

Limerick Sentences In Jazz Song Presented by Micheal Sebulsky

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Three Types of Limerick Sentences

The Single Limerick – One Pair of Rhyming Lyrics

Limerick sentences are classified by their rhyming lyric pairs.

Line 1 - (A)Line 2 - (A)Line 3 - (B)Line 3 - (B)Line 4 - (C)sentence contains one rhyming pair.

What is a limerick sentence?

What is a limerick?

The limerick is a five-line poem. Its form is generated through a specific rhyming structure.

The Limerick Form

Line 1 - (A) - 8 to 9 syllables Line 2 - (A) - 8 to 9 syllables Line 3 - (B) - 5 to 6 syllables

Line 4 - (B) - 5 to 6 syllables Line 5 - (A) - 8 to 9 syllables

A Limerick by Ogden Nash

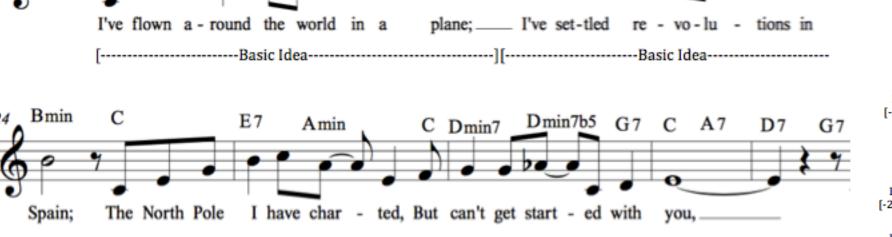
A wonderful bird is the pelican,
His bill can hold more than his beli-can
He can take in his beak
Food enough for a week
But damned if I see how the heli-can!

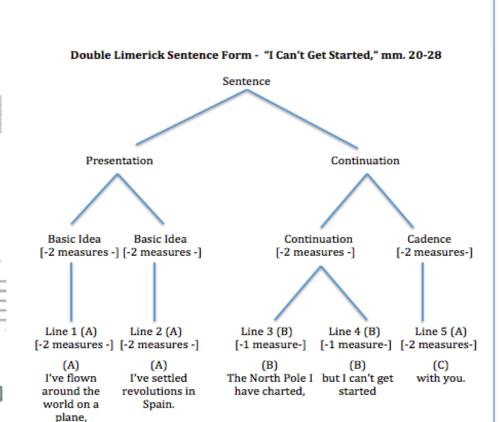
Examples of Limerick Sentences

"I Can't Get Started"

"I Can't Get Started" was written by Vernon Duke and Ira Gershwin in 1935. Below is an example of a double limerick sentence taken from the song's chorus.







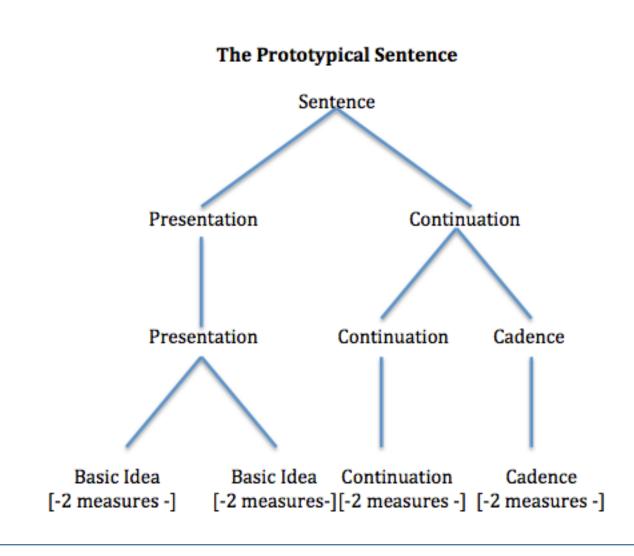
The Double Limerick – Two Pairs of Rhyming Lyrics

The double limerick	Line 1 – (A)
sentence contains two	Line 2 – (A)
rhyming pairs.	Line 3 – (B)
	Line 4 – (B)
	Line 5 – (C)

What is a sentence?

The sentence is a fundamental musical phrase construct.

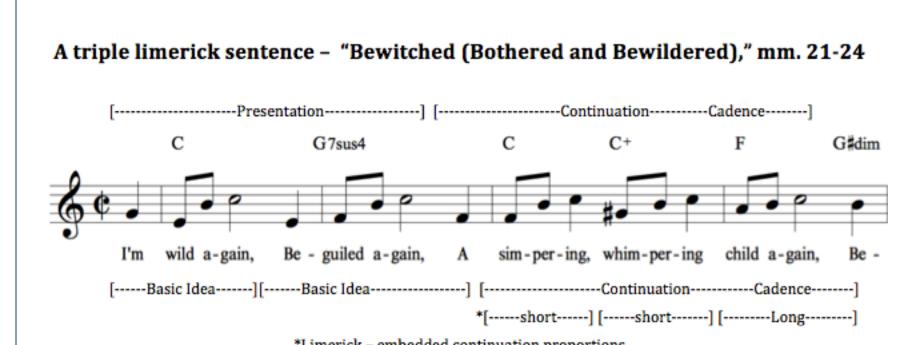
The sentence is comprised of three sections – the presentation (divided into two basic ideas), the continuation and the cadence.

