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## MTO 17.3 Examples: Summach, The Structure, Function, and Genesis of the Prechorus

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.summach.php>

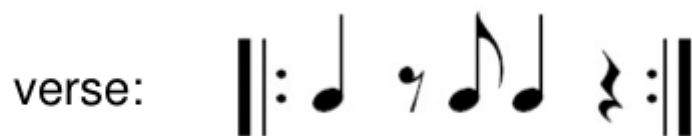
**Example 1.** Mark Dinning, “Teen Angel” (1960)

- Introduction** Teen Angel, Teen Angel, Teen Angel, ooo-ooo.
- Verse 1** That fateful night, the car was stalled upon the railroad track.  
I pulled you out and we were safe, but you went running back.
- Chorus** Teen Angel, can you hear me? Teen Angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above, and am I still your own true love?
- Verse 2** What was it you were looking for that took your life that night?  
They said they found my high school ring clutched in your fingers tight.
- Chorus** Teen Angel, can you hear me? Teen Angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above, and am I still your own true love?
- Verse 3** Just sweet sixteen, and now you're gone. They've taken you away.  
I'll never kiss your lips again. They buried you today.
- Chorus** Teen Angel, can you hear me? Teen Angel, can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above, and am I still your own true love?
- Coda** Teen Angel, Teen Angel, answer me, please.

**Example 2.** Romantics, “Talking In Your Sleep” (1984)

- Verse 1**            When you close your eyes and you go to sleep  
                          And it's down to the sound of a heartbeat,  
                          I can hear the things that you're dreaming about  
                          When you open up your heart and the truth comes out.
- Prechorus**        You tell me that you want me.  
                          You tell me that you need me.  
                          You tell me that you love me,  
                          And I know that I'm right 'cause I hear it in the night.
- Chorus**            I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.  
                          I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.
- Verse 2**            When I hold you in my arms at night,  
                          Don't you know you're sleeping in the spotlight?  
                          And all your dreams that you keep inside –  
                          You're telling me the secrets that you just can't hide.
- Prechorus**        You tell me that you want me.  
                          You tell me that you need me.  
                          You tell me that you love me,  
                          And I know that I'm right 'cause I hear it in the night.
- Chorus (x2)**        I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.  
                          I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.
- ½ Verse 3**        When you close your eyes and you fall asleep,  
                          Everything about you is a mystery.
- Prechorus**        You tell me that you want me.  
                          You tell me that you need me.  
                          You tell me that you love me,  
                          And I know that I'm right 'cause I hear it in the night.
- Chorus (x3)**        I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.  
                          I hear the secrets that you keep when you're talking in your sleep.

**Example 3.** Romantics, “Talking In Your Sleep” (1984)  
Kick Patterns



**Example 4.** Three Principal Song Types

Strophic (AAA)



AABA



Verse-Chorus

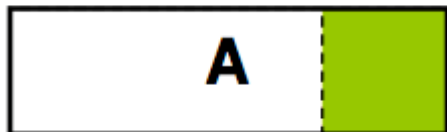


**Example 5.** Roger Miller, “King of the Road” (1965)

<b>A<sub>1</sub></b>	I              IV              V <sup>7</sup>   I Trailer for sale or rent; rooms to let: fifty cents.	}	8m antecedent
	I              IV              V <sup>7</sup>   ./. No phone, no pool, no pets; I ain't got no cigarettes.		
	I              IV              V <sup>7</sup>   I Ah, but two hours of pushin' broom buys an eight by twelve four-bit room.	}	8m consequent
	I              IV              V <sup>7</sup>   I I'm a man of means by no means: King of the road!		

