



MTO 30.2 Examples: Geary, Formal Functions of Drum Patterns in Post-Millennial Pop Songs, 2012–2021

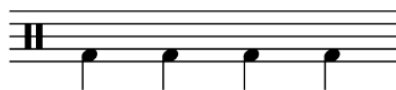
(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.24.30.2/mto.24.30.2.geary.html>

Example 1. Standard rock and four-on-the-floor drum patterns, and drum notation key

Standard Rock



Four-on-the-Floor

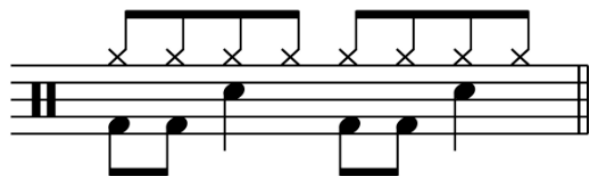


Notation Key

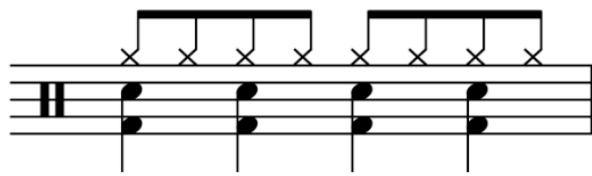
Bass	Snare (alternative)	Snare	Snare (ghost note)	Snare rim shot	Claps	Snaps	Woodblock
Hi-hat (foot)	Tambourine	Ride	Hi-hat (closed)	Hi-hat (half open)	Hi-hat (open)	Crash	

Example 2. The Beatles, "Day Tripper" (1966), verse 1

A+A



B

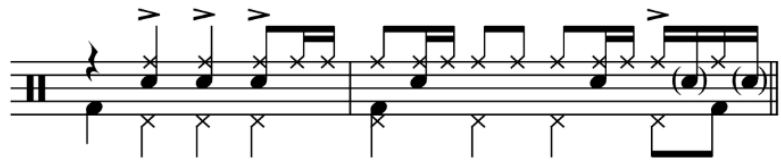


Example 3. James Brown, "Super Bad" (1970), verse and bridge

Verse*



Bridge*



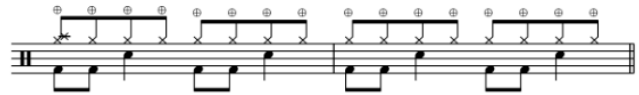
**slight variations on some repetitions*

Example 4. Nirvana, "Smells Like Teen Spirit" (1991), cycle 1

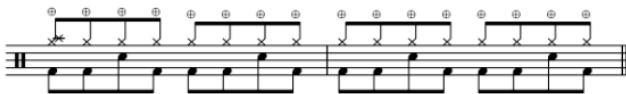
Verse 1



Prechorus 1.1



Prechorus 1.2



Chorus 1



Example 5. Carrie Underwood, "Before He Cheats" (2005), cycle 1

Verse 1.1



Verse 1.2



Chorus 1*



**slight variations on some repetitions*

Example 6. Halsey, "Without Me" (2018), cycle 1

Introduction **Verse 1**

Melody Found you when your heart was broke

Harmony *(Harmonic Synthesizer 1)*

Bass

Drums

Drum Pattern 1
[tacet]

Drum Pattern 2
backbeat claps
embellished standard rock bass drum

6

I filled your cup until it o ver-flowed Took it so far to keep you close I was a-fraid to leave you on your own I said I'd

Prechorus 1

9

catch you if you fall And if they laugh then fuck 'em all. And then I got you off your knees Put you right back on your feet Just so

(Bass Synthesizer 1)

Drum Pattern 3
sixteenth notes hi-hat
backbeat claps
more embellished standard rock bass drum

12

you could take ad-vant-age of me... Tell me how's it feel... sitt'in' up there Feel-ing so high but too far a way to hold me You know I'm the

???

(Harmonic Synthesizer II)

Drum Pattern 4
backbeat snaps

15

one who put you up there Name in the sky does it e-ver get lon-ely Think-ing you could live... with-out... me... Think-ing you could

Chorus 1

(Bass Synthesizer II)

Drum Pattern 6
sixteenth notes hi-hat
backbeat snare drum (different)
more embellished standard rock bass drum

18

live... with-out me Ba-by I'm the one who put you up there I don't know why... Think-ing you could

