




**WORDS & MUSIC**<sup>SM</sup>  
AT HOME



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO

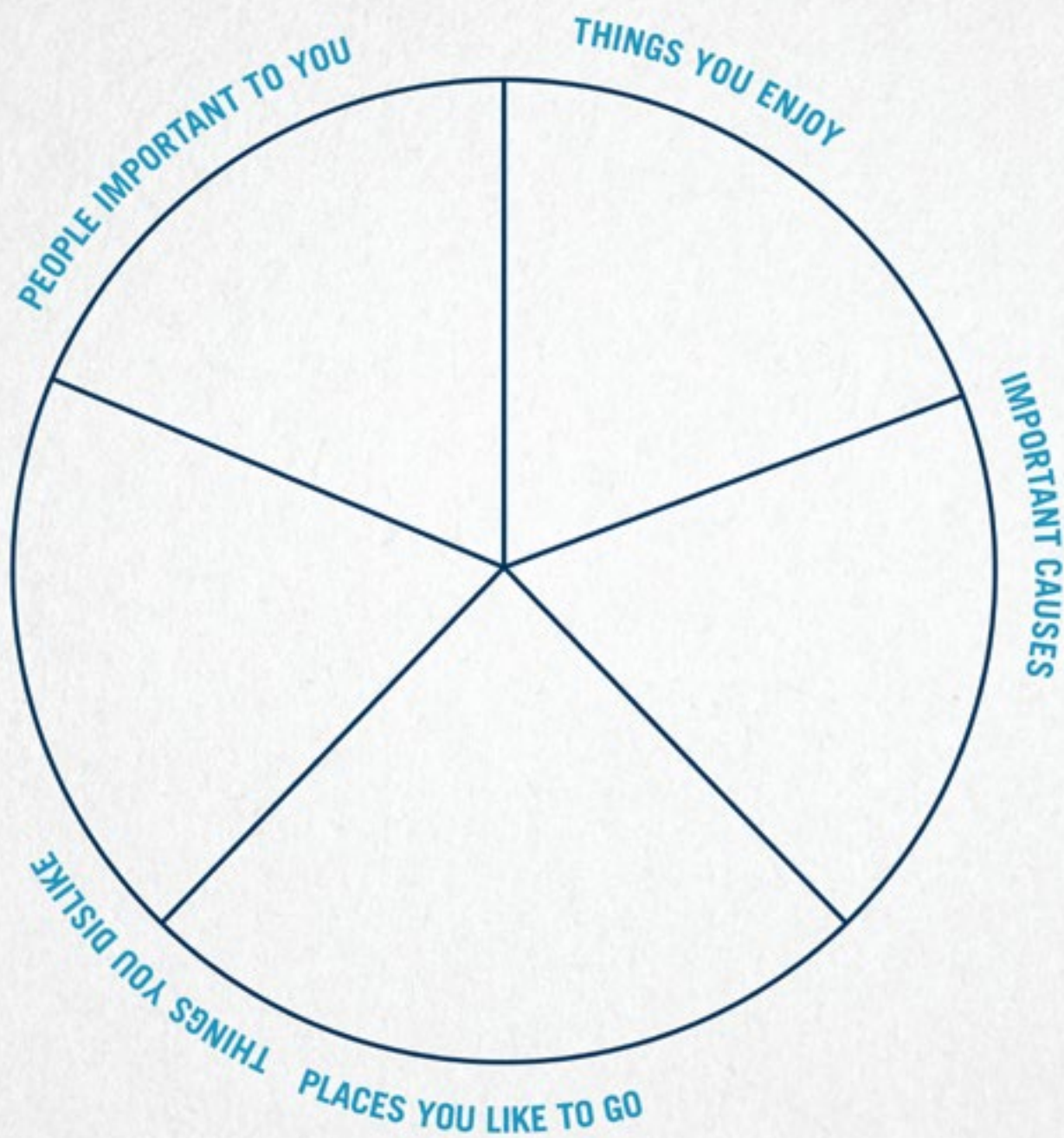
*Writing Your  
Own Song Lyrics*

WORKBOOK



# Brainstorm Wheel

Fill in the wedges of the pie chart to help generate ideas for your song.



# Parts of a Song

## TITLE

The title is the name of the song.

## VERSE

The verse communicates the details of the song, such as who, what, where, when, why, and how. Songs usually have multiple verses.

## PRE-CHORUS

The pre-chorus is a short section that serves as a transition from the verse to the chorus. It further explains the verse and sets-up the theme, or message, of the chorus. The pre-chorus lyrics can be the same each time (like the chorus tends to be) or it can change (like the verse). The pre-chorus usually has a different melody from the verse and chorus. Note that not all songs have a pre-chorus.

## CHORUS

The chorus conveys the theme of the song. The chorus is usually simpler than the verses and often contains the title. The chorus is repeated throughout the song.

## BRIDGE

The bridge introduces a twist or new idea. It usually occurs toward the song's end, and it has a different melody from the verses and chorus. Note that not all songs have a bridge.

