

Marking rhyme schemes

Mark each line with a lower case letter, marking lines which rhyme with the same letter of the alphabet, in a straight column to the right of the lyrics. Begin with “a,” and continue with b, c, d etc. until you come to a line which rhymes with a previous one. Each a, b & c refers to a different line. So:

a
b
a
b

would refer to four lines, with rhymes occurring every other line.

And

a
b
c
b
d
d

would refer to six lines, with lines 2 & 4 rhyming with each other, and the final two lines rhyming with each other.

In general, begin again at “a” with each stanza, unless the song is very short. Thus, each A-section should begin with “a” and even the B-section should begin with “a.” You might find some reasons to begin marking the second stanza’s rhyme scheme where the first stanza left off (for example, if lines in the first stanza rhyme with lines in the second stanza). Let clarity and elucidation be your guide.

Rhyme Scheme: Example

I Cain't Say No

I'm just a girl who cain't say 'no'	a
I'm in a terrible fix!	b
I always say 'Come on, let's go'	a
Just when I aughta say 'Nix.'	b
When a person tries to kiss a girl	c
I know she aughta give his face a smack!	d
But as soon as someone kisses me	e
I somehow sorta want to kiss him back!	d

I'm just a fool when lights are low	a
I cain't be prissy an' quaint	b
I ain't the type that can faint	b
How can I be what I ain't?	b
I cain't say 'no!'	a

Whatcha gonna do when a feller gets flirty	a
An' starts to talk purty	a
Whatcha gonna do?	b
S'pposin' that he says	c
That your lips are like cherries,	d
Or roses, or berries	d
Whatcha gonna do?	b
S'pposin' that he says	c
That yer sweeter than cream	e
And he's gotta have cream or die?	f
Whatcha gonna do when he talks that way?	g
Spit in his eye?	f

I'm jist a girl who cain't say no,	a
Cain't seem to say it at all	b
I hate to disserpoint a beau	a
When he is payin' a call!	b
Fer a while I ack refined and cool,	c
A settin on the velveteen setee	d
Nen I think of thet ol' golden rule,	c
And do fer him what he would do fer me!	d

I cain't resist a Romeo	a
In a sombrero and chaps	b
Soon as I sit on their laps	b
Somethin' inside of me snaps	b
I cain't say no!	a

If Ever I Would Leave You

If ever I would leave you	a
It wouldn't be in summer;	b
Seeing you in summer, I never would go.	c
Your hair streaked with sunlight. . .	d
Your lips red as flame . . .	e
Your face with a luster	f
That puts gold to shame.	e
But if I'd ever leave you,	a
It couldn't be in autumn.	g
How I'd leave in autumn, I never would know.	c
I've seen how you sparkle	h
When fall nips the air.	i
I know you in autumn	j
And I must be there.	i
And could I leave you running merrily through the snow?	c
Or on a wintry evening when you catch the fire's glow?	c
If ever I would leave you,	a
How could it be in springtime,	k
Knowing how in spring I'm bewitch'd by you so?	c
Oh, no, not in springtime!	l
Summer, winter or fall!	m
No, never could I leave you at all.	m

(Here, the rhyme scheme is not re-set in each stanza, so as to point out that the third line of each A rhymes with the B section. But you could just as easily justify beginning each stanza with “a” as in the previous example, *I Cain't Say No.*)