21

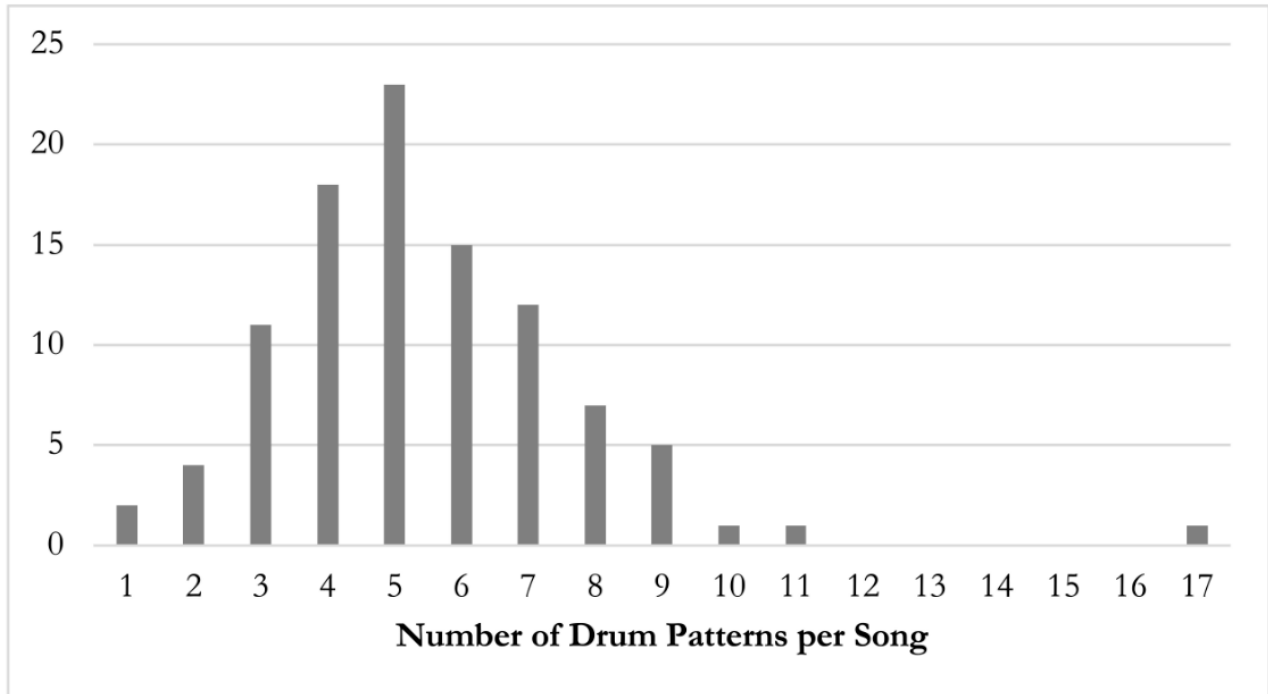
Postchorus 1

live... with-out me. Live... with-out me Ba-by I'm the one who put you up there I don't know why...

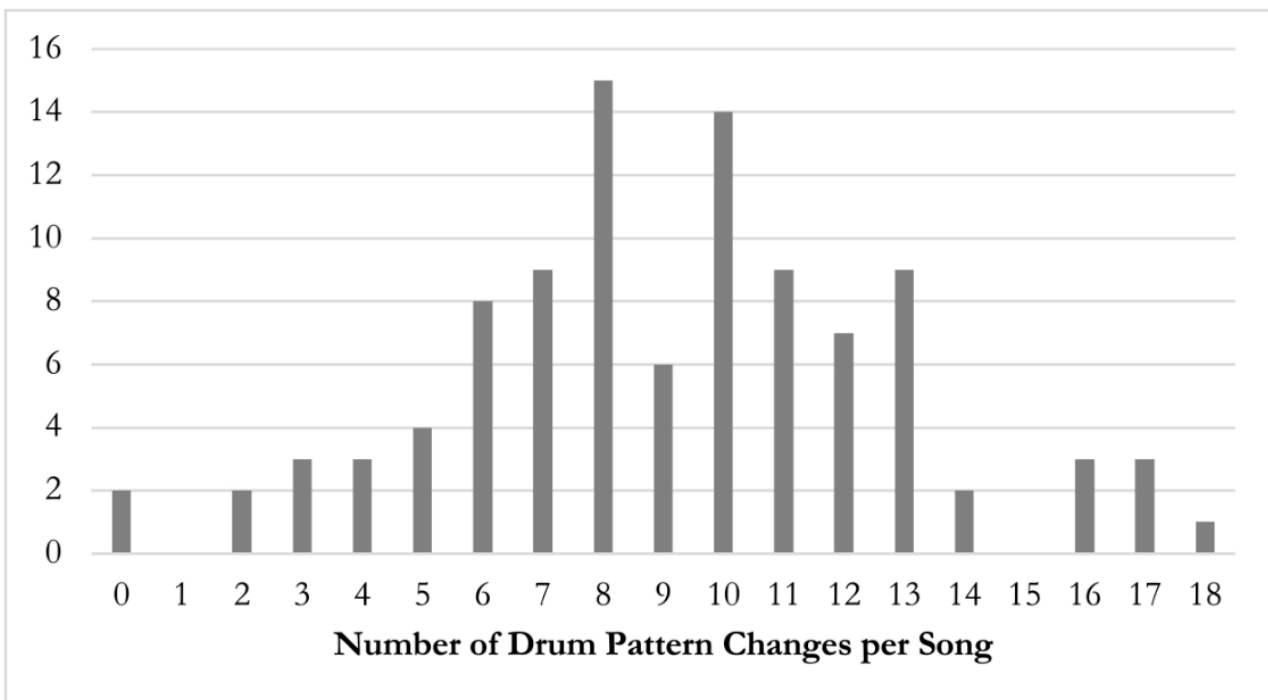
(Bass Synthesizer III)