**Example 6.** Strophic Form With a Tail Refrain vs. Verse-Chorus Form

6a. strophe with tail-refrain



6b. verse and chorus



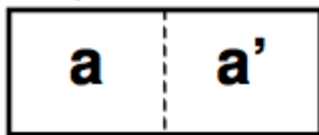
**Example 7.** Everly Brothers, “Cathy’s Clown” (1960)

<b>C (16m)</b>	I    V   I    V      I    V      I Don't want your love      anymore.	<b>a</b>
	V        I    V   I    V        I    V      I Don't want your kisses,      that's for sure.	<b>a</b>
	vi   ./. I die each time I hear this sound:	<b>b</b>
	I    V   I      V        I      V      I "Here he comes.      That's Cathy's clown."	<b>a</b>

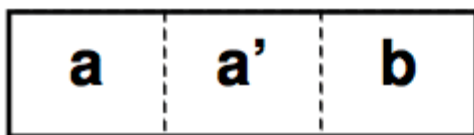
<b>V<sub>1</sub> (8m)</b>	I    IV      I I've gotta stand tall.	<b>a</b>
	IV        I    IV      I You know a man can't crawl.	<b>a</b>
	IV                              ./. But when he knows you're tellin' lies and he lets 'em pass him by	<b>b</b>
	V              I    IV      I He's not a man at all.	<b>a</b>

**Example 8.** Common Patterns within the Module

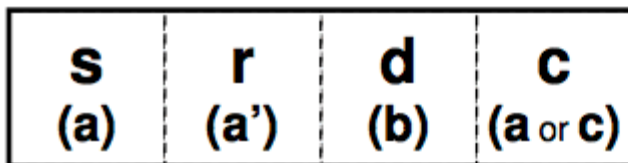
two-part



three-part



four-part sentence



(s)tatement  
 (r)estatement or (r)esponse  
 (d)eparture  
 (c)onclusion

**Example 9.** Elvis Presley, “Hound Dog” (1956)

**A<sub>1</sub>** (12m)

I	./.	./.	./.		
You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, cryin' all the time.					<b>a</b>
IV	./.	I	./.		
You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, cryin' all the time.					<b>a'</b>
V		IV	I	./.	
<i>Well, you ain't never caught a rabbit and you ain't no friend of mine.</i>					<b>b</b>

**Example 10.** The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1964)

**A<sub>1</sub>** (12m)

I	V	vi	iii <sup>no3</sup>		
Oh yeah, I'll tell you something I think you'll understand.					<b>a</b>
I	V	vi	iii <sup>no3</sup>		
When I'll say that something: "I want to <i>hold your hand</i> ."					<b>a'</b>
IV	V	I	vi   IV	V	I
<i>I want to hold your hand, I want to hold your hand.</i>					<b>b</b>



**Example 14.** Essential and Optional Features of the Sentence in Pop Music (adapted from BaileyShea 2004)

<b>Essential Features</b>				
	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>c</b>
1. Proportion:	short	short	long	
2. Function:	presentation		momentum → completion	

