

Composition Workshop Assignment #1: Analysis

Make a linear diagram of a short composition (by someone else or an original, but don't compose something just for this assignment), similar to the ones below of The Beatles' *Here Comes The Sun*, and The Beach Boys' *Good Vibrations*. The diagram should show:

- Sections (labeled with terms such as "intro", "end", "A section", "B section", "verse", "chorus" – with whatever vocabulary you find comfortable using)
- Section descriptions
- Textural (if any)/dramatic activity
- Is there some kind of dramatic arc?
- Volume changes (if any)
- Any other elements you deem significant, such as observations about the lyrics

The purpose of this assignment is to put you in touch with various components of a composition, how they might relate to each other and how they contribute to a piece's overall design. If you do not have a composition with which to do this, pick a short song by someone else instead—the main idea here is to become more comfortable with picking-apart an existing piece of music and to be able to think about it objectively.

Your diagram need not be as elaborate as the one below (and doing it by hand is fine); the most important things are to identify the different sections, see if you can comment on any relationships between them, and also track how/if the song follows any kind of dramatic arc.

*Please provide a recording (or performance?) of the piece **and photocopies** of your diagrams to share with the class.*

A linear diagram of *Here Comes The Sun* showing the sections, sectional descriptions, textural/dramatic activity and relative volumes

Intro. (A & B sections)	Verse ¹ (A section)	Chorus (B section)	Verse ² (A section)	Chorus (B section)	Bridge (C section)	Verse ³ (A section)	Chorus (X2) + tag (B section)	Coda/Ending (C section–frag.)
Foreshadows verse (instrumentally) and provides and initial chorus. A sort of overture.	First main section "A"	Second main section "B"	Repeats "A" and "B" sections, establishing continuity, but adding more layers of sound		"C" section, contrasting material; incorporates a "modal" scale for a strikingly different mood; uses irregular meters/time signatures; at the same time, the rhythmic figure is derived from the material that's at the end of the chorus, providing <i>some</i> continuity/familiarity	Another "A" section, this time with more instruments added	More "B" sections. Repeated chorus supplies and "echo" effect, using familiar material in a slightly unfamiliar way—same with the "it's all right" tag/echo at the end of the 2nd chorus	Taken from bridge, but only a fragment. Suggests a return to an earlier section, but is cut short—moving forward, but also looking back
Not full band—light texture	Full band	Similar texture as verse	Additional instruments/layers added		More instruments added; maximum density, most intense— CLIMACTIC	Additional instruments/ layers added		Only acoustic guitar—a <i>sudden</i> very light texture
Quiet	Medium loud				Loudest	Medium loud		Quiet

A linear diagram of *Good Vibrations* showing the sections, sectional descriptions, textural/dramatic activity, relative volumes and tempos

Verse¹ (A section)	Chorus¹ (B section)	V² (A)	Ch¹ (B)	Excursion¹ (C section)	False Ending (D section)	Chorus² (B' section)	Excursion²	Outro
Key of Eb minor Not-unusual descending chord progression	Key of Gb maj (relative major) Doo Wop/Bluesy style Key changes UP to Ab, then Bb	Same as before These four sections take up half the song		Keys of Bb, Eb, Bb Less harmonically active Mixolydian (b7) emphasis Psychedelic leanings	Key of F maj Repetitive chords and vocals Stylistically different	Key of Bb major Key changes <u>DOWN</u> to Ab, then Gb	Keys of Gb, Ab & Bb (like the chorus), but key changes occur faster, so it feels more energetic	Key of Bb Modeled after the chorus, but no vocals
Lighter texture Single voice Minimal drums High profile bass line	Full band Layered voices Theremin			Additional instruments incorporated (janky piano)	Light texture Church-like organ and harmonica featured	Similar to other choruses, but voices fade as the key of Gb arrives No theremin	Lighter texture, but the sweeping, layered, contrapuntal voices create a swirling, climactic effect	Theremin returns in full force
Quiet	Loud			Medium loud	Very quiet Almost fades-out	Loud, but slight fade	Loud/Slow	Medium, then fade- out
Slow	Fast			Slow	Slow	Fast	Fast, but a little vague	Fast