Drum Pattern 7
backbeat woodblock

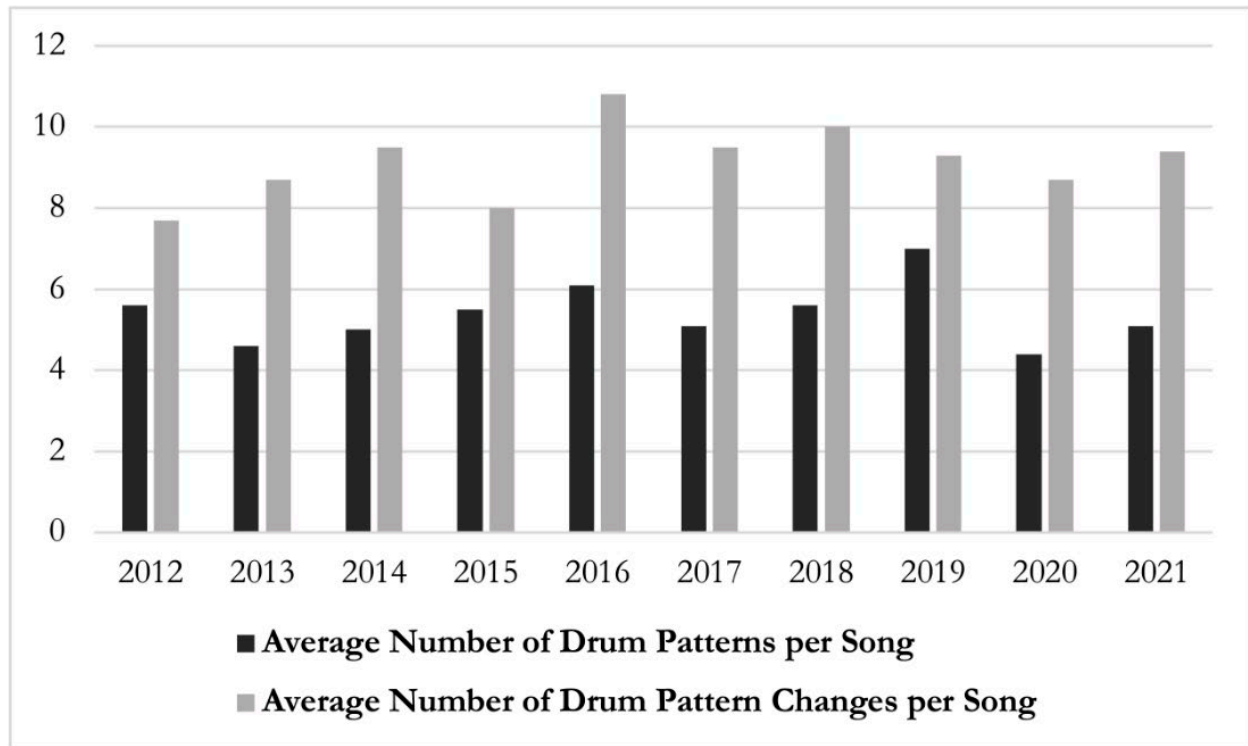
Example 7. Number of drum patterns per song



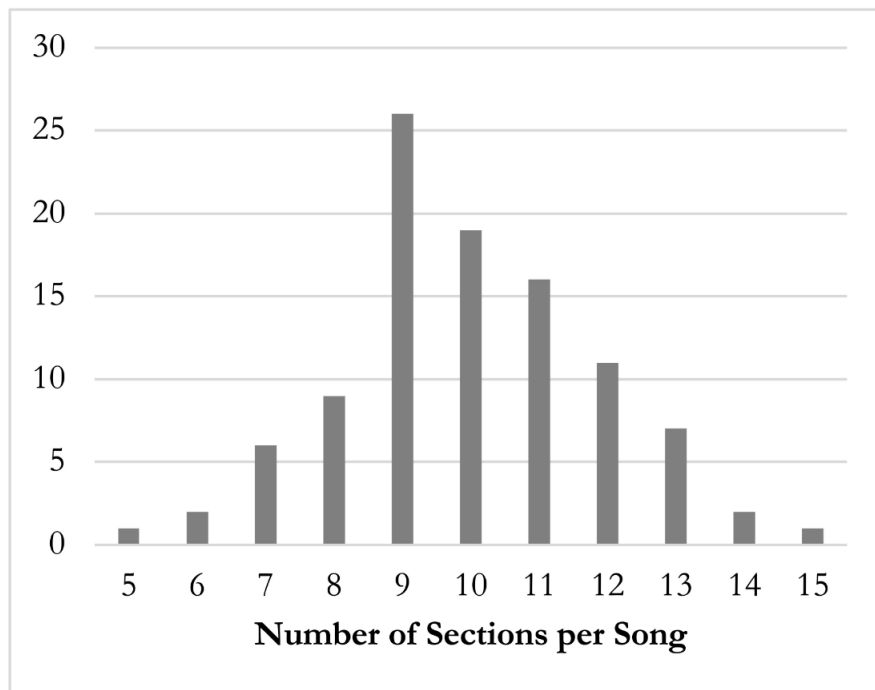
Example 8. Number of drum pattern changes per song



Example 9. Average number of drum patterns and drum pattern changes per song by year



Example 10. Number of sections per song

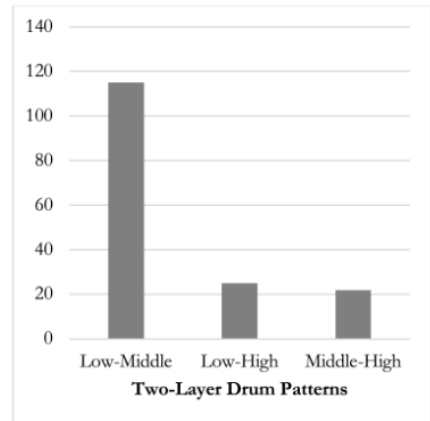
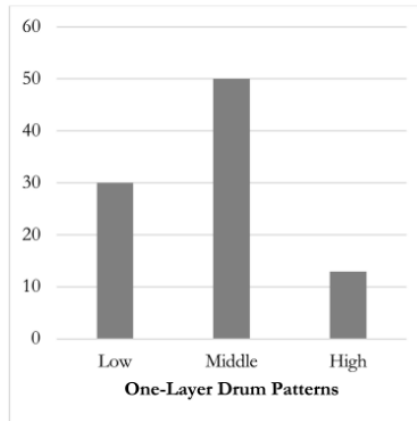
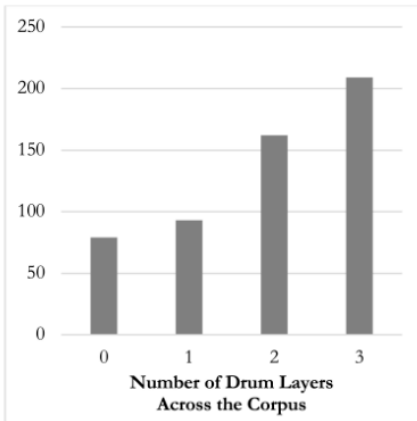


