



hooks

5 MINUTES READING #4

"I most enjoy sitting down with the acoustic guitar and just fiddling around and trying to come up with something like a hook or some sort of melodic line. That's something that I do habitually."

- James Mercer



Questions to think about:

1. Every song in the "Top 40" is there for a reason. Choose 3 songs which are currently in the "Top 40" and think about: Does it have a musical **HOOK**? What is the **HOOK**? Is the **HOOK** melodic, rhythmic, verbal or a combination of these?
2. What makes a "good **HOOK**"?
3. Can you write a short "Dictionary Definition" of the musical meaning of the word **HOOK**?

What is a HOOK?

A **HOOK** is a musical idea, often short, that is used in popular music to make a song appealing and "catch the ear of the listener". One definition of a **HOOK** is: "A musical or lyrical phrase that stands out and is easily remembered". A **HOOK** is repetitive, attention-grabbing, memorable, easy to dance to and has commercial potential – the **HOOK** is what song-writers hope will 'sell their song!' A **HOOK** has also been described as "part of a song, sometimes the title or key lyric line, which keeps recurring".

Hooks in Music

The term **HOOK** generally applies to popular music, especially Rock, R&B, Hip-Hop, Dance and pop. In these forms of popular music, the **HOOK** is often found in, or consists of the **CHORUS**. In Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby", the lyrics even contain the word **HOOK**: "Check out the **HOOK**, while my DJ revolves it", leading straight into the chorus itself.

Different types of HOOKS

A **HOOK** can either be **MELODIC**, **RHYTHMIC** or **VERBAL**.

- **MELODIC HOOK** – a **HOOK** based on the instruments and the singers
- **RHYTHMIC HOOK** – a **HOOK** based on the patterns in the drums and bass parts
- **VERBAL HOOK** – a **HOOK** based on the rhyming and/or repeated words of the chorus

Musical **HOOKS** are used in songs to help the listener remember the piece.

HOOKS need to be 'catchy' and 'stick in our heads'. The **HOOK** in the piece is what the performer is hoping will sell their song. If they create and effective and memorable **HOOK**, people will remember it and buy the song either in shops or online.