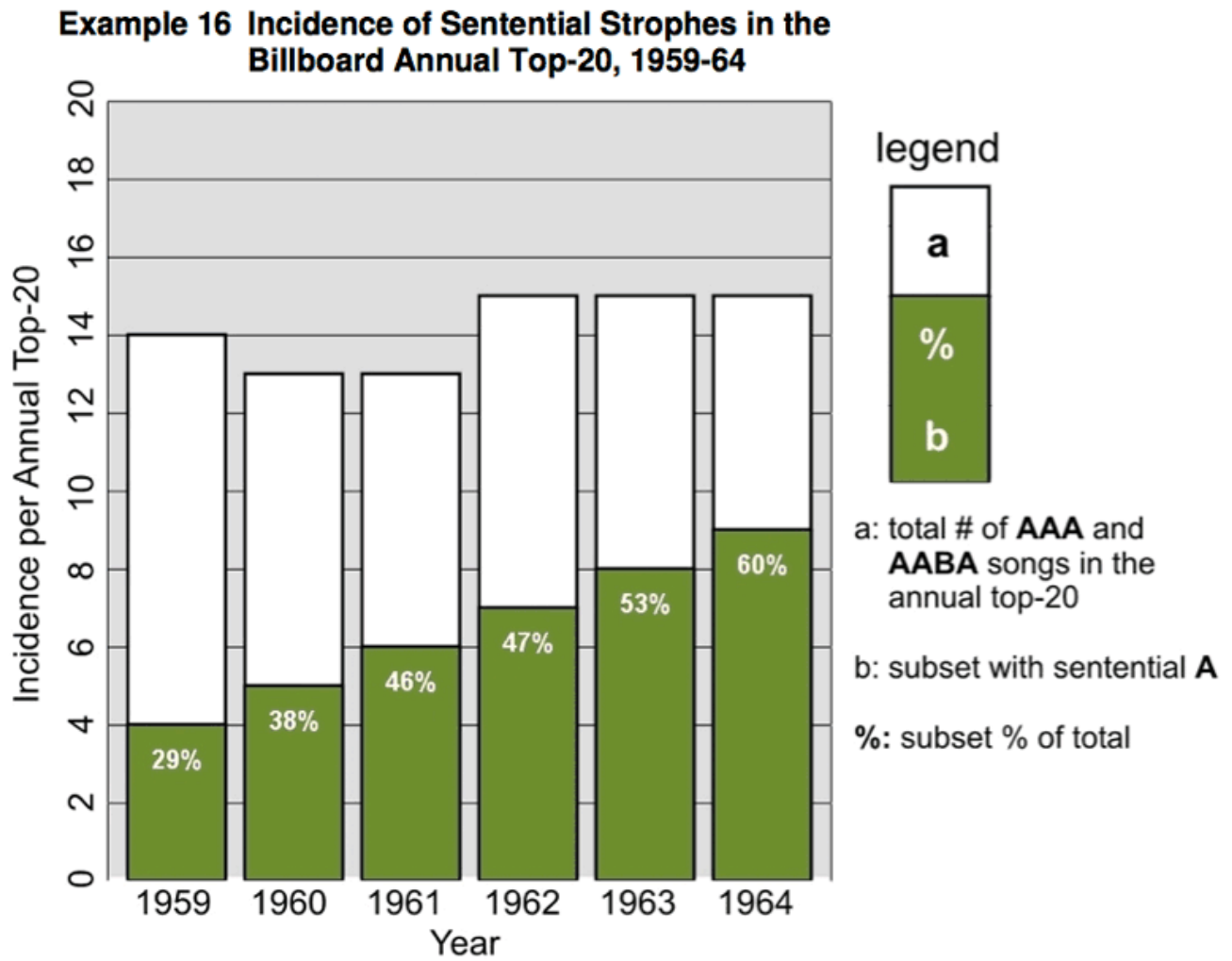
  

<b>Optional Features</b> (% indicates incidence among 295 <b>AAA</b> and <b>AABA</b> songs)				
1. options for <b>sr</b> :	<b>r</b> as restatement - 70%			
	<b>r</b> as response - 30%			
2. options for <b>dc</b> :	accelerated rate of harmonic change - 33%			
	fragmentation - 72%			
	emphasis of subdominant during <b>d</b> - 52%			

**Example 15.** Bobby Rydell, “Wild One” (1960)

<b>A<sub>1</sub></b> (16m)	I        ./        V                        ./	
	<i>Oh, wild one</i> I'm gonna tame you down.	<b>s</b> (4m)
	V        ./        I        V <sup>7</sup> /vi	
	<i>Ah, wild one</i> I'll get you yet, you bet.	<b>response</b> (4m)
	V <sup>7</sup> /ii                        ./                        V <sup>7</sup> /V                        ./	
[You little doll all you do is play] [you've got a new baby ev'ry day]	<b>d</b> (4m)	
./        ./                        V                        ./		
But someday it's gonna be me, me, and only me.	<b>c</b> (4m)	

