

How to Write a Parody or Novelty Song

1. Find the Song to Tweak

Think about some of your favorite songs, or songs that you may not particularly like but are stuck in your head.

2. Tweak the Song

Take the song title and try to tweak it into something funny. The quickest and easiest thing to do this is hit rhymezone.com, or some other rhyming dictionary site. You just type in whatever key words are in the title and it'll list out everything that rhymes. And from there, you can start to swap out words and see what comes of it.

3. Find the Story or Character in the Song

It's not enough to just think of a funny new line for a song, you've got to have a subject or theme in mind too. A story to tell.

It doesn't have to be super serious or complicated or involved, just something that has enough THERE to make something interesting to listen to. It'll set your song apart from just a collection of jokes.

Also, think about the character who's telling these lyrics and be true to that character's voice.

4. List Stuff

Once you've got an idea for the song and a character or story in mind, start making a list of stuff that relates to your topic. Think about all the things that have to do with your subject. Break out your web browser, find reference books at the library (kid reference books are great—lots of pictures and easier to skim through).

This list will be the potential pieces of the song that you can refer to as you're writing, like an ingredient list.

Also jot down ideas for things you want to make fun of, certain situations or dialogue or anything else related to your subject.

Don't worry about being super-comprehensive - new ideas you haven't thought of yet may present themselves later as you're writing.

5. Write the Lyrics

Once you've got your list, go through the lyrics of the original song and see how you can tweak it. Just kick the words around and leave no sentence unturned. Consult your list of stuff and which of your lyric ingredients may fit where.

Also: As you're thinking up new lines, don't feel bound by the usual rules of writing. Especially clichés. When you're writing a novel or a poem, it's good to avoid clichés so that your writing is fresh and you have a unique voice and people see that you put extra effort into what you're writing. But with parody songs, it's kind of the opposite. Familiar expressions like "Fussy young man" in Weird Al's *Eat It* can be funny.

Don't sweat this too much: As I said before, a lot of ideas will present themselves to you as you write. You may need some rhyme and you'll think of some other funny thing about whatever you're making fun of it'll just click into place. Just trust yourself and the words. You also won't get everything right the first time. Be prepared to revisit it.

6. Stick to the Original Song's Template

You might change words or you might change whole lines and stanzas, and that's fine. Just stick with the same meter and rhythm as the original song so it follows the source as much as possible. Think of it as editing the lyrics. You're fixing the song, in a way, fixing it in the way you want to see it made.

It helps to keep it at the same length too. Take advantage of the fact that you've already got a template. You don't have to face a blank page.

7. Or Don't Stick to the Template—Let Your Song Run Free If It Wants to

If your song starts to veer in its own direction and breaks the original mold or pattern, it may just be worth seeing where that leads. And if it leads nowhere, go back to the parody and see what new words and ideas work.

8. Produce the Song!

See what you can whip together in whatever music program you use. It's fun to goof around with loops and make vocal tracks with silly voices. Have fun!

Monster Fishing Expedition

[As sung by Dracula in the genial, out-of-touch aristocratic vein]

[Music of any style is greatly appreciated.]

Well me and my buddies are monsters you know:

Frankenstein, Wolfman, and a few other bros.

When we get together, we look quite the fright!
We just want to hang, like any creature of the night.

We don't go in for parties, we don't like to mash.
But that's not to say we don't know how to make splash!

We've taken up a hobby that fulfills our need to kill,
But our new set of victims are the kind that come with gills!

[chorus]
Monster fishing expedition!
We're monsters on a mission.
It is our fervent wish,
to catch all the fish!
On this monster fishing expedition!

When I cast my first line, you could say I was hooked!
It felt like fanging a neck in some shadowy nook.

The others didn't get it, they went a little cuckoo.
Wolfman stood to pee and tipped over the canoe.

The mummy got his wrappings so very dripping wet
Whilst the blob was carried off and formed his own islet.

Igor wound up tangled in the fishing line,
mistaken as live bait by clever Frankenstein!

[Chorus]
Monster fishing admonition!
I will make this one admission:
A little water is fine,
As long as it's not the holy kind,
On this monster fishing expedition!

Once we gathered our wits and got back in our boat,
Things were looking up for this pack of undead goats!

Igor caught a bass so lovely and pure,
Not with his rod but on my hook as a lure!

Frankenstein snagged a catfish just by wiggling his toes
They'd fallen off his feet once they'd decomposed.

We had the best time, despite a little mud.
But I passed on the fish fry, since I prefer blood!

[Chorus]

Monster fishing grand magicians!
We made several acquisitions!
Master casters are we,
Let's go fish the Dead Sea!
On this monster fishing expedition!