

Christmas Just DOESN't Work Out For me

Songwriters Blueprint

1. Basics of the song lyrics. Answer these:

Relatable Premise = The holiday season is portrayed as magical for most people, yet deeply painful for those who've experienced loss or loneliness. For some, Christmas has become a symbol of emotional isolation and disappointment, year after year.

Emotion = Melancholy, bitterness wrapped in sadness, quiet heartbreak.

Central Point/Core Idea (What's song about?) = Christmas is supposed to be full of joy, family, and warmth but for some, it's a harsh reminder of everything that's missing. It never works out for them, no matter how much they hope it will. It simply doesn't bring them joy and they finally confess it.

What is the key emotion evoked? Hopelessness masked by effort; a longing that turns to surrender.

Unique because of = This flips the typical "cheerful Christmas song" trope by honestly acknowledging that the holidays can be incredibly hard for some people. It's raw, introspective, and taps into a rarely discussed side of the season.

Singer style/mood/attitude = Tender, wounded, restrained in the beginning, then increasingly heartfelt and expressive as the song builds—like someone trying to hold back tears but finally lets them out in the last chorus.

Backing vocals = Gentle male harmonies in key lines for emotional layering with optional children's choir echo or "ghost" whispers in final chorus for contrast

What's the juicy part that everybody can relate to? The moment you realize you're the only one not smiling, and you can't pretend anymore. The season that once held promise now just hurts.

2. Point of view. Answer these:

Who is talking = A man who's emotionally spent after years of trying to believe in the magic of Christmas.

What is their character avatar = A weary soul; possibly someone who's experienced trauma, grief, or chronic emotional distance during the holidays.

What pronoun? “I” - deeply personal

Who are they talking to = Themselves (internal monologue), and to anyone who's ever felt the same way.

Their character avatar = Empaths, emotionally wounded, holiday loners, or quiet reflectors.

What pronoun? “You,” indirectly inviting listener empathy

Why are they talking to them? To process and validate their feelings, and connect with others silently suffering through holiday cheer.

3. What is the musical/lyric hook that encapsulates the relatable premise? Write the lyric and sing the melody. The only part of the song you want to write out of pure inspiration is this step.

- What is the Hook: Christmas just doesn't work out for me
- What is the Melody: soft and breathy vocal delivery in first chorus, then builds into a haunting and layered final chorus.

4a. Where will the hook be in the chorus? Beginning? Middle? End?

Last line of each chorus, as the emotional climax.

Main Idea: Every effort to feel joy ends the same disappointment and sadness.

Details (imagery/senses):

- Smiling people
- Crackling fires that don't warm
- Lights that blind but don't brighten
- Holiday music that rings hollow

Sensory/metaphor:

- Christmas as a mirage
- Smiles like wrapping paper - beautiful but empty
- Snow that numbs instead of delights

4b. What will comprise the remainder of the chorus?

The chorus speaks to effort, failure, and realization. It's not that he hasn't tried, he's *tried hard* but it just doesn't reach him. Christmas joy remains out of reach.

5. What will I say in the 1st verse that will set up my chorus? (Only one main thought idea per section so you don't confuse listener with too much). You need to know the **What and Why and When And How and Where and Who**. Tell the Story in the verses. Use human senses - what can the character and listener see, hear, touch, taste and smell? Use details in verses - what is the central character wearing? Who else is in the song? What are other characters doing, wearing, saying, etc.?

Main Idea: Despite doing all the right things like decorating, caroling, wrapping gifts, he still feels empty.

Details (imagery/senses):

- Twinkling lights with no warmth
- Wrapped gifts that feel meaningless
- A voice singing carols that sounds like a stranger

Sensory/metaphor: Christmas is a snow globe. Beautiful from the outside, but he's stuck inside alone.

6. What will I say in the pre-chorus (if there is one) that will set up my chorus?

Main Idea: A cold contrast between outer celebration and inner isolation.

Details (imagery/senses):

- Snow falls, but it brings a chill
- Christmas stories feel like lies
- Songs feel empty

Sensory/metaphor: The season is a stage; he's an actor who forgets his lines.

7. What will I say in the 2nd verse that will further the story and set up and keep moving the chorus along? It has to be different than verse 1 – don't say the same thing or idea again. (Only one main thought idea per section so you don't confuse listener with too much).

Main Idea: Even childhood warmth is gone. He tries to fake a smile, but his heart is aching.

Details (imagery/senses):

- A fire that won't warm
- Decorations that feel hollow
- A heart colder than the snow outside

Sensory/metaphor: He's a cracked ornament no one hangs anymore.

8. If the bridge has lyrics, what will be said there? Must fit into relatable premise but offer a different twist/perspective but still make sense. The most emotional lyrics tend to come in the bridge where the story is being resolved, or where you're adding an extra twist in the tale to heighten the emotion. There are three things a bridge can do:

- 1) Change time
- 2) Change perspective
- 3) Go universal/philosophical

Main Idea: He'll look back one day and realize he was always on the outside of the holiday joy.

Details (imagery/senses):

- Stars shining for others, not him
- The weight of being left out again and again
- Memories that once gave hope now bring pain

Sensory/metaphor: He's the only unwrapped gift under the tree.

9. If there is a 3rd verse or ending, what will be said there? Is it really needed?

None

Ending / Final Chorus

Main Idea: He repeats the chorus, but now with *finality* instead of hope. He's no longer trying. This is his resignation.

Details (imagery/senses):

- Whispers instead of belts
- Emptiness in the sound
- Music fades out with snow or wind FX

Sensory/metaphor: Christmas just doesn't work out for me becomes his closing thought—the period on a season he no longer believes in.

Final Checklist – answer these questions:

DID YOU TELL THE WHOLE STORY?

Yes. We go from hopeful tradition to painful resignation with strong emotional and sensory progression.

DID YOU INVITE THE LISTENER IN?

Yes. The internal monologue reflects what many quietly feel but rarely admit aloud.

DID YOU FULFILL EXPECTATIONS?

Yes. The setup of a man trying to love Christmas resolves clearly in emotional defeat, not ambiguity.

DID YOU SAY WHAT YOU MEANT TO SAY?

Yes. The song sticks with its theme and hits a deep emotional chord.

DOES THE SONG FEEL COMPLETE?

Yes. It has structure, emotional arc, sensory richness, and a satisfying (if sad) conclusion.