

Glossary – Popular Music (for teachers' reference)

♭VII	In any major or minor key, a major triad built upon the lowered seventh degree (i.e. leading tone) in that key. Virtually unknown in pop music prior to the Beatles.
12-bar blues	The standard blues chorus. Harmonically it consists of: I-I ₇ / IV ₇ -I / V ₇ -(IV ₇)-I. Verbally, it usually consists of three lines of text, the first two similar or identical to each other. “Hound Dog” is a good example of a 12-bar blues.
16-bar chorus	A musical period consisting of four 4-bar phrases in an AABA (in the case of “It’s Now or Never”, AA ₁ BA ₂). A common layout for pop songs, especially when preceded or followed by a verse.
32-bar chorus	A musical period consisting of four 8-bar phrases in an AABA configuration. The most common layout for pop songs prior to rock ‘n’ roll.
45rpm (also 45s)	45 revolutions per minute. The speed of most pop singles (7-inch phonorecords) manufactured during the 1950s and 1960s.
78rpm (also 78s)	78 revolutions per minute. The speed of most albums (12-inch phonorecords) manufactured between the late 1910s and the late 1940s. See also ‘LP’.
<i>accento</i>	A Baroque vocal ornament in which a melodic line begins on a higher tone before dropping to the adjacent lower tone. “Yesterday” by the Beatles begins with an <i>accento</i> on the first syllable of the title word.
Acid Trip	The experience a man or woman undergoes after taking LSD.
Acid Rock (also Acid Rocker)	A style of late 1960s music that artistically simulates or at least refers to LSD and acid trips. “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” is an example of acid rock; as its composers and performers, the Beatles could be said to have been acid rockers—but only in relation to songs of precisely that

kind.

Acoustic	Without electrical amplification. Originally, all guitars were acoustic instruments.
Added Ninth	A note nine steps above the root of a given triad and added to that triad. A C-Major chord with an added ninth would consist of the notes C, E, G, and D a fifth above the preceding G.
Added Second	A note one step above the root of a given triad and added to that triad. A C-Major chord with an added second would consist of the notes C, D, E, and G.
Added Seventh	A note seven steps above the root of a given triad and added to that triad. A C-Major chord with an added major seventh would consist of the notes C, E, G, and B. A similar chord with an added minor seventh would consist of C, E, G, and B \flat .
Added Thirteenth	A note thirteen steps above the root of a given triad and added to that triad. A C-Major chord with an added thirteenth would consist of the notes C, E, G, and F a seventh above the preceding A.
Air	Vocal silences in pop songs. Elvis left little air in most of his recordings, while the Beatles left more in many of their skiffle numbers.
Album	A synonym for LP. See also 'CD'.
Amplification	Electronic enhancement or magnification of sound. See also 'acoustic'.
Arrangement	A version of a musical composition to be performed for a certain collection of instrumental and vocal forces. A song with guitar accompaniment, for example, might be arranged for brass band.
Art Song	A song composed by a classical or romantic European or European-American 'master'. Also, a song that aspires to similar

refinement of musical style. Some Beatles songs have been called art songs.

Asymmetric Structure	Melodic	Any melodic structure composed of phrases of dissimilar lengths. Instead, of a '32-bar chorus', for example, a melodic period consisting of two 7-bar and two 9-bar phrases.
Backbeat		Heavy emphasis is placed on beats 2 and 4 in 4/4 time consistently. Backbeat is generally presented by strokes on the snare drum, or comping by the rhythm section, or both.
Backup		in popular music, a collective term for instrumental and/or vocal accompaniment. One vocalist, for example, sings the 'lead' and the others 'back her up' with non-melodic material.
Ballad		In popular music, a slower, more sentimental, and more tuneful song. "Love Me Tender" and "Yesterday" are ballads, whereas "Hound Dog" and "Taxman" are not.
Baritone		In vocal music, the male voice with a range lying somewhat below that of a tenor and somewhat above that of a bass. Also, the range of such a voice. Elvis Presley sang baritone.
Bars		Measures of music. Every melodic phrase or compositional passage is composed of one or more bars.
Bass		In some pop ensembles as in classical European orchestral music, a low-pitched, four-string member of the viol family. Bill Black played the bass in some of Elvis Presley's early recordings. See also 'bass guitar' below.
Bass Guitar		An electric instrument employed by rock musicians especially to support individual notes in harmonic progressions and to add counterpoint to otherwise chordal musical structures. In both respects, the bass guitar functions in ways similar to the solo continuo instrument

