

Map the Song Form, by Jeannie Deva

Some songs are uniquely constructed while others follow a cookie-cutter formula. The form is based on the number and arrangement of verses, pre-choruses, choruses and in some cases, a bridge and/or tag ending. I call this the **map** of the song.

Once you identify and learn a song's map, you can predict whatever comes next as you sing it. It's much easier to memorize a song once you've determined its form.

This process will enable you to give a better performance as well as be a more confident bandleader.

Example: Mapping the Song

Let's analyze the song, "There She Walks Again" by Connie Lim, which I've mapped below. (You can hear her singing it on iTunes or YouTube.)

In the left margin of the lyrics, you'll notice I've labeled each section using some of the following abbreviations:

Intro = **introduction**

V = **verse**

Pre Ch = **pre-chorus**

Ch = **chorus**

Trans = transition to bridge

Br = **bridge**

Instr Brkdown = **instrumental breakdown**

Tag = **tag** ending

Full Lyrics and Map for "There She Walks Again"

Ch 1: (2x) There she walks again

There she walks again

There she walks again

V1: Looks like porcelain

Talks like Chaplin

Always finds herself in with the in crowd

Pre Ch 1: Till, Knock, knock, knock on her window

He breaks her in and teaches her sorrow

Young thing ain't so young of a thing anymore

Ch 2: There he walks again

There he walks again

There he stalks again

Ch 3 (Alternate): There he walks again
Doesn't give a damn
Wants her under his command

Pre Ch 2: So, Knock, knock, knocks on her window
He broke her in and taught her sorrow
Young thing ain't so young of a thing anymore

Trans: You're wasting your time
She's got a heavy, heavy mind

Br: So she bends over
Her heart can sit above her mind
Oh how she bends over
Her heart can sit above, sit above, sit above her mind

Instr Brkdwn

Ch 4: She will walk again
She will walk again
She will walk again

Map at a Glance: "There She Walks Again"

It's also useful to condense the map to give yourself an easy-to-read prompting tool during rehearsal:

Chorus 1 (2x)
V1
Pre Chorus 1
Chorus 2
Chorus 3 (Alternate)
Pre Chorus 2
Transition to Bridge
Bridge
Instrumental Breakdown
Chorus 4 (1x)

Exercise: Now write or print out the lyrics for a song that you know. Label each section of the song. Don't worry about "getting it right." There's no wrong or right way to do it. For learning and memorization purposes, whatever coding helps you to clarify the organization of the song will be fine.