

TOP FIVE SONGWRITING TIPS

There is no right or wrong way to begin the songwriting process, but these top tips offer a good starting point.

1. MAKE IT MATTER

Choose a topic that matters to you so you can perform it with passion. This could be from personal experience, your hopes, fears and dreams, or something topical from the news. Your **choice of instrument, tempo and lyrics** should complement the mood of your theme.

2. START WITH A MIND MAP

Grab a plain sheet of paper, put your topic or title in the middle, then scribble down your **thoughts, feelings and observations**. Use a **thesaurus to expand your options** and get inspired by **words which rhyme or subtly sound alike** such as 'fireflies' and 'paradise'.

3. HONE YOUR SONG STRUCTURE

Balance repetition and variety by trying out the popular **VERSE / CHORUS / VERSE / CHORUS / BRIDGE / CHORUS** song structure. **Verses** have the same melody, different lyrics and give details. A **chorus** repeats lyrics which sum up the theme of the song. The **bridge** is often in a different key, and can introduce a revealing moment. Most radio songs are a **maximum of 3 minutes 20 seconds**.

4. TIE YOUR LYRICS & MELODY TOGETHER

Tackle lyrics and melody in any order. **Keep lyrics simple** to start with and then **add interest through sounds and word flow** as in the Thin Lizzy song, *With Love*: "I must confess that in my quest I felt depressed and restless". Melody-wise, **work out what key signature your song is in** and play about with notes from that scale. **Google relevant chord patterns** to ensure you don't get any unpleasant clashing sounds.

5. ON TO THE FINISH LINE

Try not to be too critical or abandon a song part-way through or you'll never finish. You're nearly there. Once complete, **get your song out there**. Upload it or share it in person with family and friends and **don't be afraid to ask for feedback** - that's how you'll progress.