(cello or viola da gamba) employed in Baroque music.

Battery	Another name for percussion instruments as a group. In popular music, a battery consisting of one or more snare drums, one or more cymbals, and a bass drum is more often referred to as a set or kit.
Beatlemania	The enthusiasm expressed by admirers of the Beatles especially during the early and mid-1960s. Often reserved for describing the behaviour of groupies at concerts and other 'personal' encounters.
<i>bel canto</i>	Italian for 'beautiful voice' or 'beautiful singing'. Mostly used in conjunction with Italian opera, although some pop singers (Elvis Presley, Mario Lanza, etc.) also sang <i>bel canto</i> effectively.
Black	African American. Used to describe certain musical styles as well as the people who invented them.
Blue Notes	Flatted or lowered notes employed in blues, jazz, and other pop forms. Usually refers to the third, fifth, and seventh degrees of the musical scale.
Blues	A Black musical form of expression with limited vocal and harmonic range but considerable expressive power. See '12-bar blues', 'rhythm and blues', and 'rock 'n' roll'.
Boogie Woogie	African American blues-based music characterised by a forceful, repetitive left-hand bass figure that drives the groove.
Break	A brief instrumental passage which maintains the underlying rhythm and harmony of the piece.
Bridge	In a standard 32-bar or 'AABA' tune, the third or 'B' 8-bar phrase. Also the instrumental solo that separates one verse, stanza, or chorus from another.

British Invasion	During the early 1960s, the introduction of pop music and musicians from England, either in person or by way of recordings, into the United States. The success of the Beatles during their 1964 American tour contributed enormously to the overall impact of the British Invasion.
Broadway Show Tune	Any song written for one or more musical comedies performed in theatres located on or close to Broadway in midtown Manhattan. Also: songs similar in style to such tunes.
Call and Response	Musical or other situations in which one voice or voices are answered by a different voice or voices. Associated originally with gospel.
Calliope	A kind of organ, formerly steam-powered but now usually electric. Associated with circuses, carnivals, and other outdoor European and American entertainments. Calliopes produce harsh, metallic musical sounds.
Campy (also Camp)	Playful in a sarcastic, exaggerated manner.
CD	A common abbreviation for 'compact disk', a form of commercial digitalised musical recording. See also 'album' and 'LP'.
Celeste (also Celesta)	A small keyboard instrument outfitted with metal bars that produce bell-like sounds when struck. Unknown in Western music until the 1890s, when Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky employed it in his <i>Nutcracker</i> ballet.
Chaconne	A variation form in which a single chord progression defines each in a series of subsequent statements or variations.
Chest Voice	Singing with the support of the diaphragm. Chest voice employed in <i>bel canto</i> and other forms of classical vocal music as well as in Broadway musical comedy.
Chorus	In popular music, the material that follows one or more verses. See also

‘32- bar chorus’ and ‘refrain’.