**Example 16.** Incidence of Sentential Strophes in the Billboard Annual Top-20, 1959-64





**Example 17.** Jimmy Gilmer and the Fireballs, “Sugar Shack” (1963)

<b>A<sub>1</sub></b> (18m)	<p> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> </p> <p>There's a crazy little shack beyond the tracks,</p> <p> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> </p> <p>And everybody calls it the Sugar Shack.</p>	<p><b>s</b> (4m)</p> <p><b>r</b> (4m)</p>
	<p> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  ii</span> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  V<sup>7</sup></span> </p> <p>[Well, it's just a coffeehouse and it's made out of wood]</p> <p> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  ii</span> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  V<sup>7</sup></span> </p> <p>[Espresso coffee tastes mighty good]</p> <p> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  ii</span> <span style="margin-right: 4em;">  V<sup>7</sup></span> </p> <p>[That's not the reason why <i>I've got to get back up to that</i>]</p>	<p>} <b>d-ext</b> (6m)</p>
	<p> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">  I</span> <span style="margin-right: 2em;">IV</span> </p> <p><i>Sugar Shack, whoa baby, to that Sugar Shack.</i></p>	<p><b>c</b> (4m)</p>
<b>A<sub>2</sub></b>	<p>There's this cute little girlie, she's a-working there:</p> <p>A black leotards and her feet are bare.</p> <p>[I'm gonna drink a lot of coffee, spend a little cash]</p> <p>[Make that girl love me when I put on some trash]</p> <p>[You can understand why <i>I've got to get back up to that</i>]</p> <p><i>Sugar Shack, whoa baby, to that Sugar Shack, yeah honey to that Sugar Shack, whoa yes, to that Sugar Shack.</i></p>	<p><b>s</b></p> <p><b>r</b></p> <p><b>d-ext</b></p> <p><b>c-ext</b></p>
<b>A<sub>3</sub></b>	<p>Now that sugar shack queen is a-married to me, yeah.</p> <p>We just sit around and dream of those old memories.</p> <p>[Ah, but one of these days, I'm gonna lay down tracks]</p> <p>[In the direction of that Sugar Shack]</p> <p>[Just me and her, yes, <i>we're gonna go back up to that</i>]</p> <p><i>Sugar Shack, whoa, to that Sugar Shack,</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, Honey, to our Sugar Shack, yah, our Sugar Shack... (fade)</i></p>	<p><b>s</b></p> <p><b>r</b></p> <p><b>d-ext</b></p> <p><b>c-ext</b></p>

**Example 18.** Monkees, “Last Train To Clarksville” (1966)

<b>A<sub>1</sub></b> (14m)	I <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	Take the last train to Clarksville, and I'll meet you at the station.				<b>s</b> (4m)
	I <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	You can be there by four thirty, 'cause I made your reservation.				<b>r</b> (4m)
	IV <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	[Don't be slow]    [oh, no, no, no!]    [Oh, no, no, no!]				<b>d-ext</b> (6m)
<b>A<sub>2</sub></b> (18m)	I <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	'Cause I'm leavin' in the morning and I must see you again.				<b>s</b> (4m)
	I <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	We'll have one more night together 'til the morning brings my train				<b>r</b> (4m)
	IV <sup>7</sup>   ./.	./.	./.	./.	
	[And I must go]    [oh, no, no, no!]    [Oh, no, no, no!]				<b>d-ext</b> (6m)
	V <sup>7</sup>   ./.	I	./.		
	<i>And I don't know if I'm ever coming home.</i>				<b>c</b> (4m - 2m elision)

**Example 19.** Petula Clark, “Downtown” (1965)

**A<sub>1</sub>**

I I IV/<sup>1</sup> V/<sup>1</sup> I IV V  
 When you're alone and life is making you lonely, you can always go downtown. **s (4m)**

I IV/<sup>1</sup> V/<sup>1</sup> I IV V  
 When you've got worries, all the noise and the hurry, seems to help, I know, downtown. **r (4m)**

I vi  
 [Just listen to the music of the traffic in the city] **d1 (5m)**

I vi iii  
 [Linger on the sidewalk where the neon signs are pretty] How can you lose?

IV /·  
 [The lights are much brighter there] **d2 (4m)**

V/V /·  
 [You can [forget all your troubles] [forget all your cares]] and go

I/<sup>5</sup> ii/<sup>5</sup> I/<sup>5</sup> ii/<sup>5</sup> **c (10m)**  
 [Downtown, things will be great when you're] [downtown, no finer place for sure]

I/<sup>5</sup> ii/<sup>5</sup> I /· /· /· /·  
 Downtown, everything's waiting for you!

**A<sub>2</sub>**

Don't hang around and let your problems surround you, there are movie shows *downtown*. **s**  
 Maybe you know some little places to go to where they never close, *downtown*. **r**

[Just listen to the rhythm of a gentle bossa nova] **d1**  
 [You'll be dancing with them, too, before the night is over] happy again.

[The lights are much brighter there] **d2**  
 [You can [forget all your troubles] [forget all your cares]] and go

[Downtown where all the lights are bright] [Downtown, waiting for you tonight] **c**  
 Downtown, you're gonna be alright now!

