

Text Setting in Pop Music

Name: _____



[Worksheet playlist](#)

PART 1: Text scansion

Below you are given several lines of text. Analyze the strongly and weakly emphasized syllables by marking above them with an **x** (**strong stress**), **-** (**unstressed**), or **/** (**secondary stress**). The first is completed for you as an example.

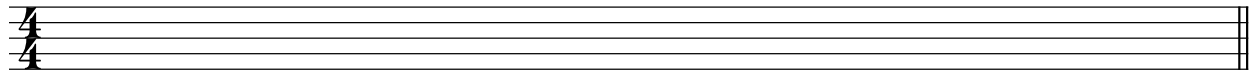
x - x - - x x - x - x - x - x

1. Hello darkness my old friend; I've come to talk with you again (Paul Simon)
2. The world is changed because you are made of ivory and gold (Oscar Wilde)
3. His soul just crawled behind his heart and curled up and went to sleep (Maya Angelou)
4. "i forgive you" slipping like a key beneath a door (Wo Chan)

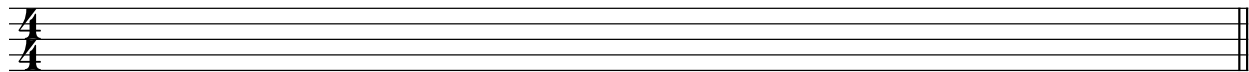
PART 2: Setting text to meter

Choose one lyric from Part 1 and create three different rhythmic settings of it following the directions below.

1. Begin on beat 1; put stressed syllables on strong beats



2. Begin with a pickup (that is, *do not* begin on beat 1); put stressed syllables on strong beats



3. Emphasize (some) stressed syllables with syncopation



PART 3: Analyzing scansion and text setting in pop songs

The text setting of the melodic snippets given below do not align stressed syllables with musical accents. For each snippet:

- **Add lyrics by transcribing them** from the recording. (If needed, look up lyrics online.)
- **Underline** the syllable that is unstressed when spoken normally, but accented in the music.
- **Above that underlined syllable, write letters** corresponding to the accent types used there:
 - a. Metric accent (strong beat or syncopated rhythm)
 - b. Agogic accent (longer rhythmic value)
 - c. Dynamic accent (louder)
 - d. Melodic accent (melisma or higher pitch)
- **Circle** the syllable that is stressed when spoken normally, but unaccented in the music.
- **Rewrite the melody** to place the accent on the stressed syllable of the word and remove the accents from the unstressed syllable identified in #1.

The first exercise is completed for you as an example.

1. Metallica, “Fight Fire with Fire” (1:31, “Nuclear...”)

Em

Nu - cle - ar (war) - fare

a, d

Em

Nu - cle - ar war - fare

2. Lady Gaga, “Plastic Doll” (0:20, “I come with...”)

Am C F

3. Toto, “Africa” (2:04, “Rises like...”)

A/E E/F# G#m A