

Spotlight on Chorus

TITLE AND SWING LINES

In this lesson you will focus specifically on the chorus of a song. As you learned in Lessons 2 and 3, the chorus often incorporates the title as part of the hook.

When songwriters talk about where the title is placed in a chorus, they use the following terms:

A title line (T) is any line that contains the title/hook.

A swing line (~) is any line that does not contain the title/hook.

A chorus form is the pattern of title and swing lines.

EXAMPLES

In the following examples, title lines are represented by a “T” and swing lines are represented by a “~”.

“We Will Rock You”, written by Brian May and recorded by Queen, is an example of a TTTT chorus form because the title is repeated in all four lines of the chorus.

T We will, we will rock you.

T We will, we will rock you.

T We will, we will rock you.

T We will, we will rock you.

“Delta Dawn”, written by Larry Collins and Alex Harvey and recorded by Tanya Tucker, is an example of a T~~~ chorus form because the title appears only in the first line.

T Delta Dawn what’s that flower you have on?

~ Could it be a faded rose from days gone by?

~ And did I hear you say he was a meetin’ you here today

~ To take you to his mansion in the sky

The most common chorus forms are:

(~~~T)	(T~~~)	(~T~T)	(T~T~)	(T~~T)	(TTTT)	(TT)
~	T	~	T	T	T	T
~	~	T	~	~	T	T
~	~	~	T	~	T	
T	~	T	~	T	T	

Less common chorus forms are:

(TTT~)	(T~TT)	(TT~T)
T	T	T
T	~	T
T	T	~
~	T	T

Note: Choruses are not limited to four lines, but they are the most common.

ACTIVITY

Pick one or two songs you want to examine more closely. What chorus forms do they use? Write a chorus using a chorus form from one of your favorite songs or from one of the two charts.



Tanya Tucker scored a Top Ten country hit with “Delta Dawn” in 1972.