



Song Appraisal Guide

Thank you for choosing to give song feedback to our students. Please read this guide thoroughly as we pride ourselves on offering our students thorough and detailed critiques on their work to help them improve.

Platform

We use a ticketing platform called Happy Fox for our appraisals. We'll set you up as a mentor on the platform and you will be notified automatically.

Kristian, our Student Support Manager, will contact you to guide you through how to use the platform.

You can reach Kristian at support@thesongwritingacademy.co.uk

Timescale

IMPORTANT We offer our students a **MAXIMUM** 3 day turnaround for song appraisals. If you are assigned a ticket and cannot manage it within 3 days please unassign yourself from the ticket in the Happy Fox platform and let Kristian know immediately so it may be reassigned to another available mentor.

How will you receive the demos?

You will be assigned an appraisal ticket from Happy Fox which will be submitted by the student as a form/checklist, including a link to their song and lyric (e.g. SoundCloud/Disco etc.).

The form is a checklist they have been asked to fill in so they are aware of the sort of things we will be looking for in their song e.g. song length, structure, hooks etc.

The idea behind this is to teach them to think about songs the way professional writers do. **Please read the student form.**

When you have listened to the song and read the form, you will reply on the Happy Fox platform.

General

Time you should assign per appraisal

As a guideline, appraisals should take an average 20-30 minutes to complete.

Format for your reply

Appraisals are written as a reply to the ticket on Happy Fox. If you prefer to record yourself talking it through and/or offering musical changes then you simply attach the audio file to the ticket reply.

Broad strokes or fine details?

If a song needs a great deal of work and there are many key issues with the composition, give the writer a slightly more 'broad stroke' approach in the appraisal, rather than feeling you have to go into the minutiae. i.e. Let's 'fix' the big things first!

In contrast, if a song is 'nearly there' those final subtle changes will be all that is needed, so dive in with the nuances.

Either way please be **thorough and comprehensive** with your appraisal, so the student has feels well equipped to advance their work, whatever stage it is at.

Demo recording quality

For the song appraisals we ask students to send in basic demos, so we can hear the bare bones ideas of lyric, melody and chords. This prevents them spending valuable time and/or money fully recording something which often is not ready to go.

We have a separate category for production appraisals which are more highly polished, so **please focus on the songwriting** aspect of the demo submitted.

Please don't assess their playing/singing when this is clearly not a demo for pitching. Many of our students are not artists, producers or performers. Our job is to 'hear' the raw song.

Note: There is a section on their appraisal checklist where they can choose to let you know what they are hearing for the final record, or which artists the song might be aimed at.

Rights and ownership

Please be aware that, as a mentor, if you offer specific lyrical, melodic or harmonic changes to the song, this will not give you co-writer status or rights. We're here to help the student so its up to you how far you go with your suggestions. The song will always be 100% the copyright of the student(s).

Guidelines on how to write the appraisal

Here are our guidelines of the areas to include in your appraisal, although the order and delivery method is entirely your choice.

First Appraisal

£30 per song

- Structure : An appraisal of what is happening structurally in the song e.g.
 - Song length
 - How many sections are in the song and how well they work together
 - The timing of sections
 - Length of intro
 - Time to reach the hook
 - The overall balance and feel of the structure
 - **What works already and what could be improved**
- Lyrics: A detailed look at the lyric e.g.
 - Is the point of the song clear

- Do the lyrics flow
 - Is the lyric easy to follow
 - Originality
 - Impact
 - Use of language
 - Repetition of key phrases
 - Hook writing
 - **What works already and what could be improved**
-
- Music: A breakdown of the effectiveness of the chords *and* melody e.g.
 - Do the harmonic progressions work in each section
 - Are the melodies strong
 - Is it musically hooky?
 - Does it move the listener
 - **What works already and what could be improved**
-
- The Feels: An overarching view of the song e.g.
 - Does the song move the listener
 - Does the song feel balanced
 - **What works already and what could be improved**

Always try and balance suggestions on improvements with positive feedback on what the student has done well.

Second Appraisal

£15 per song

Once you have completed your appraisal, the student has the option to submit a second version of the song which will come back to you. As this is more of a 'tweaking' of the first song and will be less comprehensive, the fee is £15.

Important Information

We pay mentors for a maximum of first and second song appraisal per song. Please do not request further submissions from the student and try not be enticed into further discussions with the student after the second appraisal.

Invoicing

Please send your invoice to invoice@thesongwritingacademy.co.uk

Invoices are paid in the first week of each month

Many thanks for being such a valuable part of the TSA team!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin x". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large 'M' and a small 'x' at the end.