

# Notes:

## Lyrics

The lyrical strategy will depend on what kind of a song someone is writing. They might want to write very confessional, honest lyrics if the song is more personal and intimate. They could write a story in the third person if the song follows more of a narrative structure. Or maybe you're going for poetic lyrics filled with metaphor or a political theme filled with opinion and purpose. Whichever they choose, be sure the theme is consistent throughout the song and the message is clear. Also consider meter, rhyme, and structure.

## Being Original

Judging a song on originality can be pretty subjective. But then, judging a song on just about any criteria is pretty subjective, so we'll just have to recognize that the song is going to be at the mercy of the judges' personal biases and opinions. But what, generally, makes a song original? The easiest way to answer this might be to ask the opposite: what makes a song unoriginal? An unoriginal song is one that sounds like everything else you've already heard, or specifically sounds like the songwriter was listening to certain artists and emulated their sound. The best way to sound more original is for the writer to draw inspiration from multiple sources and try your best not to copy someone else's sound! Does the writer's music/lyrics come from them, not their possible influences.

## Memorable Melodies

Just like originality, melody is another vague category. You may be judging a melody, but what do you think makes for a good melody in the first place? There's no way to know for sure, really. But the best melodies are usually the ones that stick in your head, so the key might be to look for a melody that's as memorable as possible. The song should have a great chorus that a crowd would love to sing along to.

## Composition

When it comes to composition, judges will be looking at the overall structure of how the song is put together. The chord progression should feel natural within the song and move it where it needs to be throughout. The song structure should make sense, be memorable and take the listener on the desired journey that you hope to take them on. They might judge the tune on its use of dynamics or instrumental hooks. Composition could mean any number of things, but it mainly means this: all of the elements of the song should come together in a clear, concise whole.

## Is it Country?

Hopefully there is a clear difference in the sound of the song, which distinguishes it from a Pop or other genre song. You need to allow for old right through to modern country – but exclude any obvious non-country efforts, or at least mark the content down. We are trying to foster Country music after all. There is plenty of room within the Country Genre to show other influences i.e. Country Blues, Country Rock etc.