**A<sub>3</sub>**

(instrumental **sr**) **sr**

[And you may find somebody kind to help and understand you] **d1**  
 [Someone who is just like you and needs a gentle hand to] guide them along.

[So, maybe I'll see you there] **d2**  
 [We can [forget all our troubles] [forget all our cares]] and go

[Downtown, things will be great when you're] [Downtown, don't wait a minute more] **c**  
 Downtown, everything's waiting for you!

**Example 20.** Del Shannon, “Runaway” (1961)

i i / / VII i / / VI i / / V i / /  
As I walk along, I wonder what went wrong with our love, a love that was so strong. **s** (8m)

i i / / VII i / / VI  
And as I still walk on, I think of the things we've done together, **r** (8m)  
i / / V i / /  
a-while our hearts were young.

I i / / vi i / /  
[I'm walkin' in the rain] [tears are fallin' and I feel the pain] **d** (8m)

I i / / vi i / /  
[Wishin' you were here by me] [to end this misery]

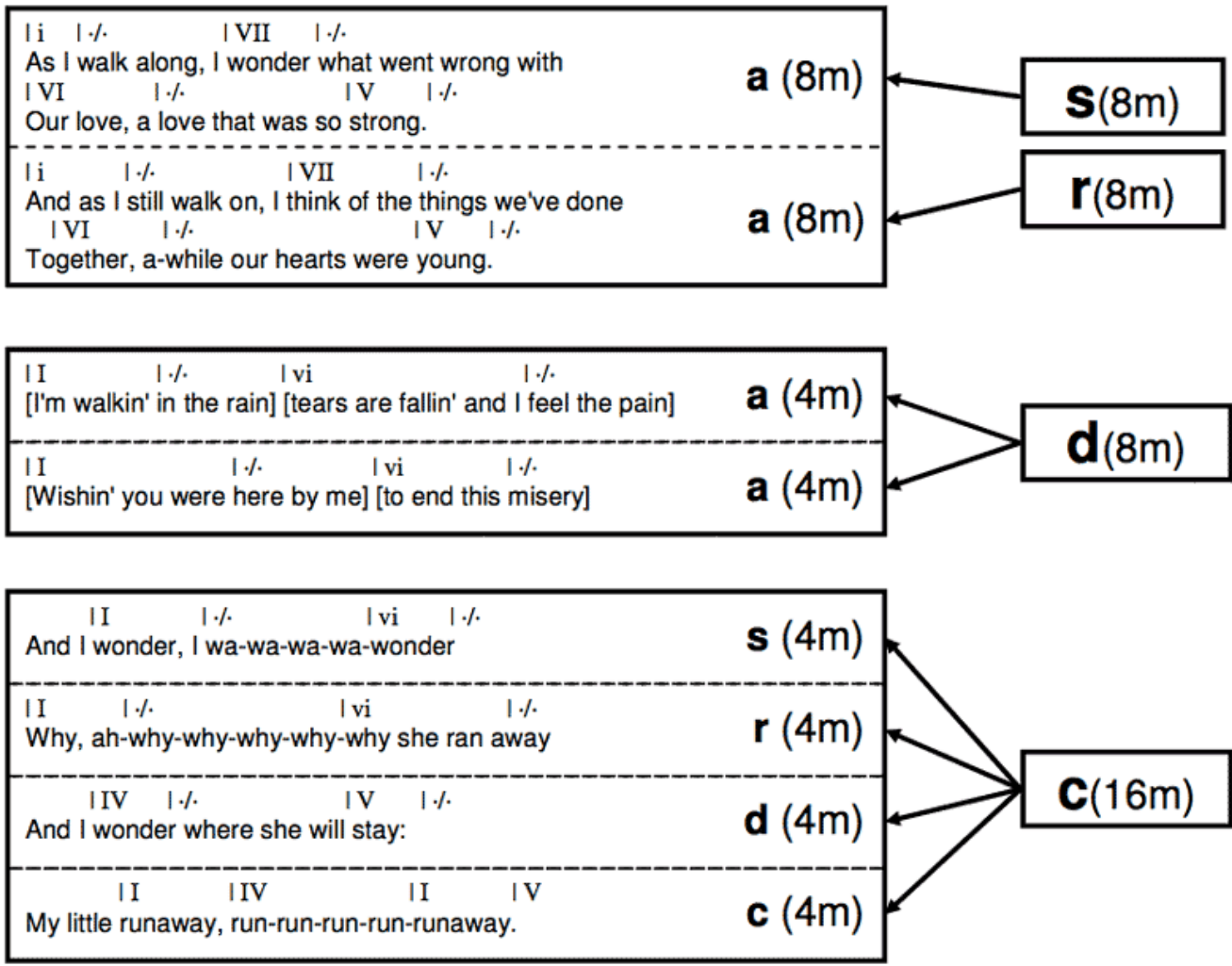
I i / / vi i / /  
And I wonder, I wa-wa-wa-wa-wonder **c** (16m)

