

How To Write a "Catchy" Song Title

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The song title, "You Can't Take That Away From Me" immediately raises the question, "What can't you take away from me?" It drives the reader to want to investigate further and find out what the lyric says. It peaks our interest and arouses one's curiosity.

A "catchy" song title will perk the interest of the listener and lead them to want to pursue more information about what the song is about.

When selecting a song title one must ask, "What is the song about?" Is it about winning love, losing love, rival love, unrequited love? The topic of the song must be crystal clear in the mind of the songwriter and this central idea must be conveyed to the listener

1. What makes a good title?

The title of a song should summarize the essence of the song and should be used in a prominent place in the song, like the first line of "Night and Day," or at the end of each verse as in "New York State of Mind," or at the very end of the song as in "You'll Never Walk Alone."

Some of the strongest and best titles contain language that paints a verbal picture or suggests an image in the mind of the listener "A Boy Named Sue," or one that pertains to a color "Blue Suede Shoes." or one that mentions a place "Chicago," or represents a name "Michelle," or suggests a date "April Showers."

2. Can I use a title that already exists?

It is fascinating to know that song titles, book titles, movie titles and so on are not copyrightable and therefore can be used freely by anybody without cost or paying royalties. There are hundreds of songs with the title "I Love You" and this title might be classified as a cliché (an overused and worn out phrase). No doubt this phrase "I Love You" is a vitally important one to express particularly in love songs or ballads, but one must skillfully find another way to present clichés...offering a fresh and unique way to do it. The word "love" only rhymes

with five other words, "glove" "of" "above" "dove" and "shove." and is therefore very limited with rhyme couplings.

3. Where can I find "catchy" titles?

One can find fresh and "catchy" song titles practically anywhere, such as book titles, phone conversations, newspapers, television, radio, advertisements, movies, conversations overheard in restaurants and so on.

The title can be considered the "hub" of a wheel and all lyric lines are the spokes that connect to the hub or title. Each lyric line should reflect back to the title and help the story develop.

Some writers begin with the title and then build a story around that title. The title must be unique and should bring to mind a clear image such as "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face."

4. What's wrong with the title, "I Love You?"

It is a good idea to find new and fresh ways to say the same old and tried phrases like "I Love You." Such a title as "I Can't Smile Without You." or "You Light Up My Life." or "Sometimes When We Touch,." are clever ways to say the same thing. Saying "I Love You" using different words with a new approach is novel and refreshing.

It is interesting to note that the three most used words in song titles are "Heart," "Night," and "If."

5. What type of title choices do I have?

Here some ideas from which to glean song titles:

1. Color

Purple Rain, Deep Purple, Little Green Apples, Blue Suede Shoes, The Lady in Red, It's Not Easy Being Green, Purple Haze.

2. Place

New York State of Mind, By the Time I Get to Phoenix, St. Louis Blues, Chicago, April In Paris, Stairway to Heaven, New York New York, Streets of Philadelphia.

3. Numbers

Two for the Road, Three Coins in a Fountain, Sixteen Tons, Seventy Six Trombones, Three Times a Lady, One Note Samba.

4. Time

Saturday Night Fever, Rainy Days and Mondays, April Showers, Ruby Tuesday,

6. Night

Sunday Kind of Love, September in the Rain, The Longest Time.

5. Female

Michelle, Laura, Hello Dolly, Lucille, Hard-Hearted Hannah, Sweet Georgia Brown, Billie Jean.

Night and Day, Strangers in the Night, Night Fever, Blues in the Night, Teach Me Tonight, Nights in White Satin, Quiet Nights.1

7. If

If I Had You, If I Loved You, If I Had a Brain, If Ever I Should Leave You, If I Were a Rich Man, If I Ever Lose My Faith In You, If You Asked Me To. If I Had a Hammer.

8. Everyday Speech

Day In-Day Out, Here and Now, For Once In My Life, Too Close For Comfort, Opposites Attract, Easy Come-Easy Go, Nobody Does It Better.

9. Question

Is That All There Is? Who Can I Turn To? Guess Who I Saw Today? "What Kind of Fool Am I? Can You Read My Mind? How Am I Supposed to Live Without You? How Deep Is Your Love? Will You Love Me Tomorrow? What Have You Done For Me Lately?

10. Breaking Up

You Don't Buy Me Flowers, All Alone, Can't Smile Without You, Hurting Each Other, Breakin' Up is Hard to Do, The End of a Love Affair, After the Love Has Gone, Almost Over You, I Don't Have the Heart, Let's Stay Together, Right Here Waiting, You Don't Know How It Feels, Missing You Now, Right Here Waiting.

11. Love

Our Love Is Here to Stay, You Are the Sunshine of My Life, If I Loved You, People Will Say We're In Love, I Just Called to Say I Love You.

12. Request

Let's Go Crazy, Beat It!

13. Repetition

Fly, Robin Fly; Bad, Bad Leroy Brown; I Want you, I Need You, I Love You; Enough Is Enough; Time After Time.

14. Alliteration=using words that begin with the same consonants

Seasons In the Sun, The Way We Were, My Boyfriend's Back, Touch Me In the Morning, You Light Up My Life, Done Somebody Wrong Song.

14. Simile=a figure of speech that draws a comparison between two different things and uses the words "like" "as" or "than"

Bridge Over Troubled Water, Younger Than Springtime, The Song Is You, A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody.

15. Metaphor=describes somebody or something that is not meant literally, a figure of speech using analogy.

You Win the Round, Jump Start the Economy, That's Hard to Swallow, What's the Bottom Line? Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella.

16. Need to Escape

Up, Up and Away; Slow Boat to China; Let's Get Away From It All; Over the Rainbow; By the Time I Get to Paris, Fly Me to the Moon.

17. Inspirational

The Impossible Dream, Climb Every Mountain, I Believe, It's a Wonderful World, Pick Yourself Up, You'll Never Walk Alone.

18. Familiar Expressions

The Best Is Yet to Come; Easy Come, Easy Go; Wait and See; Signed, Sealed and Delivered, Beginner's Luck. It's Too Late!

19. Oxymorons

Serious Fun, The Tender Trap, Cruel Kindness, Make Haste Slowly, My Happiest Mistake, The Sound of Silence, Killing Me Softly.

20. Visual Images

Peel Me a Grape, Real Men Don't Eat Quiche, A Walk in the Spring Rain, That Goodbye Look, Knockin' On Heaven's Door, Livin' On a Prayer, Strawberry Fields Forever, Walking On Broken Glass.

21. Antonym... a word opposite to another

Another Mr Right Just Left, Everybody's Got the Right to be Wrong, If I Could Just Remember to Forget, The High Cost of Low Living, My Future Just Passed.

22. Word Play

Full Moon and Empty Arms, Every Heart Should Have One, New Looks from an Old Lover, The Night We Called It a Day, Come Rain or Come Shine, Love at Second Sight, The High Cost of Loving.

23. Book Titles

Gone With the Wind, From Here to Eternity, Games People Play.

24. Personification=attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects.

Ol Man River, The Summer Knows,

