

## Tips and Techniques - #1 Memorizing Lyrics

1 - Find the lyrics under the “Members Only” section of our website.

2 - Memorize the lyrics of the song separately from the music.

The brain will absorb and recall lyrics much faster when the music and lyrics come from separate parts of the brain. Having lyrics that you can easily recite makes learning the accompanying music easier, and further reinforces the lyrics.

3 - Read the lyrics aloud several times.

It's important that you read and practice the lyrics out loud, rather than to yourself in your head. Hearing the lyrics with your ears will help you pick up on rhymes and rhythms that will help you memorize the song. Read aloud using real emotions like happiness, anger, sadness, excitement, sorrow, etc. and connect them to each phrase or verse of the song. Try to perform the lyrics as though you were telling the story to a crowd of people. Lower your voice in the quiet moments, and get loud in the emphatic moments. Use hand gestures to highlight key passages. Be theatrical. Your dog will love you for it!

4 - Analyze the song lyrics.

- Rhyme scheme

Song lyrics are poems and poems often have words that rhyme. Which words rhyme? Is it the last word of every line, or is it the last word of every other line? Or is it something else? Is the rhyme scheme different in the chorus than in the verses?

- Rhythm

Poetry and music are both very rhythmic. Read/recite the lyrics along with the music to help you establish the correct rhythm. What is the correct tempo? Is it fast or slow? Is the rhythm steady or is it staggered in some fashion? Can you tap your foot as you recite the lyrics?

- Formal structure

Figure out the song's formal structure. Most songs are made up of a number of different verses, each separated by a repeated chorus. Many songs also include an instrumental solo, a bridge used to break up the repetitive pattern of the song and keep the listener's attention, and a tag ending. How many verses are there? Is the chorus repeated after every verse? Does the song start with a verse or start with the chorus? Is there a bridge or an instrumental solo? How does the song end?

- Meaning

Almost every song tells a story. What is the story about and what does every phrase and word mean? If you don't understand what the song is about, you'll have as much trouble memorizing it as you would have trying to memorize a string of completely unrelated words that have no meaning. Before you try to memorize the lyrics, you should be able to summarize the story easily and completely from memory. Create a short movie in your mind that relates to the lyrics and keep playing that movie when you're memorizing the song

5 - Repeat the words in short phrases one line at a time.

Memorize the first line and recite it out loud, learn the second line and recite it out loud. Now repeat the first and second lines together, then add the third line. Now recite all 3 lines together and so on. Repetition is the mother of all learning!

6 - Go slowly

Read/recite the lyrics slowly and theatrically, bringing all your new knowledge of the lyrics to bear in your performance. Pronounce and articulate each word and phrase slowly, divided into syllables spoken with clear vowels and consonants to capture it thoroughly. The more you commit to the theatrical performance of the lyrics, the more easily it will plant itself in your brain.

7 - Write down (or type out) the lyrics repeatedly.

This is great practice. When you are finished writing, compare your written version to the actual lyrics. Identify and correct your mistakes. Write it out again. Frank Sinatra memorized his lyrics this way and Frankie knew a thing or two about memorizing lyrics.

8 - Note in particular important words.

- Focus on the first few words of every verse. In performance having the first few words of each verse on the tip of your tongue will help you get each verse started correctly and on the beat.
- Highlight "milestone" or difficult words or phrases.

9 - Recite yourself to sleep

Recite the lyrics in bed at night just before you fall asleep. The brain will absorb the lyrics into the subconscious mind. Then recite the lyrics right after you wake up to refresh the memory. It's a strong and effective way of getting information into the long term memory and increase your retention. Guaranteed to re-kindle long dormant passions in your bedmate.

10 - Practice regularly; don't wait until the last minute.

Do a little bit of memory work every day. Working on your lyrics (and music) for half an hour or an hour every day is much more effective (and fun) than attempting to cram in several hours of work the day before a show.