

How to produce a song

First, you'll need to come up with an idea for a song or piece of music. An idea can be something as simple as a melody stuck in your head, a general theme you want to communicate through your music, or you simply want to remake one of your favourite songs.

You want to capture that general idea and start working by either writing lyrics, coming up with chord progressions, or playing it through instruments and sounds.

The key here is to start small, experiment and see what sounds good based on your initial idea. Once the basic idea is written, the next step in the songwriting process is building up the track by layering different sounds and instruments on top of each other.

Then, it's time to arrange the basic structure of the song. This process will give you direction and allow you to finish your song without writer's block.

Once the arrangement is complete, you'll need to mix and master the final mix.

We'll get into mixing and mastering in future posts.

As you can see, good songwriting and production seem like a lot of work initially, but it gets easy and becomes a lot of fun.

Step-by-step guide: How to write songs for beginners

Creating your own song can be daunting, especially if you've never done it before. However, anyone can do it with a little creativity and perseverance.

So, where do you start with the songwriting process?

First, take some time to listen to music and get an idea of what you like.

What genres do you enjoy? What emotions do you want to evoke with your music? How do you want people to feel when they hear your song?

Once you have a rough idea of what you want to say, it's time to put your thoughts into notes.

You don't need to be a trained musician to write music — anyone can do it.

Start with a few simple melodies and chord progressions, and see where your creativity takes you.

Don't worry if you don't know how to read music— there are plenty of online resources that can help you get started.

The most important thing is enjoying the process and letting your creativity flow. Who knows where your musical journey will take you?



Step 1: Start by writing a set of chords

Before you begin writing, there are a few things you need to keep in mind when you add chords together.



Disclaimer: you do not need a music theory degree or musical background to start creating your first song.

To start chords, you need to understand the concept of keys. Keys are any of the white and black notes on a keyboard, and there are only seven natural notes (white keys: A-B-C-D-E-F-G) and five sharps or flats (black key) that repeat up and down (octaves).

You need to decide what key you want to write in. This decision will determine the order of the notes in your chords.

Once you've decided on a key, you must familiarize yourself with the major and minor scales. These will be the foundation for the writing process of your chords. To create a chord, you simply take any two or three notes from the scale and play them together. For example, writing in the key of C, you could create a C chord by playing the notes C-E-G together. Try to aim for four-chord progressions, as many songs use a similar structure.

As you become more comfortable with chord theory, you'll be able to experiment with different combinations of notes to create unique sounding chords while staying true to the central theme of your song.



Here's a hint: don't try to reinvent the wheel if you're just getting started.

To write songs more quickly, listen to your favourite songs and check out Hook Theory to figure out that song's chords and chord progression. Then, you can use the same chord progression to start writing your own songs. You can experiment with new chords as you get better at writing songs.

There's no one right way to start writing a set of chords. It all depends on what you're hoping to achieve. If you're aiming for a certain mood or feel, start by thinking about the type of sound you want to create. Do you want something mellow and soothing or something upbeat and energizing?

Use a piano or guitar to help you find the right sound. Try playing around with different chord progressions until you find something that feels right. Once you have a general idea, begin experimenting with different combinations of notes.



Remember, there's no wrong way to do it - so don't be afraid to experiment!



Step 2: Think about the song structure

The structure of a song is the skeletal framework that gives the track its shape and makes it easy to remember and sing.

Many popular songs follow a recognizable pattern, such as verse-chorus-break-verse-chorus, but there are endless possibilities for structuring and writing songs.

As a songwriter, you'll need to decide what form your song will take and how you'll transition between sections.

One way to start is by sketching out the main ideas, emotions, or images you want to convey in the song. Then, think about arranging these elements into a cohesive whole. There are no hard and fast rules, so don't be afraid to experiment.

The most important thing is that the structure of your song supports the overall message or feeling you're trying to convey and the genre of music you are making.

Remember that a strong song form is essential for a track to succeed (in the music industry). However, no music producer out there only creates hit songs, so don't overthink the structure and don't put yourself under that unnecessary pressure. Keep in mind that a "listenable" song requires at least a basic framework. That's all there is to it.

So make sure you have at least three of the four essential components of a song structure covered: the verse, the chorus, and the bridge.

The verse is where the story is told.

The chorus is where the melody is catchy and memorable.

The bridge is where the song changes tempo or direction, providing interest and variety.

A great song structure will keep listeners engaged and coming back for more. So when you write a song, think about how each section can contribute to the overall story you're trying to tell. Writing melodies should be memorable and easy to sing along to, so hooks are essential. And don't forget the power of a good old-fashioned sing-along— sometimes all a song needs is a catchy chorus that everyone can join in on.