Example 11. Drum layers

Zero Layers **One Layer (middle)** **Two Layers (low+middle)** **Three Layers (low+middle+high)**

X - X - X X - B - X R - B - X
absent

R - B - 8
"standard rock" bass drum "backbeat" snare drum "eighth notes" hi-hat



Example 12. Ellie Goulding, "Lights" (2011), introduction to verse 1

Introduction

Verse 1.1

Verse 1.2

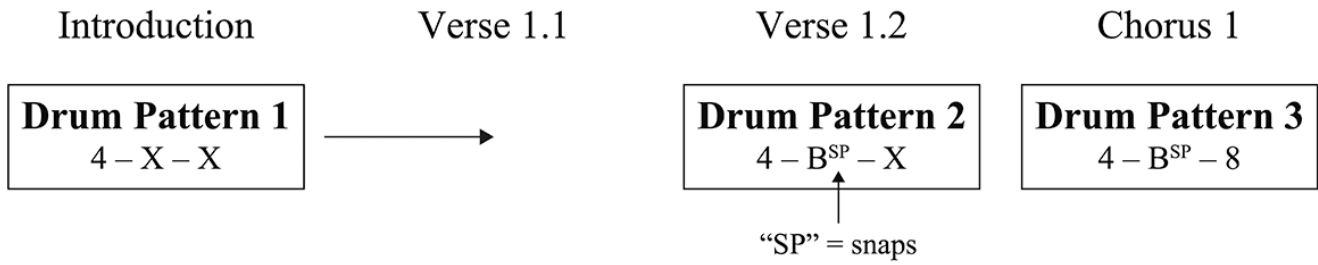
Drum Pattern 1
X - X - X

Drum Pattern 2
4 - X - X

Drum Pattern 3
4 - B - 8

↑
four-on-the-floor

Example 13. Billie Eilish, "Bad Guy" (2019), introduction to chorus 1



Example 14. Referential rhythms and other options

Referential Rhythms

Other Options

High Layer
hi-hat / tambourine

8 (eighth notes) 16 (sixteenth notes) 4 (quarter notes)

High Layer (Other Options): (hypothetical example) O (other), 8^{TAM}/16 (hybrid), X (absent)

Middle Layer
claps / snare

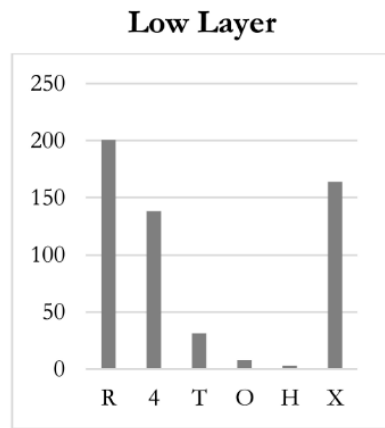
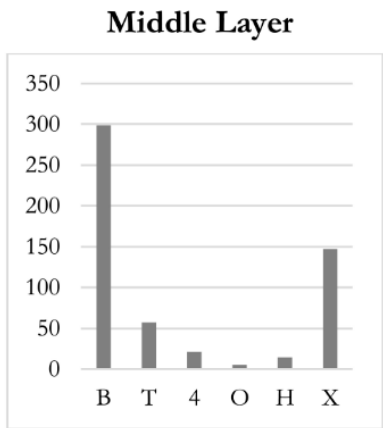
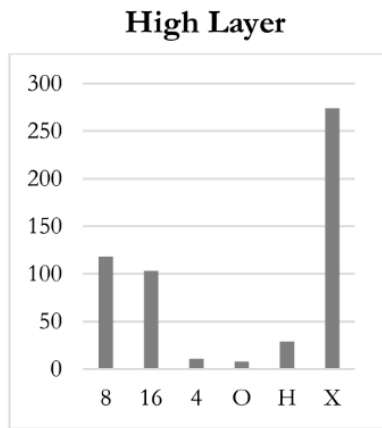
B (backbeat) T (tresillo) 4 (straight four)

Middle Layer (Other Options): (hypothetical example) 3 (other), B/4^{CL} (hybrid), X (absent)

Low Layer
stomps / bass

R (standard rock) 4 (four-on-the-floor) T (tresillo)

Low Layer (Other Options): (hypothetical example) O (other), R/4ST (hybrid), X (absent)



Example 15. Ariana Grande, "Positions" (2020), verse 1

Verse 1

R – B^{CL} – 16/8^{TAM}

Musical notation for Verse 1 of "Positions" by Ariana Grande. The notation is presented in two systems. The upper system consists of two staves: the top staff contains a series of rhythmic patterns marked with 'x' symbols, and the bottom staff contains a melodic line with notes and rests. The lower system consists of a single staff with a melodic line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 16/8.

Example 16. Ariana Grande, "Positions" (2020), chorus 1

Chorus 1

R+ – B^{CL} – 16

Musical notation for Chorus 1 of "Positions" by Ariana Grande. The notation is presented in a single system with a single staff. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests, characteristic of a rap flow. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 16/8.

Example 17. Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber, "I Don't Care" (2019), prechorus 2 to chorus 2

Prechorus 2

T – T – 8

Musical notation for Prechorus 2 of "I Don't Care" by Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber. The notation is presented in a single system with a single staff. It features a melodic line with notes and rests, including a circled note. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Chorus 2

T – T – 16

Musical notation for Chorus 2 of "I Don't Care" by Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber. The notation is presented in a single system with a single staff. It features a melodic line with notes and rests, including a circled note. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Example 18. Flo Rida, "Good Feeling" (2011), bridge to chorus 3

Bridge (Rise)

R – B – X (HT)



Chorus 3.1

4 – 4 – X



Example 19. Marshmello, "Happier" (2018), verse 1 to chorus 1

Verse 1.1

Verse 1.2

Prechorus 1.1

Prechorus 1.2

Chorus 1

Drum Pattern 1
X – B^{SP} – X

Drum Pattern 2
R – B^{SP} – 16

Drum Pattern 3
X – B^{CL} – X

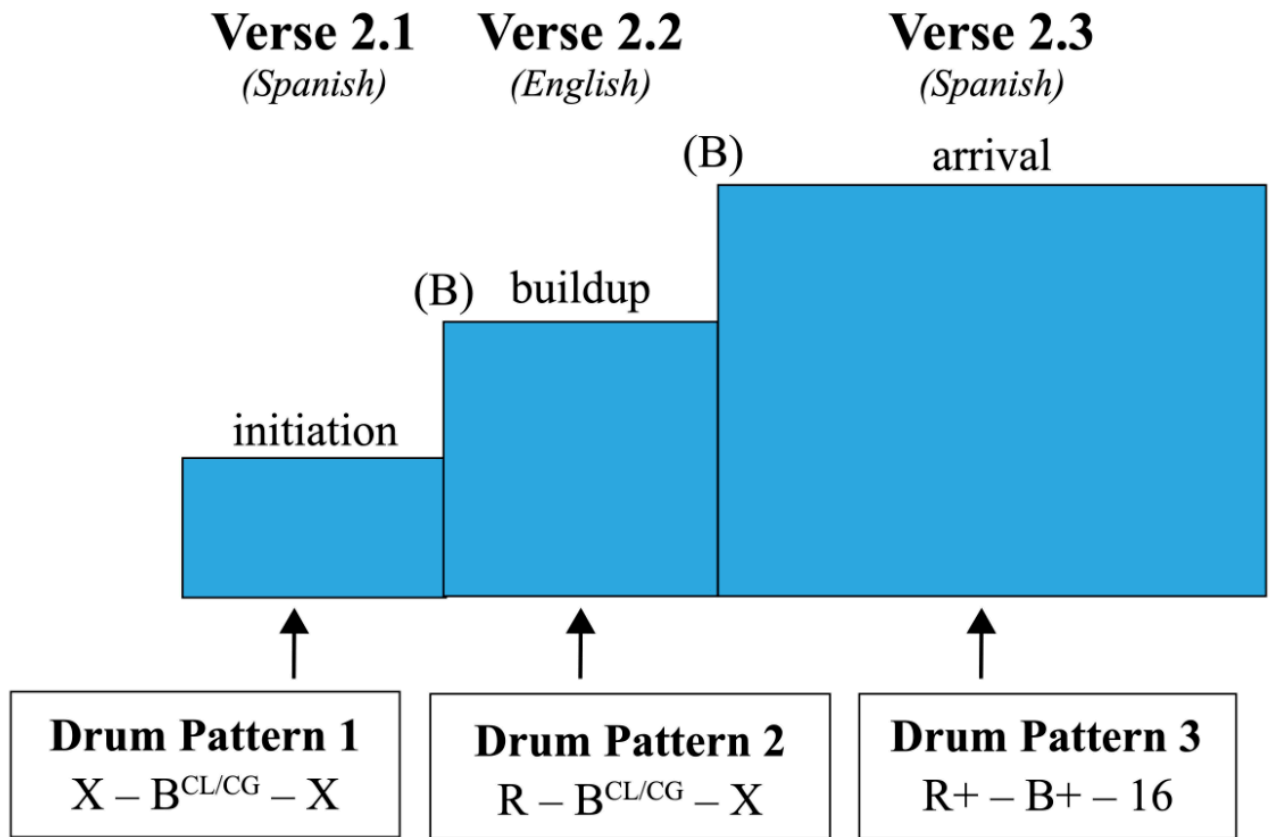
Drum Pattern 4
X – B^{CL} – 16

Drum Pattern 5
R+ – B+ – 16

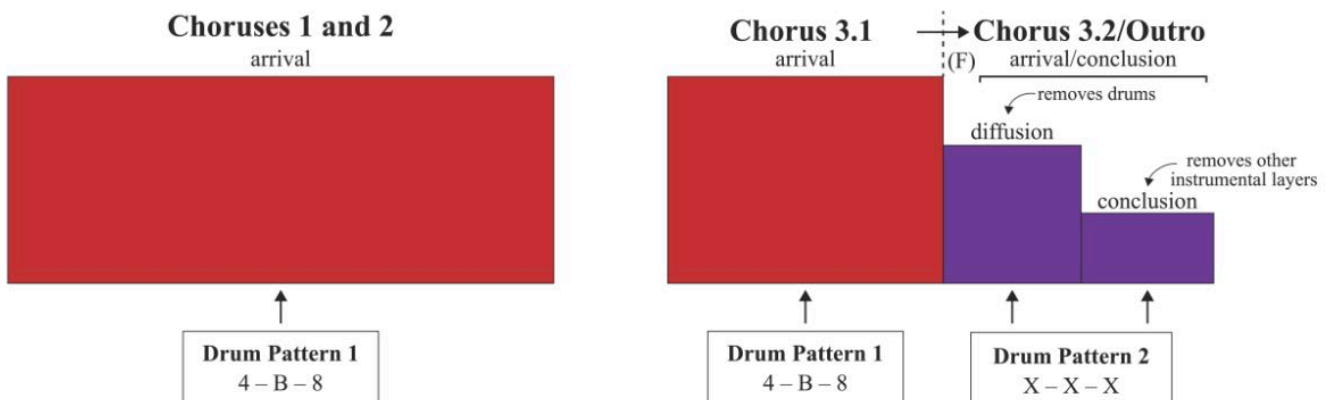
Example 20. Drum pattern changes

	Number of Layers	Rhythm	Instrumentation
Build (B)	Add	Quicken/Enliven	Louden/Expand
Fall (F)	Remove	Slow/Relax	Soften/Contract

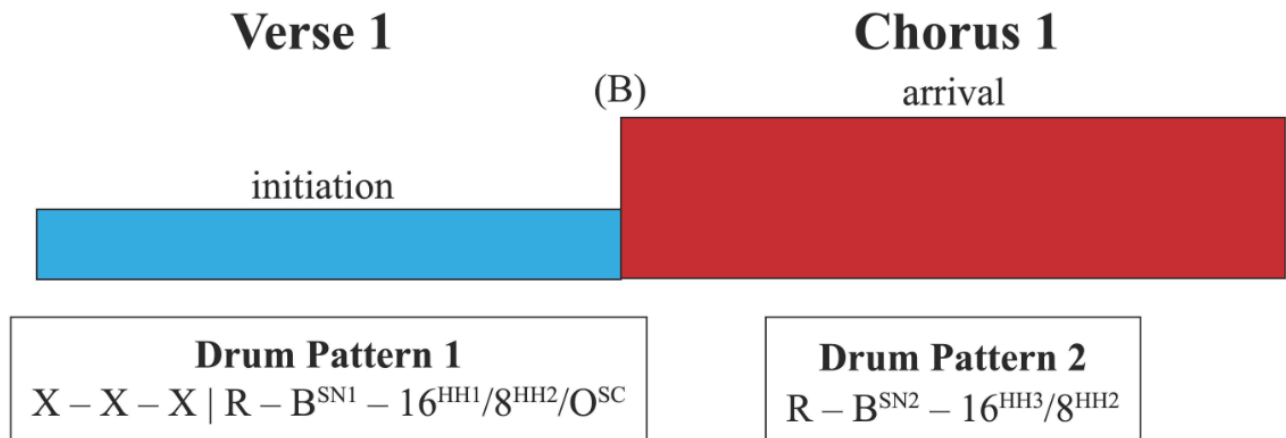
Example 21. Cardi B, Bad Bunny, and J Balvin, "I Like It" (2018), verse 2



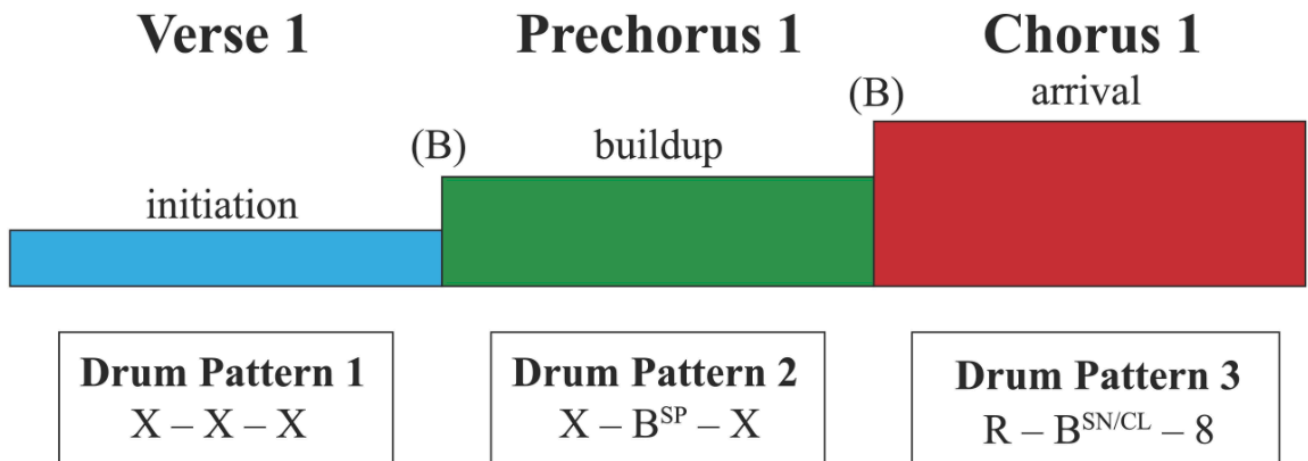
Example 22. Post Malone, "Circles" (2019), choruses



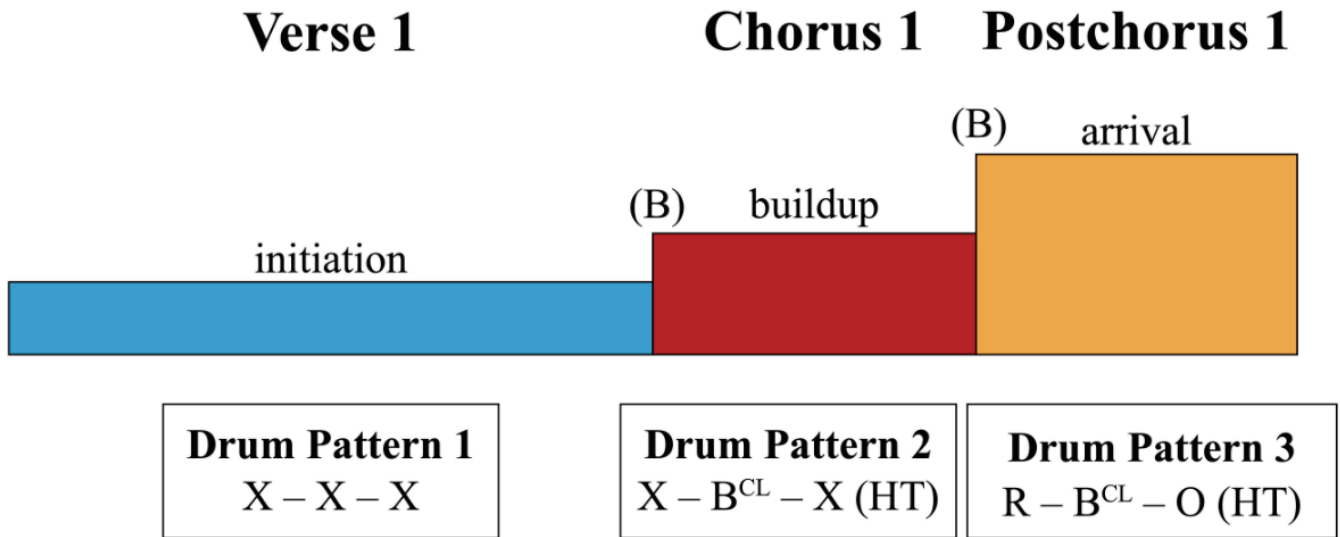
Example 23. Bazzi, "Mine" (2017), cycle 1



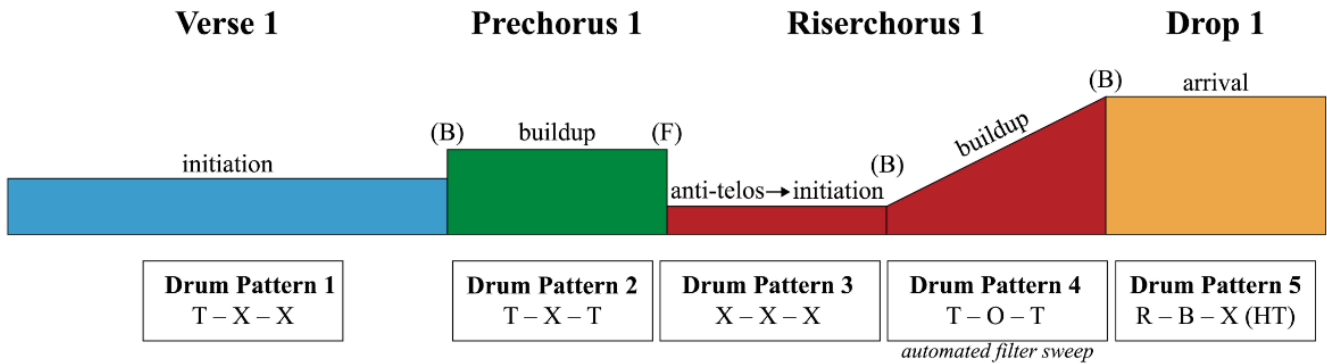
Example 24. The Weeknd, "Can't Feel My Face" (2015), cycle 1



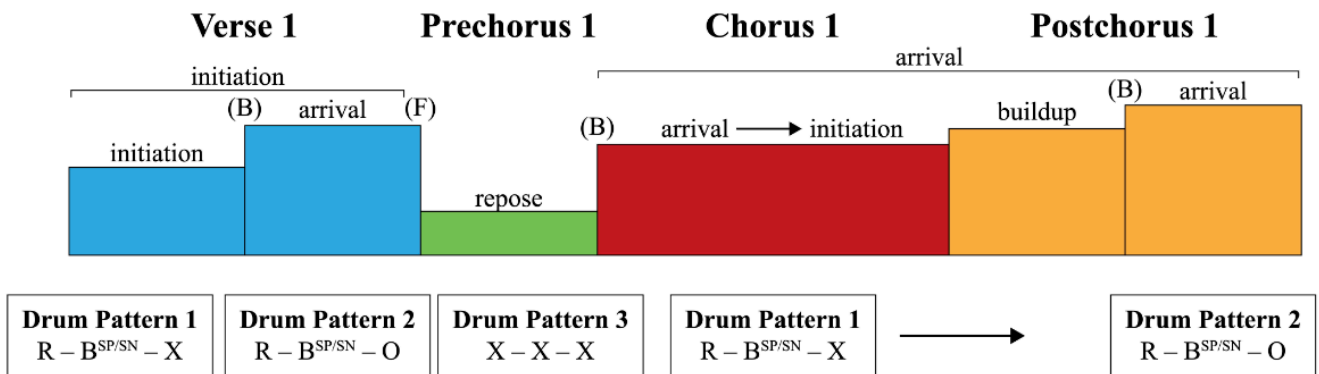
Example 25. Maroon 5, "Girls Like You (2018), cycle 1



