

credit) song is on. Or, put your headphones on and listen to iTunes. See how many song structures you can figure out.

Something more to keep in mind! There are two ways to view structure:

1. The overall structure of our composition (such as ABAB, etc.) and...
2. The harmonic structure (the chord progressions we decide to use). We will cover that more in the chapter on harmony.

Sometimes an artist/singer/songwriter will stray from these standard forms, but basically, the majority of songs will use one of these structures:

1. VERSE, VERSE, BRIDGE, VERSE: A, A, B, A

(With the first structure, there is no chorus and the title can work really well in the last line of each verse).

2. VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS: A,B,A,B
3. VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS: A,B,A,B,A,B
4. VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, BRIDGE, CHORUS: A,B,A,B,C,B
5. VERSE, VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, CHORUS: A,A,B,A,B,B

6. VERSE, PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS, VERSE, PRE-CHORUS, CHORUS: A, A1, B, A, A1, B — (at times, with a BRIDGE as well)

Sometimes there are variations on these structures. You can listen and count to see where they happen. But that being said, these are the fundamental time-honored forms that you can use as templates to create your own original material.

We can try to use these patterns in imaginative and creative ways. They are compelling devices, and we can take advantage of them in order to communicate with our songs.

Here are some examples of pop songs that represent a number of these very common song-form structures:

1. ABAB: “Change the World” (Tommy Sims /Gordon Kennedy/ Wayne Kirkpatrick)
2. ABABCB: “Love Will Lead You Back” (Diane Warren)
“Tracks of My Tears” (Smokey Robinson, Pete Moore, Marv Tarplin)
“If You Asked Me To” (Diane Warren)
3. ABABAB: “Circle Game” (Joni Mitchell)
“Candle in the Wind” (Elton John, Bernie Taupin)
4. AABA: “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow” (Gerry Goffin, Carole King)
“Saving All My Love for You (Michael Masser, Gerry Goffin)
“The Way We Were” (Marilyn and Alan Bergman, Marvin Hamlisch)