As you can see, there's a lot that goes into songwriting. But don't let that intimidate you! Just start with a few basic elements and build from there. Experiment with different chord progressions, melodies, and structures until you find something that feels right. And most importantly, have fun!

Step 3: Write a verse with only instruments

When most people think of writing a verse, they think of using words. However, it is also possible to write a verse using only instruments.

This technique can greatly add musicality to your writing without worrying about finding the right words.

To write a verse with only instruments, start by adding your initial chords and layer the melody on top of those chords.

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CYS Instrumental Verse No Vocals

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Once you are happy with the melody, you can subtract or keep the chords and add other embellishments to create interest and variation. As you're starting, use a simple melody that repeats throughout the verse. Later on, you can move towards something more complex.

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CYS Instrumental Verse with Vocals

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You then need to choose the instruments that you want to use. A few examples here: you may want to use a combination of percussion, strings, and brass, or you may want to focus on one particular type of instrument.

You can also experiment with different rhythms to add more dynamics to your composition.

In addition, don't be afraid to experiment with different instrumentation. A well-crafted instrumental verse can be just as moving and compelling as using words.



Step 4: Structure a melody for chorus and verse

When you're writing a song, it's important to consider the structure of the melody. Typical songs will have a chorus and verse, and each section will have its variation of melody.

The chorus melody is usually the most catchy part of the song, so it's essential to make sure that the melody is memorable and easy to sing along to.

The verse melody should be more lyrical (or instrumental), telling a story or conveying a message. The melody should support the lyrics and help convey the song's emotion.

When planning the structure of your melodies, it's helpful to think about which parts of the song will be most memorable and make sure those parts stand out.



Note: create a melody that will be easy for people to sing along with.

One way to do this is to write a verse and chorus melody with a similar body. This will make it easier for people to remember the melody and sing along with the song.

You can also use the technique of call and response, where you repeat part of the melody after each line. This can help people to learn the melody more quickly.

Another thing to keep in mind is the length of the notes. Longer notes are usually easier to sing than shorter ones, so you may want to make the notes in the chorus slightly longer than those in verse.

By following these songwriting tips, you can create a catchy melody that people will remember long after hearing the song, just like all the memorable songs you sing along to.



Step 5: Finish the entire song arrangement first

Most people think they need to get the song "sounding good" before they can start thinking about the arrangement.

That's wrong and will hurt you as a songwriter/producer in the future.

It's critical to finish the entire arrangement first. Even a rough version of the arrangement with the macro section is better than focusing on a single section.

Without finishing the arrangement, you don't have direction, and you will block. You cannot continue writing because you're focusing on the wrong things.

When starting, one simple trick is to use a reference track (one of your favourite songs) and reproduce the exact song structure. Then, break down the reference track by its macro section (intro-buildup-chorus-break-buildup-chorus2-outro) using a pen and paper or inside your DAW using midi clips.

Structure your song and build your arrangement to best support the verse/chorus and story you're trying to tell.

The best way to finish an entire song arrangement is to start with the basic melody and chord progression.

Then write the verse and chorus.

And lastly, outline your buildup and breaks.

Once the basic elements are in place, you can add more instrumentation and vocals. But it's important to resist the temptation to add too much too soon. Adding too many details can clutter the arrangement and make it sound muddy.

Instead, focus on creating a clear and concise arrangement that supports the song's melody and progression. With a little patience and attention to detail, you'll be able to craft a polished and professional-sounding song arrangement to take your music to the next level.



Step 6: Add bridges (buildups) and breaks as required

A musical bridge is a section of a song that helps to transition from one section to another, usually by increasing the level of intensity.

There are several ways to add a musical bridge to a song. One common technique is adding extra instruments or sound layers, gradually building up to the next section.



Remember: your goal is to create a sense of forward momentum or transition between two distinct song sections.

In contrast, a break is a short section of music that interrupts the song's flow and helps create a sense of climax or tension. Breaks are often used in conjunction with bridges delivered by drum fill or a change in tempo to create a sense of anticipation before moving into the next section.

Adding bridges and breaks will create a more dynamic and exciting song that keeps your listeners engaged.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when adding bridges and breaks to a song:

Make sure the bridge or break fits the song's overall tone and feel. If it doesn't, it will stick out like a sore thumb and disrupt the song's flow.

Keep the length of the bridge or break in proportion to the rest of the song. If it's too short, it won't have enough impact; if it's too long, it will start to feel repetitive.

Pay attention to the dynamics of the bridge or break. A good way to add interest is to start softly and build up to a more intense section.

By following these songwriting tips, you can add bridges and breaks to your own songs to enhance the overall arrangement and help to keep listeners engaged.