

## Words-first method

1) Brainstorm: write at least 10 phrases per minute. If you're writing less than that, you're censoring yourself. Free writing allows both the bad and the good to come out. Then you can pick out the good stuff.

You can also pick a theme – an idea that you want to write about: cars, love, breakfast, smelly feet, whatever.

If you are having a hard time, start with something like: This is totally hard. This is so stupid. Stupid stupid stupid stupid stupid.

Oh, look! You have the chorus to a hardcore punk song already. Good job!

2) Pick out the phrases you like. Nothing has to rhyme or even make sense at this point (or at any point, really).

3) Put the phrases you like into groups of 4.

4) Now you might have to adjust the phrases so that they fit in four measure phrases. Test them out by saying them out loud, rhythmically, while keeping track of the beat (walk, drum, conduct...).

Get rid of unnecessary words. Is the basic idea still there?

If "I was walking so happily down the sunny street" doesn't fit, try:

Walking down the street

Sunny, happy

Simpler is ALWAYS better for pop songwriting. If you're the more old-fashioned, storytelling, folksy type, then you can get away with being wordy.

If you want things to rhyme, you'll have more adjusting to do.

5) Experiment saying the words over your chosen chord progression. Let the speaking slowly change into singing. Listen to what the words and melody want to do.

### Melody-first method

1) Play your chosen chord progression over and over and improvise wordless melodies. Keep it simple.

2) When you find something you like, keep singing it over and over. That will help you remember it. Find a way to write something down, even if you're not comfortable with notation, yet. Record it.

3) Keep practicing and playing your melody and listen to see if any words occur to you. Sometimes, it might be just one word. You might be singing, "la la la la la la crazy la la la la la la la house." It's okay if it doesn't make sense. You'll start to find words that make it make sense.

4) Keep repeating and writing things down.

This method requires a lot of repetition and a different kind of listening, but can work really well if you find that melodies come to you easily, but words do not.