Chromatic Chromatic Inflection)	(also	Moving melodically by half instead of whole steps. Also, chords containing one or more notes bearing sharps or flats. Sometimes considered the ‘opposite’ of diatonic.
Close Harmony		Ensemble singing based on triads, parallel thirds and sixths, and other ‘closer’ intervals and chords. Originally a doo-wop and gospel term.
Club		In popular music, a place of entertainment where pop music can be heard, often ‘live’. The Beatles performed in Hamburg and Liverpool clubs during the very early 1960s.
Clustered Upbeat		One or more notes or syllables that function together in anticipation of a downbeat that begins a subsequent measure or section of music.
Coda		Italian for ‘tail’. Any passage of music appended to the end of a longer composition.
Combo Section		A term used of a small band or group of musicians and applied principally to jazz or pop ensembles.
Concept Album		An LP or CD devoted to a single idea, story, or theme. Unlike most albums, concept albums are created as compositional wholes. <i>Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band</i> remains the most famous concept album in history.
Conga		A tall, barrel-staved, single- headed drum of African origin that is usually played with the fingers and the hollow palm of the hands.
Coon Shouter		A singer, Black or White, who vigorously sings or even shouts out the lyrics to certain kinds of African American music.
Count-off		The numbers spoken to establish the tempo of a pop song immediately before that song begins.

Counter-culture	Collectively, people with eccentric attitudes or habits. Also, the values of such people. In 1960s America, this term was applied mostly to anti-Vietnam War protestors and other individuals who disagreed with certain commonly held American political, social, and cultural values.
Country (also Country-western)	Hillbilly music. Country musical ensembles often include banjos and mandolins as well as guitars.
Cover	To perform or record a song composed by someone else.
Deep South (sometimes South)	In the United States, the geo-political and cultural area south of the so-called Mason-Dixon Line and east of Texas. This area includes the states of Florida, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, but the term 'Deep South' is sometimes reserved especially for Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.
Distortion	Any form of alteration to a pre-existing or 'pure' musical sound. Reverb, wobble, and amplification are all forms of electronic distortion. Forms of acoustic distortion are produced by mutes (for brass instruments) and pieces of metal (for prepared pianos).
Dominant	The fifth degree of a scale, or a chord built on such a note. In C Major, G is the dominant note, a G-Major triad the dominant chord.
Doo-wop	A kind of Black vocal music, often sung without musical accompaniment and in close harmony.
Double	To perform on more than one instrument or sing more than one part. A guitarist, for example, may also be able to double as a percussionist.
Double-track	To record the same piece of music twice, then play back both recordings at more or less the same time. After being double-tracked, singers such as Elvis Presley or Paul McCartney can 'sing with themselves'.
Downbeat	The first beat of a given melodic phrase, musical passage, or

composition.

Drum Fill-ins	A short rhythmic improvisation which is used to fill in the gaps between phrases or sections in a song.
Elvis Impersonator	A singer or actor who dresses up and pretends to be Elvis Presley.
Fadeout	To gradually reduce the volume of a musical passage, either by playing or singing it more and more softly, or by decreasing its volume electronically. Also: the conclusions of many pop songs in which the music gradually fades out, becomes too soft to be heard.
Falsetto	A synonym for head voice. To sing without the support of the diaphragm and especially to sign very high notes without such support.
Folk Music (also Folk Song)	Any musical statement that sounds as if it were 'traditional' or 'ethnic' in origin. Sometimes used in opposition to 'classical' or 'popular' as a form of musical expression or culture.
Folk Revival	A movement throughout Europe and North America, began as early as the 1890s but especially widespread during the 1940s and 1950s, when both authentic and simulated folk songs were performed as entertainments. Bob Dylan began his career in the early 1960s as one of the last but most influential Folk-Revival singer-songwriters.
Fusion (also Fusion Music)	In popular music, rock combined with jazz, or sometimes with folk. Many fusion bands include trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and other jazz instruments as well as electric guitars and other rock instruments.
Glam Rock	From 'glamour'. In popular music, a form of rock largely defined by the elaborate costumes and makeup worn by its performers. Elvis came close near the end of his career to appearing in public as a glam rocker.
Gospel	In music, certain performing traditions and tunes associated with American religious music and especially with African American

Protestantism. Gospel singers often improvise on familiar melodies, ornamenting them elaborately. They also sometimes sing in close harmony; in this respect, gospel resembles doo-wop.

