

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Demi Lovato—"This Is Me (Gotta Find You)" Songwriting Skill—Finding Your Voice

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Use writing strategies to make lyrics more personal and original
- Evaluate and classify lyrics
- Support opinions

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

- Guided Lyrics – Finding Your Voice
- Student Activity –Loop Writing Process

Additional Online Support:

- www.holtmcdougal.hmhco.com
- www.BlueNoseEd.com

Teach

1. **Finding Your Voice:** A writer's voice is her or his unique way of expressing his or her thoughts and feelings. Songwriting, like other kinds of creative writing, relies upon writers discovering and using their unique voices. The two best ways for aspiring songwriters to do this are 1) to become more aware of when other songwriters are using their own authentic voices, and 2) to become more comfortable with expressing their thoughts and feelings in voices that are uniquely their own.

- Tell students that learning to write in one's truest voice does not happen by accident. It is the result of an ongoing process. Professional songwriters know it is important to be both uninhibited and self-critical—spontaneous one minute, analytical the next.

EXAMPLE: In interviews, Demi Lovato have emphasized that her best songs have come to her when she has used a personal experience as a springboard for self-expression.

2. **Teaching Students to Find Their Voice:** Remind students that finding their own voices comes from being able to distinguish what they *really* think from things that have had less impact upon them. Remind them that, with all the pressures of social life, it is often difficult to hear one's own true voice. That is why it is essential to learn writing strategies.

Another good way to get in the habit of recognizing one's own true voice is to learn to listen to and evaluate what sounds authentic in the work of other songwriters.

TEACHING NOTES

The Sound of Authenticity

Ask: Which songs sound most authentic and true to life? Which songs seem to capture the unique experience of the singer in a dramatic and pleasing way? In which songs does the singer seem to be using his or her own voice?

Then, for the sake of contrast, ask: Which songs sound unrealistic or phony? What is it about these songs makes them seem unconnected from reality? When you listen to music, how do you distinguish between what seems authentic and what seems artificial? Are there times when you *prefer* to listen to music that seems artificial? What aspects of a song seem most important when expressing the singer’s unique voice? What qualities do the more authentic songs seem to share?

EXAMPLE: As you ask students these questions, draw the following chart on the board. Ask students to volunteer songs for each category. Also, ask them to provide specific evidence that supports or opposes the classification of a song in one category or another. Chances are students will disagree with each other during this exercise. That is OK. Feel free to put the same song in a variety of different categories. But encourage students always to provide specific evidence to justify their opinions.

The Sound of Authenticity: Evaluating the Voice of Songs

Songs That Sound Consistently True	Songs That Sound Mostly True	Songs That Sound Not Quite True	Songs That Sound Mostly Untrue
<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Supporting this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Supporting this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Supporting this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Supporting this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>
<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Opposing this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Opposing this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Opposing this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Song Title: _____</p> <p>Evidence Opposing this Classification:</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>

The Loop Writing Process

The best way for students to discover their own voices is through freewriting. The Loop Writing Process is a type of directed freewriting. It is different from most freewriting in that it includes the critical appraisal of what one has written. It encourages students to be spontaneous, but then to look over what they have written, and decide which parts of their writing sound most like themselves, and which do not.

EXAMPLE: Lead the students through the loop writing process.

The Loop Writing Process
After brainstorming for song ideas, have the students choose their favorite idea and write it at the top of a piece of paper.
Then, for five minutes, have them freewrite , using that song topic as a starting point. If they stray from the topic, or lose the thread of their thought, tell them that is fine, and just to keep going . The point is for them to keep their pens or pencils moving for five full minutes, and to allow themselves to write down everything that comes into their head in an uncensored fashion.
Next, have them silently read what they have just written. Tell them to circle the parts of their text that they like most —the parts they find most inspiring, the parts that most accurately reflect their concerns, and which “ sound the most like themselves .”
Finally, have them choose one of the parts they have circled , and write it at the top of a fresh sheet of paper. Then, using that idea as a starting point, have them freewrite for another five minutes . When the five minutes is over, once again, as before, have them evaluate what they have written, looking for passages in which they speak with their own unique voices. Repeat this process.
After going through this process a few times, have the students look back at all the parts of their writing that they have circled. Ask them: do those parts sound like you ? What has this taught you about finding your voice ?

3. **Guided Practice:** How to use the Guided Practice Worksheet

Step 1: Hand out a copy of the worksheet to each student.

