



Six Secrets of a Killer Chorus

How to make your chorus the highlight of any song

A chorus should be the focal point of any song, the part everyone looks forward to because it's just so good. It should create an unforgettable moment for the listener, releasing the tension you've built up in your verse and pre-chorus to bring everything together in a satisfying conclusion.

It's the part where you deliver your killer hook for everyone to sing along.

It's the part where you repeat your killer hook so everyone can sing along.

Your chorus is where you tell your listeners the point of your song. Get it right and you elevate your song to something truly memorable. Get it wrong and your listeners will wonder what on earth they just wasted three minutes of their time listening to.

So how do you go about writing a killer chorus?

1. Make the point of your song crystal clear

Your chorus needs to get right to the point. If all someone heard was the chorus, they should instantly understand what your song is about.

Don't confuse your listeners with multiple messages in a chorus. It'll only make it hard for them to understand what you're trying to say. When you're trying to build an emotional connection, you need to communicate effectively. Confused people don't remember choruses!



For example, if you're writing a song about leaving your partner, don't write a chorus which says I'm leaving you. I'm going to travel the world and have lots of exciting experiences. Which one is it? Are you leaving your partner because the relationship is over, or do you want to travel the world and you need to leave your partner behind?

If you want to write a song about leaving someone to travel the world, tell the story in your verses where you can go into more detail.

Keep your chorus on point with one subject so if it's the only part of your song someone hears, they still know exactly what it was about. Don't think of this as dumbing down your song – this approach will make it more accessible for your listeners.

2. Have a killer hook and repeat it

Your chorus needs to have a catchy hook. Your hook should be strong enough that you can repeat it and have people love it even more second time around.

Don't be afraid of repetition. Some of the most successful smash hits have had choruses which were nothing more than a single hook repeated – think We Will Rock You by Queen or Hey Ya by Outkast. You just know that when those songs come on the radio people can't help but join in!

3. Timing is everything

Pay attention to the timing of your chorus. If your chorus is lyrically positive, try starting it on the first beat of the bar (or before), like Katy Perry's Firework. If it's more pensive, try leaving a space and starting your chorus after beat one, like Billie Eilish does in No Time To Die.



4. Repeat the chorus

This might sound a little obvious but keep your first and second chorus the same if you can. Your listeners are still learning it and this helps make your song memorable.

It's very tempting to switch things up every time and of course there's always an exception to every rule, but listeners love it when they can sing along. If you change your chorus every time, it makes it hard for people to remember what's coming next.

5. Repetition, repetition, repetition

Have I mentioned that repetition is your friend? Don't be afraid of repetition. Repeat your hook. Repeat your chorus. Your listeners will love it!

6. Be strong in your chorus

Avoid using weak, fluffy lyrics. Your chorus is the place where you want to make your message and meaning clear with strong, powerful words. Don't say I love you, say I adore you. Don't say I miss you, say I can't be without you.

If you're looking for inspiration for your chorus, here are three common techniques you can use to build a killer hook:

Call to Action

What do you want people to do when they hear your song? Tell them!

Examples include:

- Move Closer
- Stand By Me



- Get Up Stand Up
- Let It Be

A Powerful Statement

Make a declaration of powerful emotions. Move your audience with how you're feeling.

Think of songs like:

- I Will Always Love You
- I Will Survive
- I'm Still Standing
- I Won't Back Down

Questions

Ask your audience a question. Get them thinking or tell your listener what you need to hear from them. Questions create an emotional connection.

This approach worked for songs like:

- Don't You Want Me Baby?
- Do You Love Me?
- What's Love Got To Do With it?
- What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted?

Your chorus hook will often become the title of your song, so you'll want to make sure it's memorable so people can find it when they want to listen again.



Assignment

Add some chorus lyrics from some of your favourite songs that you haven't written, to each of the three categories in Number 6 above (Call To Action | Powerful Statement | Question).

Now think of at least three new ideas of your own to add to each list.

When you have your list, pick one of your ideas and think about how you could use this as the basis of a chorus.