Goth (or Goth Style)	In popular music, rockers who dress in black costumes made of leather and wear heavy chains as ornaments or belts, outrageous makeup, facial piercings, etc.
Grand Ole Opry	An American radio programme broadcast every week from Nashville, Tennessee, since 1925. As an institution, the Opry has more or less defined hillbilly, rockabilly, and country-western musical styles for post-World War II audiences.
Groove	See 'Rock Groove'
Groupies	Musical camp followers. Often used to refer to young women who follow rock musicians, attend their concerts, and otherwise consort with them. Occasionally used to refer to young men who do similar things.
Harmonica	A small, hand-held mouth organ. In popular music, harmonicas are associated especially with folk, hillbilly, and skiffle.
Harmonica tremolos	The rapid alternation of two segments of a chord to create a trembling effect.
Head Voice	See 'Falsetto'.
Hillbilly	Residents, Black or White, of America's eastern mountains. Also the music made by those residents, either in reality or as simulated in performances and recordings. Hillbilly music is generally considered 'low-class' entertainment, often home-made. In fact, much of it derives from Scots-Irish immigrants to Appalachia as well as from Black musical sources. Characteristic hillbilly instruments include the jug, the banjo, and the washboard bass.

Hippies	Young people in 1960s America who used LSD, wore psychedelic clothing, lived together in experimental communities, etc. Often used as an insult.
Honky-tonk (also Honky-tonk Piano)	A tinny piano sound associated with bars and other 'low' institutions of American cities and towns, as opposed to rural hillbilly music. Honky-tonk piano refers not merely to poorly tuned upright pianos played in such places, but to the kind of music often played on them.
Hook	A musical phrase or sound placed near the beginning of a song to attract attention.
Instrumental Break	See 'Break'.
Interlude	Music played between sections of a composition. It may be an instrumental music and serve to connect two sections.
Introduction	The opening passage of a song or composition.
Ironic Commentary (also Ironic or Irony)	To comment on or present anything in a self-conscious and often critical manner.
Jam Session	An informal and private rehearsal or performance, as opposed to a public concert.
Jobber	See 'Club'.
Label	The name a recording company uses to market music: Sun, Parlophone, Motown, etc.
Leading Tone	The tone lying immediately below the tonic of any scale. In C Major, B is the leading tone.
<i>Lieder</i>	German for 'songs' (the singular is ' <i>Lied</i> '). The art songs composed in Germany especially during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Schubert and Mahler were among the most famous Lieder composers.

LP	An abbreviation for 'long-playing'. 12-inch, 33rpm phonorecords are LPs. Today sometimes also used for CDs.
LSD	An abbreviation for lysergic acid diethylamide, also known as 'acid', a powerful and dangerous hallucinogenic
Lyrics	The words of a song, as opposed to its music.
Mandolin	A small, guitar-like instrument featured in many country-western ensembles.
Mediant Progression	An harmonic progression 'by thirds'. In C Major, a mediant progression might be from I-III (C Major to E Major), or from I-iii (C Major to E minor).
Melody (also Melodic Structure)	A tune, usually consisting of several phrases organised into one or more periods. The melody of "Michelle" is the part sung by McCartney on <i>Rubber Soul</i> .
Mersey Sound	Refers not only to songs written or performed in Liverpool (located on the Mersey River), but to songs by Liverpool artists that combined elements of folk, jazz, and rock 'n' roll. Early Beatles numbers, including "Love Me Do", are examples of the Mersey sound.
Mixolydian	In music, one of the eight Medieval church modes or scale patterns. The ascending Mixolydian scale ends with a whole step instead of a half step (G – A – B – C – D – E – F – G), whereas the standard major scale ends with a half step (G – A – B – C – D – E – F# – G).
Modal Harmony	Harmony based on scales other than those identical in structure to standard major and minor scales. In a Mixolydian harmonic passage, for example, the minor triad D/F/A would precede the major G/B/D to form a modal dominant-tonic cadence (v-I).