Step 2: Guide students through the call-out questions. Encourage them to come up with more than one answer to each question.

Step 3: Encourage them to find their own voices. Have the students use the lyrics they find most realistic from the song as jumping-off points for freewriting.

QUICK CHECK Ask students to explain what “voice” means, and to run through the steps of the loop writing process.

GUIDED PRACTICE

**Demi Lovato—“This Is Me (Gotta Find You)”
Songwriting Skill—Finding Your Voice**

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Voice: Your unique way of expressing your thoughts and ideas in writing.

DIRECTIONS Read the lyrics to “This Is Me (Gotta Find You)” by Demi Lovato. What images, situations, and feelings seem most expressive? How can this example help you write lyrics that express your own life more directly?

**Demi Lovato
“This Is Me (Gotta Find You)”**

I've always been the kind of girl
That hid my face
So afraid to tell the world
What I've got to say
But I had this dream
Right inside of me
I'm going to let it show
It's time
To let you know
To let you know

Finding Your Voice—1st Verse:

What parts of the first verse strike you as most distinctive, personal, and unique? Does this verse remind you of anything from your own experience that you can use in a song?

This is the real, this is me
I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be now
Gonna let the light
Shine on me
Now I found
Who I am
There's no way to hold it in
No more hiding who I want to be
This is me

Finding Your Voice—Chorus:

Choruses are often the most emotional parts of a song, where the song's deepest feeling breaks through. Which emotions are being expressed in this chorus? Does the chorus express these emotions effectively? Why or why not?

Do you know what it's like to feel so in the dark
To dream about a life where you're the shining star
Even though it seems
Like it's so far away
I have to believe in myself
It's the only way

This is the real, this is me
I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be now
Gonna let the light

Shine on me
Now I found
Who I am
There's no way to hold it in
No more hiding who I want to be
This is me

You're the voice I hear inside my head
The reason that I'm singing
I need to find you
I gotta find you
You're the missing piece I need
The song inside of me
I need to find you
I gotta find you

This is the real, this is me
I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be now
Gonna let the light
Shine on me
Now I found who I am
There's no way to hold it in
No more hiding who I want to be

This is me
You're the missing piece I need
The song inside of me
This is me
You're the voice I hear inside my head
The reason that I'm singing

Now I found who I am
There's no way to hold it in
No more hiding who I want to be
This is me

Finding Your Voice—Last Verse:

Are the emotions toward the end of the song the same that they were at the beginning? Have they intensified? If so, why? Does the sense of self-revelation grow greater as the song continues?

Finding Your Voice—Using Other Songwriters’ Lyrics as Inspiration

DIRECTIONS: Read over the lyrics of Demi Lovato’s “This Is Me (Gotta Find You)” and circle the lyrics that sound like the places where the songwriter’s voice comes across most clearly. List these lyrics below. Then, next to the lyric, write a sentence that explains why you chose that lyric, and what it reminds you of from your own life that you could use in a song.

Lyrics from “This Is Me (Gotta Find You)” that Sound Like They are In the Songwriter’s True Voice	Why I Chose This Lyric / Inspirations for My Own Music
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

YOU TRY IT!

Songwriting Skill—Finding Your Voice

GOAL

Finding Your Voice: You can write better songs if your songs express your personal voice. You can learn to do this by becoming more spontaneous with your truest thoughts, and learn how highlight what you really think—what is really “you.”

Loop Writing Process for Song Lyrics

Directions: Your best song lyrics are going to sound like your own personal and unique voice. To help you give free rein to your voice, use the loop writing process.

First, **brainstorm**—that is, quickly make a list of potential song ideas—to come up with a song idea that interests you. One way to do this is to make a list of topics (examples: family, nature, fitting in, friends, world events) and then jot down song ideas that those topics trigger in your imagination.

Then, using that song idea that as a springboard, **write for five minutes without stopping**, free-associating from that lyric.

Look back at those free-associations. Pick out what looks like potential lyrics that sound most like you. Then **use them for another round of free-association**.

Do this several times. At the end of the session, list all the lyrics you have written that sound most like you. **Don't be surprised if you wind up having written the lyrics for a complete song!**

Starting Song Lyrics:

Free Associations Triggered by This Lyric:

Best Lyrics from 1st Block of Free Associations:

Free Associations Triggered by This New Lyric:

Best Lyrics from 2nd Block of Free Associations:

Free Associations Triggered by This New Lyric: