CFCH Style Guide for Transcribing Lyrical Content

Last updated 2021 October 26

Formatting

If applicable and identifiable, separate lyrical sections and changes within a song with line and section breaks. Lyric lines should be single-spaced and a double space should separate each stanza.
If unsure when to input a line or section break, some common identifiers are:

- A defined chorus, verse, intro or bridge
- Changes in the song tempo
- Changes in how the performer delivers the lyrics (from singing to rapping)

Capitalization

Capitalization in your lyrics must follow traditional grammar rules. Proper nouns must be capitalized. Additionally, all lyric lines must begin with a capital letter.

Here are examples of words that must be capitalized:

- Names
- Divinity and religious intricacies ("God," "You," "Him," "Your" in religious songs)
- Acronyms (NASA, FBI)
- Geographical location (Colombia, New York, etc.)
- Title casing
- The first letter of the first word contained in parentheses

Punctuation

Do not use periods or commas at the end of a lyric line. Exclamation points, question marks, and quotation marks must be the only end-line punctuation and can be included as needed. Within the line, it is most important to follow traditional grammar rules.

- **Hyphens:** dropped words, spelled out words, and acronyms (L-Y-R-I-C-S)
- **Parentheses:** background vocals must be wrapped in parentheses at the end of a line, with the first letter capitalized
- **Apostrophe:** for certain slang and contractual modifications (e.g. 'round for around, 'em for them, I'ma for I'm going to...etc.)

Repeated lines

The lyrics must match the audio. If a line is repeated, it must be written out.

Spoken word

If a performance includes spoken word/conversational content, please transcribe as you would a narrative-based recording, as recommended by the TC Sound instructions.

Non-word vocal sounds

Please refer to the section in the TC Sound instructions titled "Transcribing Speaker Sounds, Background Noise, Interruptions, & Unknowns" for guidance.