

# Music 2: Songwriting



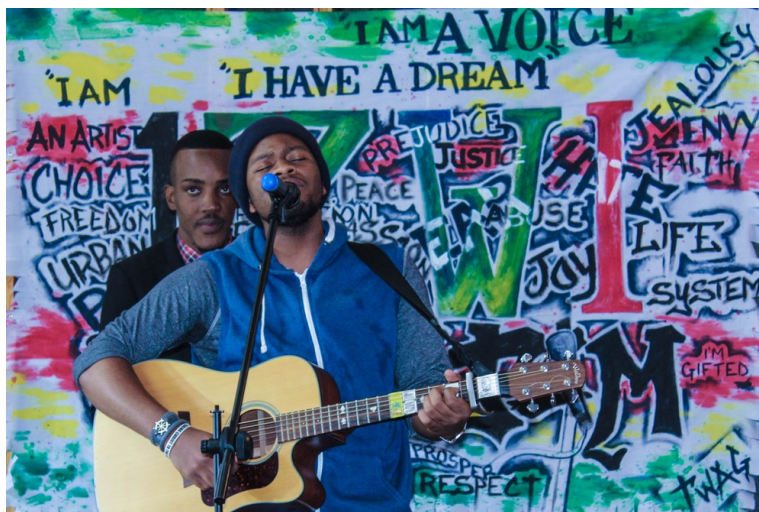
Welcome to the ARTSQUAD Project music resources. These resources have been developed to demonstrate how music can be used as an educational medium to build key competences and provide students with an awareness and appreciation of music and practical experience of making and performing music through fun and creative activities.



Song writing requires creativity and imagination. There are a number of elements that go into making a song: theme, lyrics, instruments and performance. In this resource we will look at all those elements to help you to compose lyrics, put a melody to those lyrics and stage a final performance where it all comes together. This can be done on your own or as a group activity. The important thing is to have fun while you are doing it!



Firstly, you need to choose a theme. Themes can have a political, social or cultural message. Your theme might be based on a personal situation that you are experiencing, an issue that you are passionate about or one of local or national relevance.



Looking at newspaper articles, magazines, photos and social media can help to stimulate your imagination and give you some ideas on what you would like your song to be about.



Write down a few options to start with or place some pictures in front of you then play around with words associated with the themes or images, finding words that rhyme or evoke emotions.



It is not important if the lines don't rhyme. The main objective is to build a story which can form the lyrics of your song. For example, using the following image you could say;

*'Smoke from bombed buildings covers the sky, Pilot is afraid that his plane won't fly'*





## Mood and Tempo

Once you have your lyrics completed you can identify what emotions the lyrics are expressing and find an appropriate tempo to convey those emotions. If it is a sad song, you might want to use a slow tempo as in a ballad or blues beat, where as if it is a happy song, an upbeat tempo might suit better.



It can be useful to download a metronome app to help find the right tempo for your song but you can also explore rhythms through experimenting with homemade shakers, drums or bells. Check on the internet to find digital resources that supply beats which can be used as a backing track to your song's melody. Beats produced by percussive instruments or digitally are also useful if you are writing a rap song.



### Melody

Once you have decided on a tempo you now need a melody. If you play guitar, piano or another instrument, you can experiment with different chords and riffs, maybe taking some notes from songs you like and changing them around. Don't forget that the voice is an instrument! It is very useful to have a smart phone or similar device to record as you go.



By now, you should have all the elements of the song and can now rehearse, perform and record it on a smart device or PC.

The 'Audacity' programme is a free and user friendly online tool which can be used for recording the finished composition. This programme allows you to import existing music as well as record any new material. Vocals can also be recorded over a backing track and there is a range of sound effects and sound manipulation features on the programme.



There are many things that you can now do with your song; perform it for others, create a video to go with it and upload it to your preferred social media platform. Congratulations on producing your own original, creative composition!





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