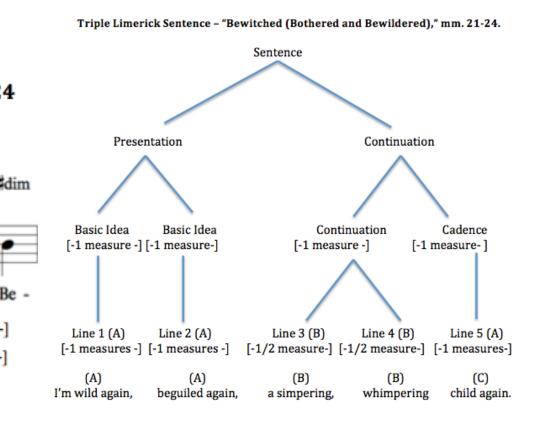


"Bewitched (Bothered and Bewildered)"

"Bewitched (Bothered and Bewildered" was written by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and published in 1941.

Below is an example of a triple limerick sentence taken from the song's chorus.



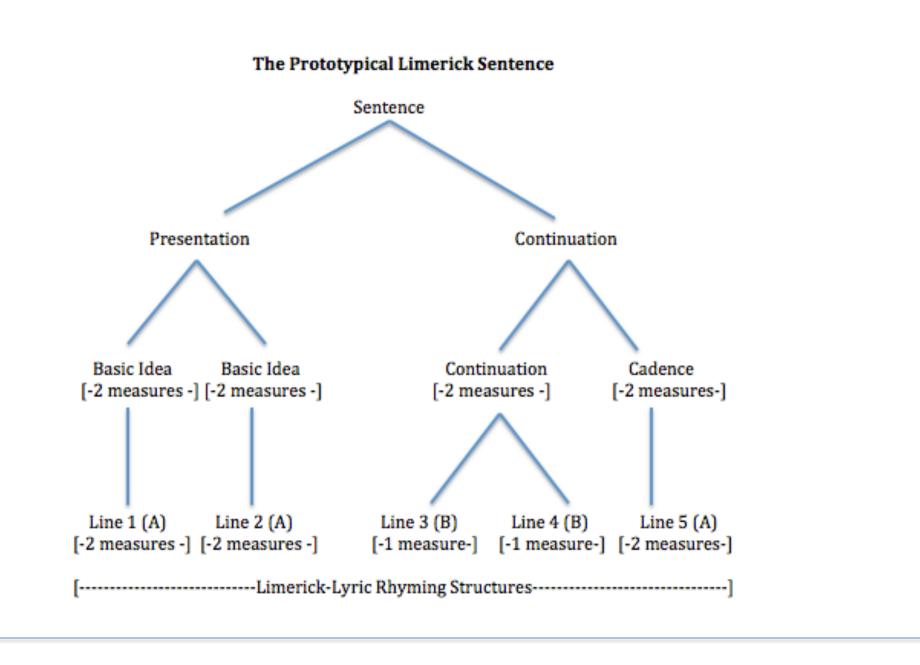


The Triple Limerick – Two Rhyming Pairs and a Return

	Line 1 - (A)
The triple limerick sentence	Line 2 – (A)
contains the same rhyming	Line 3 – (B)
scheme as the poetic	Line 4 – (B)
limerick.	
	Line 5 – (A)

What is the limerick sentence?

The limerick sentence is a musical phrase that contains both the elements of the musical sentence and lyrics that align with the poetic limerick.



More Examples of Limerick Sentences

Below are some other examples of limerick sentences in jazz songs

"Just Friends" – John Klenner and Sam M. Lewis

"Unforgettable" – Irving Gordon

"Lady Bird" – Tadd Dameron (lyrics by Alyssa Allgood, 2015)

"Let's Fall in Love" – Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler

"Long Ago and Far Away" – Jerome Kern and Ira Gershwin

Contact

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This poster presentation summarizes materials that are a part of Micheal's thesis, which treats musical sentence structure. Micheal seeks to find common ground between the many differing, contradictory sentence definitions that have been offered since 1998, the year that William Caplin published his widely accepted sentence definition in his book *Classical Form*. Micheal's work identifies common sentence idiosyncrasies and new sentence sub-types, such as the limerick sentence. His research focuses specifically on sentences found in the music of Johannes Brahms, jazz, and popular music.

References

- 1. For more about the poetic limerick, see
- A.N. Wilkins, *Mortal Taste Limericks* (New York: Exposition Press, 1965), pg. 10.
- 2. The term 'limerick sentence' is credited to Dr. Steve Larson, who used the term in 2008 during an email communication with the Society for Music Theory's Jazz Interest Group.
- 3. To view the original published music for "I Can't Get Started" see Vernon Duke and Ira Gershwin, I Can't Get Started (New York: Chappel& Co. Inc., 1935).
- 4. To view the published sheet music for "Bewitched (Bothered and Bewildered)," see Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers, Bewitched (Bothered and Bewildered) New York: Chappell & Co. Inc., 1941), 1-5.

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