



The first example extends the lines awkwardly. To be honest, it makes a complete mess out of your lyrics.

The second example makes your lyric sheet way to long.

You also don't need to number your lines in the lyrics, or putting A, B, and C's before lines to point out the rhyme pattern.

These annotations aren't necessary. You're showing your song to people who know what rhyme patterns are, and how to refer to lines in your song by content.

If you submit to a publisher or a contest like the above, it will scream, "Uh-oh. Amateur alert."

You don't want that.

So, why not get in the habit of presenting lyric sheets consistently, and in a way pros are used to seeing them. If a reviewer or publisher has a musical question... they'll ask.

It's a good habit to adopt, even if you don't intend to send to a publisher or submit to a contest. You will also serve as a good example to newer writers.

### **3. Do you need to label the sections?**

Most songs today are verse-chorus songs. Some have bridges, some do not.

When it comes to verses, there's no real point in labeling them. Fellow songwriters and music industry pros know how to identify the verses.

Separating them with great writing, and using line spacing is plenty suitable.

Do not label the pre-chorus either. It's simply not needed.

That said, labeling the chorus is standard practice. So, go ahead and do that.

But the only time you need to actually type out the chorus a second time is if it is a moving chorus. Sometimes called a traveling chorus or progressive chorus. These choruses contain new information for the song.

You don't need to add to the lyric's length by including the same chorus multiple times on the sheet.

Simply put [Repeat chorus] and you're good to go.

Bridges won't need special labeling either. Even in AABA structured songs, the bridge's content, rhyme pattern, and length are quite different and distinguishable from other sections.

This is a good litmus test to your writing. If readers aren't able to distinguish the sections by the writing, it might mean a re-write is in order.

#### **4. No need to double space lines.**

Double spacing lines only creates additional pages. It makes it look more daunting to read. It's like a song with the same tempo and musical groove sung in similar melody throughout... it makes it seem much longer than it really is.

Besides, when you do need extra space between the verse and chorus, now you've got to triple space to keep somewhat of a format pattern.

Just type it out normally, like everyone is used to reading printed material.

#### **5. What about font size, indenting, and accented fonts?**

You can put the title in bold letters. It can also be slightly larger, but, no larger than 14-point font.

The title and possibly the copyright information can be centered or left justified on the page, but the rest of the lyrics should be left justified.

You don't have to indent any part of the lyric either. It's tempting to indent sections to help differentiate them. But, again, doing so gives less horizontal space for your lyric lines.

Plus, the song sections should be able to stand out by themselves. They don't need extra attention called to them like flashing arrows in a construction zone.

Lyrics should be written in a normal sized font.

Some fonts which are easy on the eyes, particularly on screen, are Arial, Verdana, or a font in the Sanserif family. They don't have curly details.

Times New Roman is often a default font on computers, but it is harder to read than other fonts, particularly on a screen.

For the lyric size, again, no more than 14 fonts. But, the larger the font, the less room you have for it on the page, so keep that in mind.

A 12-point font is good. Less than that isn't recommended because it can be too difficult to read.

#### **6. Keep it to one page.**

As you can see, many of the above tips help you keep the lyric sheet to one page.

There are rare occasions a story song might go over that, but 99% of songs should fit on one page.

Bringing in a printed lyric sheet with a staple or more than one page usually raises the brow of most writers and music pros.

They are used to songs being presented on just one page. Varying from that gives them suspicion about you as a writer.

And, it doesn't matter if you are sharing it online. It still should be one page. Actually, it's just as important to follow this rule when sharing lyrics online using video conferencing platforms.

Depending on your settings in MS Word, here's a space saving tip to omit paragraph spacing under every line.

When pressing the RETURN key, hold down the SHIFT key. This puts the next line directly underneath the previous one. A line break will be placed instead of a hard carriage return.

Then, use the RETURN key by itself to put a paragraph line format between sections of your song.

This helps keep your lyric within one page, identifying sections more concisely.

## **7. Put it in a MS Word or RTF file.**

If you are submitting an electronic version, put it in a document format people are used to. Many people, including Mac users, can produce MS Word formats. If not, then use an RTF file format.

RTF simply means it is rich text. It can be bolded, italicized, have links in it, and more.

PDF files work to view on an individual screen, but do not work consistently well when sharing through video meeting platforms. Too much Extraneous file viewing information can take up needed room on the screen.

If you're sending to an industry pro as part of a pitch package, PDFs work fine.

If you are sending for reviews to be screen shared online through video conferencing, choose the Word or RTF format option.

Don't send your lyrics in the body of an e-mail.

First, it makes it more difficult to save or put in print. Plus, formatting may not be preserved.

Sending it in e-mail only makes more work for whoever is receiving your lyric.

Even though you don't mean it, you can be giving the impression you are lazy, or don't really care about the person receiving it.

Plus, if you're sending to a music pro... you never want to make that mistake.

## **8. Include contact information.**

It's less important to include contact information if you're submitting one for review when it's people you know.

But if you send it to a professional reviewer, an artist, or a publisher, you're going to want that information on it.

If the lyric sheet gets separated from any other information which identifies you, they'll likely not take their time to hunt down your contact information.

All you need is your name, e-mail address, and telephone number...

John Smith | [jsmith@jsmith.com](mailto:jsmith@jsmith.com) | 763-555-1234

Leave off references to organizations you belong to. They won't make a difference or impress the reader. They are interested in the song.

Don't forget to include the names of your co-writers. It tells whoever reads it this isn't a solo write. And in some cases, they may recognize a name which certainly doesn't hurt.

To save space, you can list them like...

John Donaldson | Tamara Johnson | Mark Smith | Don McGee

You can put a copyright on it, but you might leave the date off of it when pitching a song. A song written years ago might get passed over by a publisher if they're looking for something fresh and new.

If you have a dated song from years back, they will assume it's been passed over for some reason, and may pass on it themselves wondering what is wrong with it.

### **Sample lyric sheet.**

Here is a sample lyric sheet you can follow formatting.

#### **King of Her Heart**

His name is Leroy but she calls him Pete  
30 some odd years to find the man of her dreams  
She don't mind, has no regrets  
25 years of love and they're in love still yet  
Their love is strong and free as eagles  
Though she wouldn't call them regal

Chorus:

She is his queen and soul companion  
She's most at home right in his arms  
He is the king of her heart

His golden crown is an old seed cap  
T-shirt and jeans is where his royal robe is at  
His scepter is a garden hoe  
He'll tend to his court and work it row by row  
When he's through with all the weeding'  
He'll wink at her and start his teasing

[Repeat chorus]

The color of compassion must be blue cause in those eyes  
It runs so clean and pure no way that it could hide  
Should it recede it reveals a great big smile...

His court jester is an old stray cat  
Walking 'cross the lawn and jump up on his lap  
They'll set there and watch the clouds  
Talk to the Orioles right out loud  
She'll look on him without him seeing  
Shake her head cause it's so easy

[Repeat chorus]

She knew it from the very start  
He is the king of her heart

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If you noticed, this is a modified version of a verse-chorus song with a bridge and a tag ending.

The bridge is in a nontraditional position in the song. Even so, it did not need additional labeling. The content, rhyme pattern, content length, and line spacing did the job.

It's a good idea to get in the habit of formatting lyric sheets like above. When submitting songs to publishers or review sessions, you'll be seen as more professional and consistent.

Those who you do send it to will greatly appreciate the effort. In some cases, pros will reject your submission if sent with a sloppy format.

Plus, it's handy to have a consistent format to follow without thinking about it.