

DOCSONG TOOLKIT		
Step to complete	Hurdle you might face	Tools to try
1. Draw forth a <i>story</i>		
	Story source offers only broad impressions	Ask for a specific experience, from any period of their life
	Story is too short	Ask for what happened first, second, third
	Story lacks imagery	Ask how it would look in a film, ask for colors and the like
	Story source describes vague emotions	Ask for physical reactions, such as, "How did you know you were sad? What part of your body tells you that and what does it feel like?"
	Story source sees themselves also as a teaching artist.	Explain that a story source and a teaching artist serve two separate roles. While both individuals contribute ideas, the story source looks <i>inward</i> to ensure authenticity. The teaching artist looks <i>outward</i> to ensure accessibility. The story source is misty-eyed. The teaching artist is clear-eyed. To keep the roles separate, to give them to two different people, is a tested way to ensure an authentic, accessible song.
2. Make a free verse <i>poem</i>		
	Story source can't begin to decide which lines to highlight	Ask for lines that convey emotion, imagery, move the story forward, or might feel fun to sing
	Story Source chooses many, many lines	Repeat and repeat the process of selection, highlighting, and deleting lines.
		Ask if the line is essential to understanding the story
3. Make <i>lyrics</i>		
	Story source is unable to choose a refrain	Look for candidates that convey emotion or a power full image
		Look for candidates that summarize the experience
	Story source wants to include everything	Explain that your role as teaching guide is to ensure that a song is accessible to listeners. A song is not a novel. A song is not a film. A song tends to keep to a single emotional message.
4. Design a melody for one verse and a refrain		
	Story source is very reluctant to sing	Sing the words on one pitch only. Ask the story source on which note the line should rise or fall
	Story source doesn't know whether the line should end high or low	Explain the idea of melodic arcs, using examples that open with a peak, peak in the middle, or at the end
		Explain that each line of a melody is either a comment, a question, or an answer
	Melody sounds like another	Propose adjustments in rhythm or pitch
	Phrases all begin the same way	Suggest sliding a phrase earlier or later, leading into the downbeat, starting on the downbeat, or reacting to the downbeat
	Melody isn't a pleasure to sing	Ask which words might feel good to hold out
	Melody lacks rises and falls that feel good	Sing a harmony and then choose pitches from the harmony to replace pitches in the melody
	Melody is hard to remember	Create a pattern: Ask the story source to pick the melody of one line and use it on the other lines.
	Melody has a pattern but sounds monotone	Create a sequence: move one the lines up or down a step or interval in the scale
	Melody fits only one of the verses	Say "Bring in the editors" and reorder whole lines, words within lines, choose other lines for the spoken text
	Story source wants a bridge but sings the same melody as the verse	Sing examples of contrast in pacing, in pitch, in length of line
	Story source sings with no discernable tempo	Ask the story source to tap their hand as they sing and begin to tap along, averaging out the discrepancies
	You are unsure if the song is in swing or straight	Try to count "1,2,3" quickly within each beat. If the count of 3 fits within each beat, then the groove is swing. If not, it's straight
5, Edit the <i>remaining verses</i> to fit the melody		
	Story source becomes concerned over grammatical accuracy, redundancy, or marketability	Offer examples of songs exercising grammatical freedom and songs with lines that repeat
	Story source wants to change the words to make the song more mysterious	Explain that that goal of a documentary song is to be authentic, accessible, and artistic, in a way that feels honest and true.

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6. Choose <i>chords</i> if desired		
	You are unsure what chords to try	First try only the probable major chords – I, IV, and V Next try the probable minor chords – ii, iii, and vi Next try the flatted seven – VII, then the major two – II
7. Make a <i>live recording</i>		
	Recording gets distorted when texted on iMessage to an Android phone	Text the recording through WhatsApp or send an email