I i / / vi i / /  
Why, ah-why-why-why-why-why she ran away

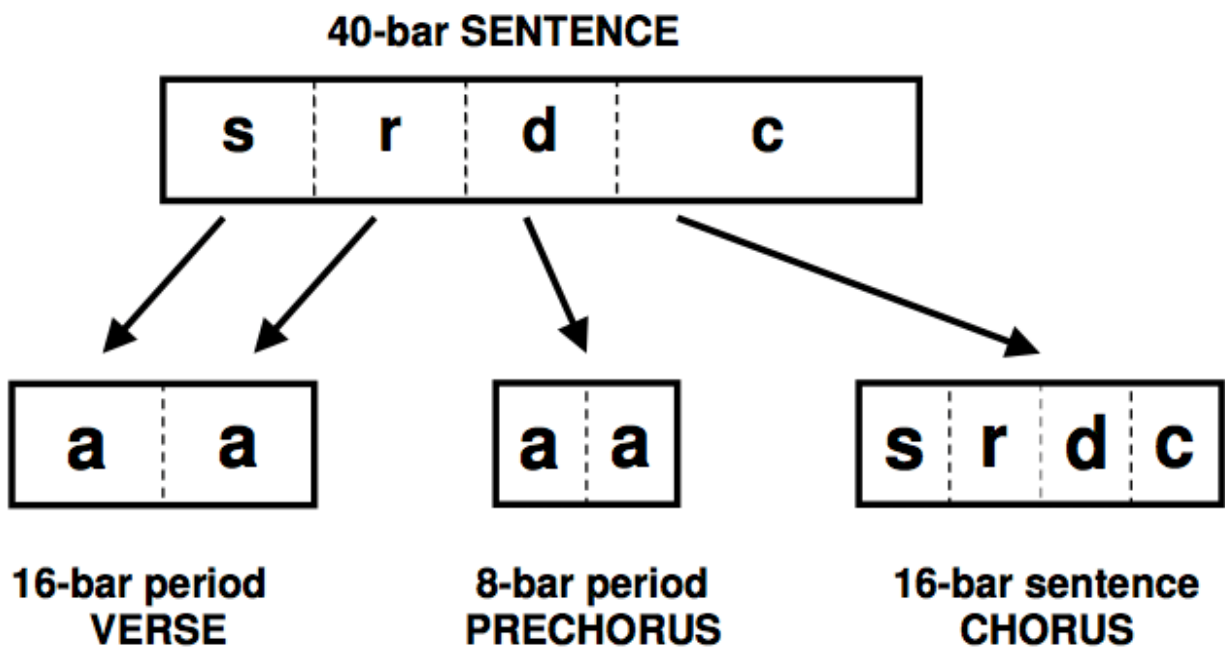
IV i / / V i / /  
And I wonder where she will stay:

I IV I V  
My little runaway, run-run-run-run-runaway.

**Example 21.** Del Shannon, “Runaway” (1961)  
 Patterns Within the Parts of the Expanded Sentence



**Example 22.** Del Shannon, “Runaway” (1961)  
The Expanded Sentence Cleaves Apart



**Example 23.** The Young Rascals, “Good Lovin” (1966)

**V<sub>1</sub>** (16m)

| I IV IV IV | I IV | V IV | I ... (riff repeats)

I was feeling so bad. I asked my family doctor just what I had.  
I said, "Doctor, Mr. MD, now can you tell me what's ailing me?"