Motown (also Motown Sound)	The label distributed by the Motown Recording Corporation, as well as the music produced and marketed as 'Motown'. Many Motown artists performed together in small groups, singing and playing rock or doo-wop numbers characterised by lively rhythmic figures and distinctive structural patterns.
Music-hall Songs	In popular music, topical and occasionally risqué songs associated with lower-class theatrical entertainment in England between the later nineteenth century and the 1950s.
Musical Device	Any definable way of momentarily manipulating musical material. Counterpoint is a musical device; so is reverb; so is chromatic harmony. Sometimes referred to disparagingly as 'gimmicks'.
<i>musique concrète</i>	French for 'hard' (i.e., non-musical) music. Any 'natural' sound recorded and introduced into an 'artificial' musical composition. The airplane noises at the beginning of the Beatles' "Back in the USSR" are examples of <i>musique concrète</i> .
Ninth	See 'Added Ninth'.
North	In the United States, the geo-political and cultural area north of the so-called Mason-Dixon Line. Also, any place outside the South, especially the Deep South. Often used in reference to such urban areas as Manhattan, Boston, Chicago, etc.
Oblique Counterpoint	A kind of contrapuntal motion in which one voice or part remains fixed on a given note while another moves away from that note. Oblique counterpoint was originally employed in Medieval music, especially in organum; for this reason it often sounds 'antique' or 'exotic', especially when used in popular music.
Ondioline	A monophonic vacuum tube instrument composed of a single oscillator

and a small eight-octave touch sensitive keyboard. Uncommon.

Open Fourths, Fifths (also Parallel Fourths, Fifths) Notes sung or played a fourth or fifth apart, without the addition of thirds or other musical intervals. In C Major, the notes D/A moving directly to the notes E/B would be considered parallel fifths.

Ornament, Ornamented In music, additional or extraneous notes added to a familiar tune or pre-existing composition. An *accento* is an ornament; so are passing notes used to link portions of existing melodies.

Parallel Harmony Chords moving in parallel motion. In C Major, the triad C/E/G moving directly to the triad D/F/A would be considered parallel harmonies.

Parallel Thirds Voices or parts moving together at the interval of a third. In C Major, the pair C/E moving directly to the pair D/F would be considered parallel thirds.

Parody A word with several somewhat different meanings. To ‘parody’ something often means simply to ridicule it. At the same time, many musical parodies consist of pre-existing material reworked into new forms. First used as a musical term to define the parody masses and motets of Renaissance Europe, in which pre-existing compositions were recomposed to serve new musical and cultural purposes. “Back in the USSR” utilises both kinds of parody: it pokes fun at “California Girls”, a Beach Boys song, even as it incorporates part of the song within its own melodic structure.

Pastiche Any cultural artifact composed of fragments or sections in different, often extremely different styles.

Period (also Musical Period) A group of phrases forming a complete melodic statement. One form of musical period is the 32-bar chorus. Another is the 12-bar blues.

persona from the Latin for ‘mask’. A *persona* is the individual one shows the

outside world, as opposed to one's inner self. Elvis Presley's stage persona was that of a vibrant, playful, occasionally cruel singer. In his private life, by contrast, Elvis was often sorrowful, angry, or generous as a son, friend, or business associate.

