement 2:** Slow and lyrical, often in ternary form. *Instrumental*
- **Movement 3:** A dance-like scherzo or minuet. *Instrumental*
- **Movement 4:** Fast and dynamic, often in rondo or sonata form. *Instrumental*

Typical Structure: Movement 1 → Movement 2 → Movement 3 → Movement 4

10. R&B (Rhythm and Blues)

R&B focuses on smooth melodies and emotional delivery:

- **Intro:** Sets a soulful or rhythmic mood (4-8 bars). *Instrumental*
- **Verse:** Expresses personal emotions or storytelling (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Chorus:** Emphasizes the song's emotional core or hook (8-16 bars). *Lyrics*
- **Bridge:** Adds contrast or a climactic moment (8-16 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*
- **Outro:** Often fades with ad-libs or the chorus (4-8 bars). *Lyrics and/or Instrumental*

Typical Structure: Intro → Verse 1 → Chorus → Verse 2 → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus → Outro