## THEME

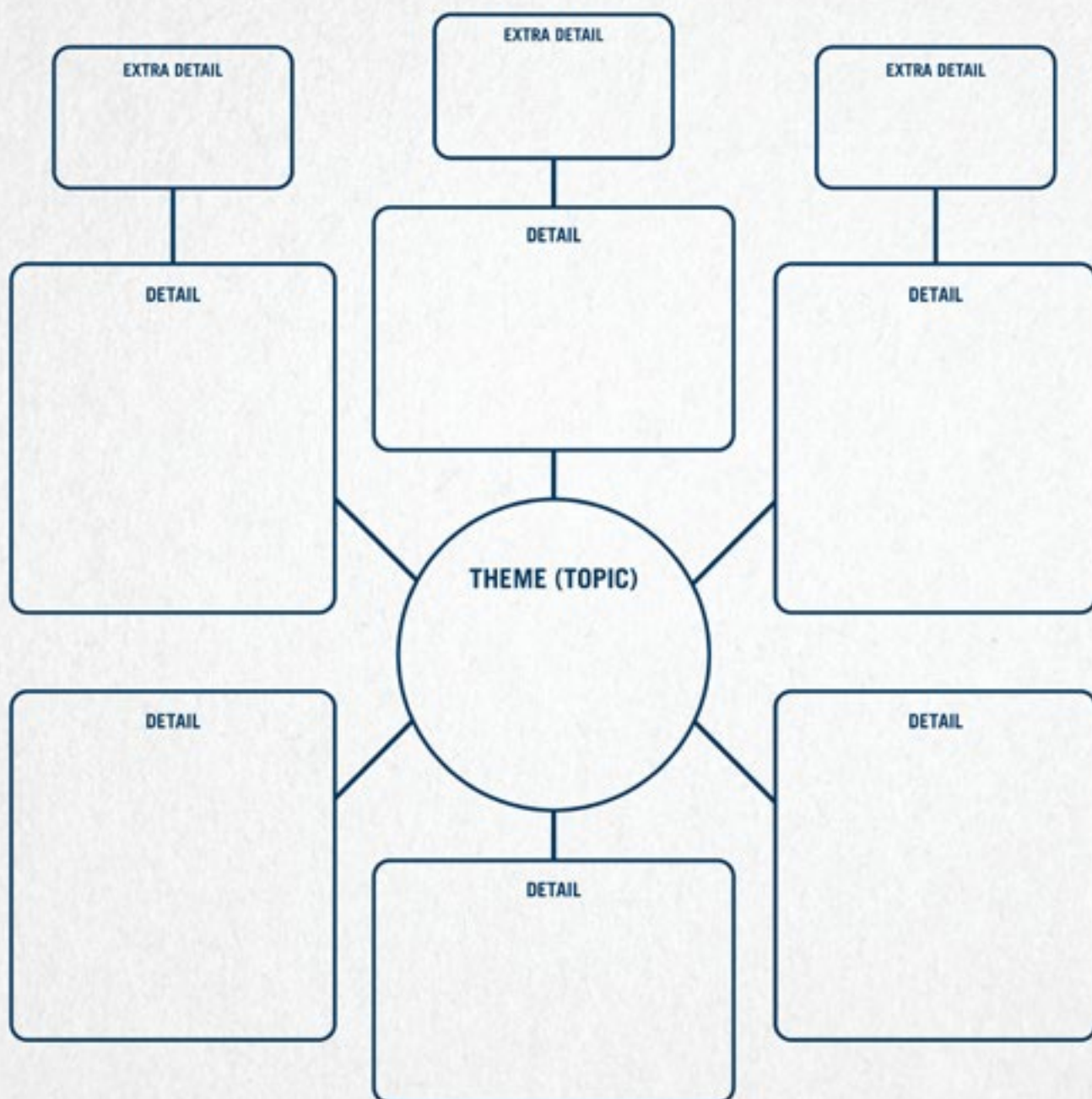
The theme is the message of the song. The theme is found in the song's chorus.

## HOOK

The hook is the part of the song that catches, or "hooks," a listener's attention and makes the song easy to remember. The title and hook are often the same, and the hook is usually repeated throughout the song.

# Spider Map

Brainstorming with a spider map helps you to add strong images to your lyrics that relate to your theme. Write your theme or topic in the circle and add branches for every detail that comes to mind. You can create branches off the details, too.



# Song Outline

**TITLE:**

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**VERSE 1 (TOPIC):**

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**PRE-CHORUS (OPTIONAL)**

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**CHORUS (THEME):**

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**VERSE 2 (TOPIC):**

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**PRE-CHORUS (OPTIONAL)**

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**CHORUS (THEME REPEATED):**

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**BRIDGE (OPTIONAL):**

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# Songwriting Template

## VERSE 1

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## PRE-CHORUS (OPTIONAL)

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## CHORUS

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## VERSE 2

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## PRE-CHORUS (OPTIONAL)

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---

## CHORUS

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## BRIDGE (OPTIONAL)

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## CHORUS

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“Songwriting is my way of channeling my feelings and my thoughts. Not just mine, but the things I see, the people I care about. My head would explode if I didn’t get some of that stuff out. Not everything I write is good, but it’s all good for me...”

—Dolly Parton (*The New York Times*, 2002)

*Words & Music*<sup>SM</sup> at Home is a branch of the Museum’s flagship education program, *Words & Music*. Thanks to the following supporters who ensure the sustainability of this important work.



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“I was twelve when I learned my first three chords on guitar and wrote my first song. My life changed forever... Music became the way I told my stories.”

—Taylor Swift

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