Phonorecord	A disk on which music or other sounds are recorded acoustically rather than digitally. LPs, 45s, and 78s are all phonorecords, whereas CDs are digital recordings.
Piccolo Trumpet	A small trumpet used today mostly in performing Baroque music.
Plagal Cadence	A IV-I rather than V-I chord progression. Often associated with religious music, especially hymns.
Popping	Repeating one note over and over, often quickly. A term used in conjunction with Irish and Irish-American folk music as well as pop songs of certain kinds.
Postlude	A work forming the conclusion of a larger work or one performed at the end of a ceremony.
Pre-recorded Sound	See ' <i>musique concrète</i> '.
Psychedelic	See 'LSD', 'acid', 'acid trip', etc.
Psychedelic Art	Paintings or other visual forms of expression associated with LSD. <i>Yellow Submarine</i> (1969), an animated movie based on Beatles songs, features illustrations made by Peter Max, a 1960s painter and illustrator.
Punk Rock (also Punk Rocker)	A form of music characterised by extreme harmonic and melodic simplicity, high electrically amplified volume, and social protest or anger. Punk began in the early 1970s; the term is often used to refer to such British bands as the Sex Pistols.
Radio DJ	An abbreviation for 'disk jockey'. A man or woman who plays

recordings (or disks) during radio broadcasts. A term associated mostly with popular music in 1950s and 1960s America.

Raga	In North Indian music, any exotic scale as well as the music constructed using such a scale. Ragas are modes, each with its own tuning system and cultural associations.
Race Music	In America and especially in the Deep South, anything composed or performed by African Americans or suggestive of them. Rhythm and blues was 'race music' until Elvis and other White (and Black) performers transformed it into rock 'n' roll.
Receive Reception)	(also In aesthetics, the opinions expressed about a given individual, art work, or artistic style. Elvis was initially received as a sexual icon; later, the reception granted him by music-lovers also embraced his religious faith and family values.
Refrain	A melodic statement that reappears anywhere in a song, often between or after the chorus. Also used by some people as a synonym for 'chorus'.
Retro	Not merely old-fashioned, but backward-looking. Retro art and music are deliberately and often playfully antique. "Honey Pie" is a retro song rather than an actual example of 1920s popular music.
Reverb	An abbreviation of 'reverberation'. In popular music, the result of electronic manipulation that makes music sound 'larger' or more distant, and to create echo-like effects.
Rhythm and Blues	A Black term for rock 'n' roll. Also rock 'n' roll as performed by Black artists.
Rock (also Rock Music)	A difficult term to define. Today, virtually a synonym for popular music. In the 1960s, the term 'rock' was often used to distinguish the more complex blend of musical styles and sound effects created by artists such

as the Beatles from that of the less complex blend of styles and effects employed by artists such as Elvis Presley.

Rock Groove	Any continuous syncopated rhythmic accompaniment in rock 'n' roll or related musical idioms. Without a groove or backbeat, at least until the Beatles transformed popular music, any given song cannot possibly be 'rock'.
Rockabilly	A blend of rock 'n' roll and hillbilly musical styles and devices. Many rockabilly bands, for example, employ banjos or pianos as well as guitars and drums.
Rock 'n' Roll	A White term for rhythm and blues. Also, rhythm and blues as performed mostly by White artists. This term is sometimes also used to distinguish the more 'authentic' and vital recordings of Elvis and Chuck Berry from the "rock 'n' roll" of later, more commercialised and less exciting artists and ensembles, including Elvis impersonator Ricky Nelson.
Rounded Binary Form	Repeat the material of section 'A' to arrive at a more symmetrical structure, which is known as 'rounded binary form'. The most common treatment is A-A-B-A, which is even referred to as 'pop song form'.
Samba	An energetic Brazilian dance and music style in 2/4 meter. It also comes with verse provided for solo singer alternating with choral refrain.
Second	See 'added second'.
Secondary Dominant	Dominant: harmonically, the dominant of a dominant (or other chord) in any key. In C Major, a D-Major triad would be considered the dominant of G Major, itself the dominant of the home key.
Set	See 'battery'.
Seventh	See 'Added Seventh'.

