

Writing about Music:

"...is like dancing about architecture." But we're gonna try anyway! After all, the job of the writer is often to convey lived-in experiences using only words, and fortunately there are several tips for approaching this when writing about music.

Tips:

- **Listen to the song and freewrite observations.**
 - What's the mood? What helps to create it?
 - Are there sudden increases or decreases in volume (dynamics)? What instruments take the forefront? Does a tune seem to switch from one instrument to another?
 - Are certain notes or passages repeated over and over again?
 - Do particular lyrics stick out?
- **Use strong, active verbs and precise details in your description:**
 - vocals soar...guitars wail...electronics burble...Rihanna croons
- **Use metaphor, simile, comparisons to describe music:**
 - "The violin sputters and spits like a trick candle on a birthday cake, struggling to remind the listener of its former brilliance right up until the moment when the entire orchestra douses it for good with a fortissimo chord."
 - "The piano keys strike a somber rhythm, tap tapping like rain on a window pane."
- **Consider using a play by play approach to describing specific parts of a song:**
 - "The first time I heard those crunching, distorted guitars, it was a revelation. Then the vocals began: melodic but ominous, they soothed me into the first thirty seconds of the song. Finally, that immortal Cobain scream let loose and the guitars followed suit with Dave Grohl's punishing drums speeding them along. "
 - "Lamar goes deeper into his own mind, painting blood-soaked hypotheticals and then juxtaposing them against his desires for gun control."
- Finally, **read a few reviews of the musical genre you're writing about.** Describing hip-hop is different than describing progressive metal. Learn from the style of other skilled writers.