

Hey Good Lookin'

Hank Williams

The goal of this very first lesson is simple: listen to music and practice hearing “phrases.” I’ve given three examples to consider. Study these examples and move on to the homework.

A phrase *A phrase*

The diagram shows two identical melodic phrases on a four-line staff with notes C, B, A, G. The first phrase consists of notes C4, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second phrase is identical but includes an additional note G4 on the second measure. Below the staff are rhythmic values: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1. Below that is a guitar chord chart for the first phrase: T (1), A (2), B (0) for 'Hey'; T (2), A (0), B (2) for 'good'; T (2), A (0), B (2) for 'look-'; T (1), A (0), B (2) for '-in'.

These two phrases are labeled “A phrase” because they are *nearly* identical. You could argue that they are different phrases because of the added note labelled with the lyric “cha” but for now, we’ll say they are similar enough to be called “A phrases.” As we move through this course, you’ll develop tools and vocabulary to help you define your personal style.

B phrase

The diagram shows a melodic phrase on a four-line staff with notes C, B, A, G. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Below the staff are rhythmic values: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1. Below that is a guitar chord chart for the B phrase: T (2), A (0), B (2) for 'How's'; T (2), A (2), B (2) for '-bout'; T (2), A (2), B (2) for 'cook-'; T (0), A (0), B (0) for '-in'; T (0), A (0), B (0) for 'some-'; T (0), A (0), B (0) for '-thin'; T (0), A (2), B (0) for 'u-'; T (2), A (0), B (0) for '-up'; T (1), A (0), B (0) for 'with'; T (1), A (0), B (0) for 'me'.

- Hey, good lookin' A
- What ya got cookin'?' A
- How's about cookin B
- Something up with me? B
- Hey, sweet baby A
- Don't you think maybe A
- We can find us B
- A brand new recipe? B

The basic verse melody arrangement for this tune is AAB AAB

Ain't No Sunshine

Bill Withers

This tune is similar to the previous tune in the sense that it also starts with two A phrases in a row.

A phrase

T																	
A		2	0	2		1	0		2	2							
B																	

Ain't no sun- shine when she's gone

A phrase

T																	
A		2	0	2		1	0		2	2							
B																	

It's hot warm when she's a- way

B phrase *C phrase* *D phrase*

E
D
C
B
A
G
F
E

1 e+a 2 e+a 3 e+a 4 e+a 1 e+a 2 e+a 3 e+a 4 e+a 1 e+a 2 e+a 3 e+a 4 e+a

T
A
B

Ain't no sun- shine when she's gone
And she's al- ways gone to- o long
a- ny time she goes a- way

- Ain't no sunshine when she's gone A
 - It's not warm when she's away A
 - Ain't no sunshine when she's gone B
 - And she's always gone too long C
 - Anytime she goes away D
-
- Wonder this time where she's gone A
 - Wonder if she's gone to stay A
 - Ain't no sunshine when she's gone B
 - And this house just ain't no home C
 - Anytime she goes away D

Two of Us The Beatles

A phrase *B phrase* *C phrase*

T																			
A	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2					
B																			

Two of us riding nowhere spending someone's hard earned pay

A phrase *B phrase* *D phrase*

T																			
A	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	0					
B																			

you and me Sunday driving not arriving on our way back home

- Two of us riding nowhere A
- Spending someone's B
- Hard earned pay C

- You and me Sunday driving A
- Not arriving B
- On our way back home D

HOMework

1. Pick 5 songs
2. Print the lyrics (or copy them to a word document)
3. Pick just the verse or chorus of each song to analyze
4. Listen to each song one at a time and mark the phrases with A, B, C, D, and more if needed. You're listening for melodies, not lyrics. Sometimes the melodic phrases match when the lyrical phrases don't match, and sometimes it's the other way around.
5. If you find two phrases that are similar, mark them with the word "similar."

REMEMBER:

This being the first lesson in the series, this homework section is only designed to get you started. You may have more unanswered questions after this homework than when you started. That's the idea. Do your best to label melodic phrases with A, B, C etc and mark "similar" on the ones that seem similar to you.

As you're listening and labeling, keep in mind that there may not be a perfectly correct answer. It's more important to think of the reasons why *you* would choose to separate and label phrases the way you did. This is how you develop your own style. This is how you learn to write deliberately. This is how you build problem solving skills.

I'll be giving you more tools, vocabulary, and concepts as we move along, but you've got to think about what you like and how you write.