Single	A 45rpm recording. Sales information for many of the songs recorded by Elvis Presley and by the Beatles before 1965 appeared on singles charts; to have a 'hit', Elvis or the Beatles would need to rank near the top of such charts.
Sitar	A large Indian lute-like instrument outfitted with sympathetic strings and movable frets.
Skiffle	A musical style that originated in both Black and White circles and employed folk sounds as well as instruments such as the harmonica. The Beatles began as skiffle artists.
Song Cycle	A carefully arranged and integrated collection of songs, often one that tells a story or makes a particularly consistent musical statement. A term used mostly in connection with certain collections of <i>Lieder</i> by classical composers such as Schubert. <i>Sgt. Pepper's</i> has often been considered a song cycle rather than a mere collection of songs.
Soundtrack Album	Any LP or CD that contains the music from a particular musical comedy or motion picture.
South	See 'Deep South'.
Spliced-in	An antique term for cutting and pasting one piece of recorded magnetic tape into another piece. Anything added electronically or digitally to a pre-existing musical recording. Some of the ship and water sounds used in "Yellow Submarine" were spliced into the music the Beatles themselves sang and played.
Steel Guitar	An amplified guitar often played lying on a table instead of held in the hands. Its sound is often associated with hillbilly or rockabilly music.
Stepwise Progression	Chord A progression, say, from I-II or from II-III in a given key.

Strophic Form	Referring to vocal music in which the text changes but the music stays essentially the same.
Stylistic Gestures	Any device employed in part (as opposed to all) of a musical composition.
Subdominant	The fourth degree of a major or minor scale. Also, any triad built on that scale degree. With regard to some Beatles songs, see also 'substitute chord' below.
Substitute Chord	A chord used to function as another. Often the minor submediant triad is used as a substitute for the dominant triad in pop music.
Subtext	Something suggested but not explicitly explained. One possible subtext for the lyrics to "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is an acid trip.
Summer of Love	A term invented by <i>Time</i> magazine to define the summer of 1967 in terms of LSD, and San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury residential district, where many hippies lived that year in counter-cultural communities. The most famous musical 'product' of or associated with the Summer of Love was <i>Sgt. Pepper's</i> .
Surreal	Fantastic, dreamlike.
Swarmandel	A kind of Indian harp. Uncommon in Western music.
Tambura (or tamboura)	A small lute-like instrument from India. Similar instruments, including the tamburitza from the Balkans, can be found in countries around the world.
Tango	Popular Argentinian ballroom dance music with syncopated rhythm. It is in 2/4 time with the first quaver dotted.
Tape Loop	Originally a piece of magnetic recording tape spliced to itself so that it

could play endlessly without having to be rewound. Anything musical fragment or sound played over and over in a mechanical manner.

Three-Chord Songs (also: Three-Chord Players)	Songs employing only tonic, subdominant, and dominant (I / IV / V) chords. Often used to refer to rock 'n' roll music and the individuals who perform it.
Thirteenth	See 'Added Thirteenth'.
Tipping	Moving between two adjacent notes, often rapidly. See also 'popping'.
Tonic	The first degree of a major or minor scale.
Topical Song	A song with lyrics that discuss or refer to a current event or situation. "Taxman" is a topical song insofar as it refers to the British system of taxation, actual politicians involved with that system (including former Prime Minister Wilson), etc.
Transposition	To move a musical statement from one key to another.
Vamp	In popular music, a short, repeatable musical figure usually placed at the end of a song's introduction.
Vaudeville	A form of entertainment, usually a variety show, popular throughout late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe. Vaudeville songs were pop songs associated with such shows.
Verse	In popular music, either: a) the lyrics of a song; or b) the melodic period that precedes or follows the chorus or refrain.
Vocal Break	The point in any singer's range above which he or she cannot sing using chest voice. Shifting quickly between chest and head voice (or falsetto) produces an effect known as yodeling.
Vocal Range	The range, from lowest to highest, that a given singer can sing.

Sometimes restricted to chest voice.

Washboard Bass

A primitive instrument that lends rhythmic support in skiffle and hillbilly ensembles. Occasionally actually fashioned from a washboard, a device used for scrubbing clothes to get them clean.

White

Caucasian American. See also 'Black'.

Yodel

See 'Vocal Break'.