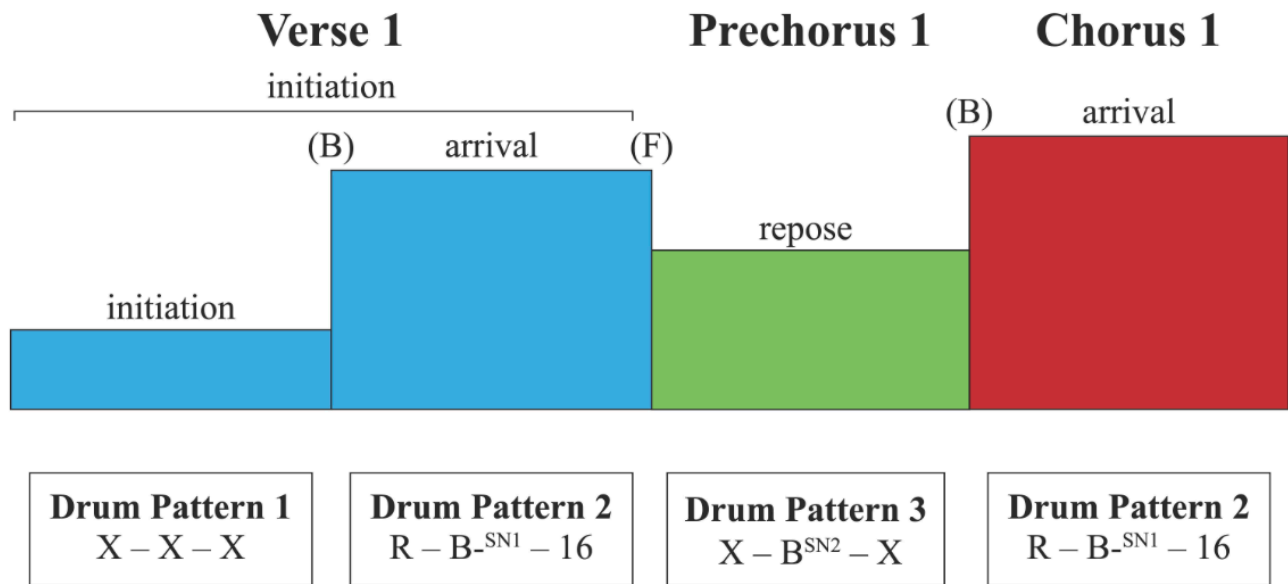
Example 26. Taylor Swift, "I Knew You Were Trouble" (2012), cycle 1



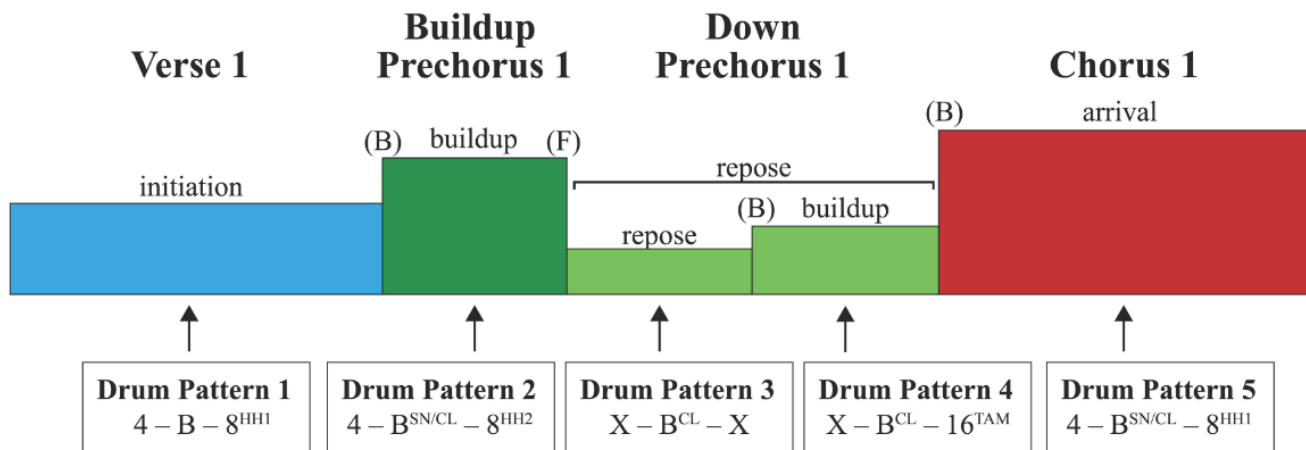
Example 27. DJ Khaled, "No Brainer" (2018), cycle 1



Example 28. Twenty One Pilots, "Ride" (2016), cycle 1



Example 29. Dua Lipa, "Don't Start Now" (2020), cycle 1



Examples 30-32 are videos (online)

Example 33. Drum pattern labeling system

PRIMARY SYMBOLS

Low Layer	Middle Layer	High Layer	All Layers
standard rock (R)	backbeat (B)	eighth notes (8)	other (O)
four-on-the-floor (4)	straight four (4)	sixteenth notes (16)	hybrid (variable)
tresillo (T)	tresillo (T)	quarter notes (4)	absent (X)

AUXILIARY SYMBOLS

Surface Rhythm: plus (+) and minus (-) symbols depict comparative amounts of surface rhythm embellishment

Instrumentation: abbreviated superscripts indicate instrumentation other than bass drum, snare drum, and hi-hat

Drum Feel: normal-time feel is assumed and parenthetical addendums express half-time feel (HT) and double-time feel (DT)

EXAMPLES

$R - B - 8$	$R+ - B^{CL} - 8^{TAM}/16$	$R - B - X (HT)$
		