**a**  
**a'**

**P** (8m)

| I IV | I IV/5 I

He said, ["Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"]

**s**

| I IV | I IV/5 I

["Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!"]

**r**

| V/V | ./.

Yes, indeed, all I,

**d**

| V | ./.

I really need:

**c**

**C** (8m - 2m elision)

| I IV | V IV

Good lovin' - Now gimme that good, good lovin'

**a**

| I IV | V IV

Good lovin' - All I need is lovin'

| I IV | V IV

Good lovin' - Good, good lovin', baby

**a'**

| I IV | V IV

Good lovin'

verse two:

Honey, please squeeze me tight. Don't you want your baby to be all right?  
I said, "Baby, now it's for sure: I got the fever and you got the cure."





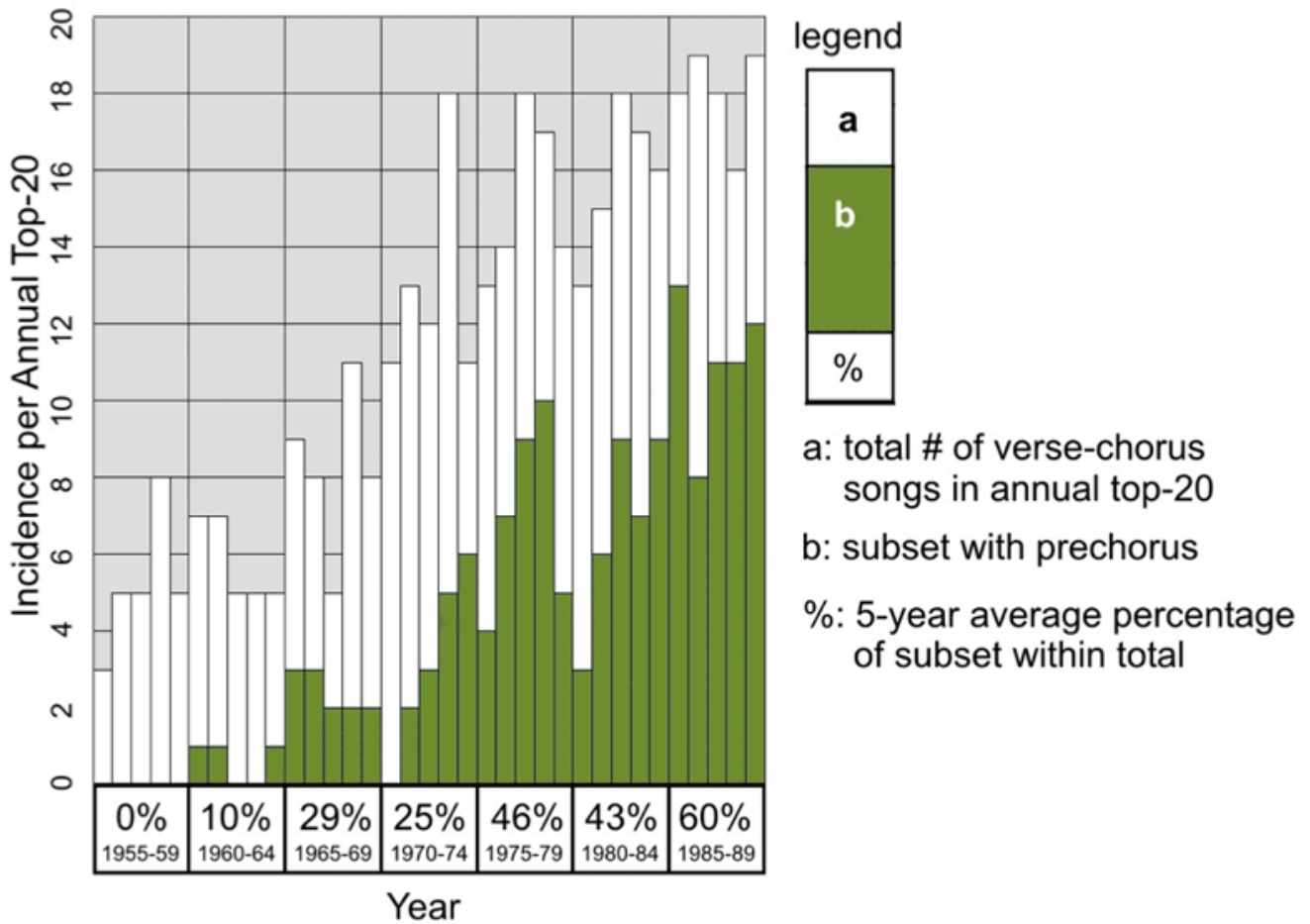
**Example 25.** Blondie, “Call Me” (1980)

