

# Creative Songwriting Workshop for Children

## Write a song with **The Mudcakes**

Workshop created by

Thaddeus Rex [www.thaddeusrex.com](http://www.thaddeusrex.com)

Adapted for Australian Audiences by Sherry Rich

### Specifications

Group size – 8 to 30

Ages - 4 to 6y.o or 7 to 9y.o or 10 to 12y.o with some flexibility

Times - 60 mins for younger kids. 90 mins for older.

Cost - **Please note – fees vary according to location and the number of shows requested on the day. Please contact us directly for a quote.**

CD postage and duplication will be an extra cost.

### Overview

This workshop is designed to get kids excited about their own creativity.

Students will learn specific skills for overcoming the intimidating writers block that can overwhelm beginners. Students will leave with a completed song they created as a group and a feeling that writing a song is just as natural as speaking or reading/writing a story.

THE MUDCAKES can record the song as performed by the kids and send it as an MP3 email to teacher or students who have access to a computer, or alternatively burn a CD to be collected/or posted the next day.

These young creatives are now the proud co-authors of a new piece of art!

### Requirements

A comfortable, quiet and enclosed room with power outlets.

A chalkboard and chalk or a whiteboard and markers.

Chairs or a rug and cushions. Toilet access.

A refreshment break is suggested for the 90 min session.

Parents are welcome to attend with younger children but we find school aged kids are less inhibited when parents are not there.

### I Intro

Introduce ourselves - THE MUDCAKES

A Short Discussion on Songwriting

Play a song they know (*ie - TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR*)

What was author of this song was doing when he wrote it?

Why do you think he/she wrote this song?

Play *SHORTNIN' BREAD* or *An Australian Folk Song* (Enquire about this one also)

Explain that songs don't need complicated concepts to be good

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star is a very simple song that became very famous

Shortnin' Bread is also a simple song that people really enjoy

## **2 Let's write our own song**

Simplify the concept of starting

We needn't plan the whole song at the start

Start with a single word for the song

This makes it simple to get started

Kids are not daunted by the task of finding a single word

The whole group brainstorms together on what that single word could be

All the options are written down

There are no bad ideas

We now democratically select which word to use

Kids vote on which word they want to use

If it's close, we vote again

If there's a tie, we use both chosen words

Brainstorm for ideas and democratically turn that single word into a phrase

Same process used for the 1st word is used here

If the single word they've picked is a noun, kids are asked what's it doing, if it's a verb, kids are asked what thing is doing the action (ie – Is it a person place or thing? What type of person place or thing is it? etc.)

The phrase is then added onto to make a 4 line stanza (continuing to use the brainstorming method to develop each additional line which fleshes out the actions we started in line 1)

We now have some decisions to make for this song...

Should the song rhyme or not? kids vote to decide

Should the song be fast or slow? kids vote to decide

Should the song be happy or sad?

Difference between major and minor keys is explained

THE MUDCAKES may demonstrate some different musical styles

Kids vote for their preference

The phrase is sung to a simple melody based on their decisions

Kids vote to decide if this 1st stanza should be the chorus or the 1st verse of the song

The difference between a chorus and verse is explained

The same process is used to create additional verses and a chorus as needed.

## **\* Notes on the workshop for younger children [4 to 6 y.o]**

We will create a 'Colour Song' or get kids to choose [by vote] from a selection of interesting photographs as a starting point for their song, then continue with a simplified version of the method above

## **3 Make a Balloon Maraca**

[While someone prints multiple copies of the song lyrics/chords]

What's a song without rhythm? Here's a fun way to keep the beat.

Kids take a break from thinking and keep those hands busy making a balloon maraca by dropping beans or rice into a balloon and then blowing it up. They can use it to play along to their song. The Mudcakes will also provide some unusual percussion and other instruments to spice up the performance.

## **4 The daunting task of writing a song is finished!**

The song is sung through twice by the kids

Revisions are now allowed, so long as the group agrees on them

**5 The song is sung one last time for the big recording session and the workshop is brought to a close**

A short discussion ends the workshop. Kids are reminded if they ever have trouble being creative to break the project up into small pieces and start with just the 1st word, then build on it.

Song lyric/chord sheets are given to each child and as previously discussed they will make arrangements to get their VERY OWN CD of the song THEY composed and performed.

Workshop created by Thaddeus Rex [www.thaddeusrex.com](http://www.thaddeusrex.com)

Adapted for Australian Audiences by Sherry Rich

thanks to [www.songwritingforkids.com](http://www.songwritingforkids.com) and [www.peterandellen.com](http://www.peterandellen.com)

**If you are interesting in hosting this workshop at your school, festival or other event please contact the Mudcakes – (Sherry] o423765192 or email [info@themudcakes.com](mailto:info@themudcakes.com)**