

Revising Lyrics - Questions to Ask Your Song

1. What is the central idea of this song? Is the song focused on communicating that idea clearly?

2. Does the song feel fresh or familiar? Are there cliches that could be made more personal, specific, or surprising?

3. Does the lyric work mechanically?
 - Does the meter feel natural?
 - Does the rhyme feel effortless or forced?
 - Does the natural emphasis of the words match the musical phrasing?

4. Can you imagine someone else singing this song convincingly?

5. Are there places where more concrete language could strengthen the lyric?

6. Are the metaphors consistent and emotionally connected to the central idea of the song?

7. Is the meter and rhyme scheme consistent between verses? If it changes, are the changes intentional?

8. Does the narrative flow?
 - Does it have a clear and understandable arc?
 - Does it deliver on its central point?
 - Are the characters, setting, and situation clear?

9. Is this song abstract? Is it meant to be abstract? Does it still have a point even though it is abstract? Is the imagery clear?

10. Does the song sound like your inner voice or the voice of a narrator/character? Is that distinction clear and intentional?

11. Could the narrator's identity or emotional state be made clearer through word choice, phrasing, regionalisms, or dialect?

12. Are the words readily understandable to the average person? Could they be understood across the barroom/coffee shop? Does the audience need a dictionary to understand it? Is that your goal? Is there a way you could say the same thing in a clearer way?

13. Could you use the form and structure of the verses/chorus/bridge, etc. to better represent your story?