**V<sub>1</sub> (12m)** | i | | ·/· | | VI | | ·/· |  
 Color me your color, baby; color me your car. **s (4m)** **a**  
 | i | | ·/· | | VI | | ·/· |  
 Color me your color, darling; I know who you are. **r (4m)** **a'**  
 | iv | | V | | iv | | V |  
 [Come up off your color chart] [I know where you're coming from] **d (4m)** **b**

**C (8m)**

| i | | III | | iv | | VI |  
 Call me on the line, call me; call me any anytime. **c (8m+overlap)** **a**  
 | i | | III | | iv | | VI | | i |  
 Call me my love; you can call me any day or night, call me. **a'**

**Example 26.** Incidence of Verse-Chorus Songs With and Without Prechorus in the Annual Top-20, 1955-89



**Example 27.** Median Length of Verse-Chorus Songs in the Annual Top-20, With and Without Prechorus, Per Five-Year Period

	Median Length (in seconds)				
VC	177	210	224	238	251
VPC	174	215	221	240	254
	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89

**Example 28.** Sly and the Family Stone “Thank You Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin” (1970)

**V<sub>1</sub>** (16m)

Looking at the devil, grinning at his gun;  
 Fingers start shaking, I begin to run;  
 Bullets start chasing, I begin to stop;  
 We begin to wrestle, I was on the top.

**C** (8m)

*I want to thank you for letting me be myself again.  
 Thank you for letting me be myself again.*

**Example 29.** John Denver, “Take Me Home, Country Roads” (1971)

**V<sub>1</sub>** (9m)

Almost Heaven, West Virginia;  
 Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River.  
 Life is old there, older than the trees;  
 Younger than the mountains, growing like a breeze.

**C** (8m)

*Country roads, take me home to the place I belong:  
 West Virginia, mountain Momma; take me home, country roads.*

**Example 30.** Chic, “Good Times” (1979)

**V<sub>1</sub>** (16m)

Happy days are here again.

The time is right for making friends.

Let's get together, how 'bout a quarter to ten?

Come tomorrow, let's all do it again.

[Boys will be boys] [better let them have their toys]

[Girls will be girls] [cute pony tails and curls]

Must put an end to this stress and strife.

I think I want to live the sporting life.

**C** (16m)

*Good times, these are the good times*

*Leave your cares behind, these are the good times.*

*Good times, these are the good times.*

*Our new state of mind, these are the good times.*

**Example 31.** Bee Gees, “Tragedy” (1979)

**V<sub>1</sub>** (8m)

| I                    | ·/·                    | ·/·                    | ·/·  
 Here I lie in a lost and lonely part of town. **s**

| I                    | ·/·                    | ·/·                    | ·/·  
 Held in time, in a world of tears I slowly drown. **r**

**P** (9m)

| II                    | ·/·                    | III                    | ·/·  
 [Going home, *I just can't make it*] [*all alone, I really should be*] **d**

| II                    | ·/·                    | IV                    | ·/·                    | ·/· (6 beats)  
 [*Holding you*] [*holding you*] [*Loving you*] [*loving you*]

**C** (16m)

| i (key of vi:)                    | v  
*Tragedy! When the feeling's gone and you can't go on, it's* **c**

| i                    | v  
*Tragedy! When the morning cries and you don't know why*

| VI/ <sup>^</sup><sub>7</sub>                    | ·/·  
*It's hard to bear with no one to love you;*

                  | i                    | iv/ <sup>^</sup><sub>6</sub> V  
*You're going nowhere.*

*Tragedy! When you lose control and you got no soul it's*  
*Tragedy! When the morning cries and you don't know why*  
*It's hard to bear with no one beside you;*  
*You're going nowhere.*