



SONGSMITH COACHING

CLARITY. CREATIVITY. PURPOSE.

WRITING *for* SYNC

STUDENT HANDBOOK &
RIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGMENT



*Everything you need to know about writing for
television, film, and commercial sync before your first session.*



WRITE INTENTIONALLY.



UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS.



CREATE WITH CONFIDENCE.

A GUIDE TO SONGWRITING OWNERSHIP, PUBLISHING,
MASTER RECORDINGS, ROYALTIES, AND SYNC LICENSING.

— *Rhyan Shirley* —
SONGSMITH COACHING

SYNC WRITING SESSION

AGREEMENT & RIGHTS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Before Booking a Sync Writing Session

Thank you for your interest in writing for TV, film, and advertising with SongSmith Coaching.

Because sync licensing operates differently than traditional songwriting, it's important that you understand how ownership works before we begin writing together. This document is designed to explain those rights in simple terms so there are no surprises later.



IMPORTANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

Before booking a Sync Writing Session, you must not have signed an exclusive publishing agreement or publishing administration agreement that controls your share of the songs we write together, unless we have discussed it beforehand and confirmed that it will not interfere with the project.

WHY?

One of the most valuable things a song can be in the sync world is one-stop.

A one-stop song means that a music supervisor only has to work with one team to obtain all of the permissions necessary to license the song.

Those permissions generally include:



THE SONGWRITING RIGHTS
(WRITER'S SHARE AND
PUBLISHER'S SHARE)



THE MASTER RECORDING



ADMINISTRATION NEEDED
TO ISSUE LICENSES AND
COLLECT ROYALTIES



The fewer parties involved, the easier and faster it is for a production company to clear the song.



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If your publishing or administration is already controlled by another company, they may have approval rights over your share of the song.

While this does not prevent your songs from being placed in TV or film, it may not fit the streamlined one-stop process used for SongSmith Coaching sync sessions.



For that reason, **please do not book a Sync Writing Session** if your publishing or administration is already committed elsewhere unless we have discussed your situation in advance.



If you're unsure whether you've signed an agreement that affects your eligibility, please **reach out before booking**.

I'd much rather answer your questions beforehand than discover an issue after we've written a great song.

ONE-STOP IS KEY



PRODUCTION
COMPANY



MUSIC
SUPERVISOR



ONE-STOP SONG

*All rights in one place. Easier,
faster, and more licensable.*

Before We Get Started: UNDERSTANDING SYNC

The music industry uses a lot of terminology that can sound confusing, but the concepts are actually very simple.

The most important thing to understand is that every song has **two completely separate copyrights**.



THE SONG
(PUBLISHING)

*Lyrics, melody, chords,
and composition*



THE RECORDING
(THE MASTER)

*The finished audio
recording*

THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT ASSETS
THAT ARE LICENSED SEPARATELY.

PUBLISHING (THE SONG)

When people say "publishing," they're actually referring to the ownership of the song itself.

That includes:



LYRICS



MELODY



CHORDS



COMPOSITION

Publishing is divided into two separate halves:



WRITER'S SHARE

This is the portion owned by the songwriter(s). If we write a song together, we'll agree upon our songwriting percentages, and each writer owns their agreed-upon writer's share.



PUBLISHER'S SHARE

The publisher's share is the business side of the song. This is the portion that handles licensing opportunities, administration, royalty collection, and the commercial exploitation of the song.



In the sync world, many sync companies prefer to control the publisher's share because it allows them to quickly license songs without having to negotiate through multiple publishers. For a song to be truly "one-stop," the sync company typically wants to control the publisher's share for licensing purposes.



THE MASTER RECORDING

- The master is the finished audio recording.
- It's the version someone hears on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, or in a TV show or commercial.
- The master belongs to whoever paid to create that recording or whoever those ownership rights have been assigned to.
- Owning the master is completely separate from owning the songwriting.



WHY THIS MATTERS

When a TV show, movie, commercial, trailer, or streaming platform wants to use a song, they usually need permission from both copyright owners:



THE OWNER(S) OF
THE SONGWRITING
(PUBLISHING)



THE OWNER(S) OF
THE MASTER RECORDING



Without permission from both, the song generally cannot be licensed.



HOW SONGSMITH COACHING WORKS

- When you invest in a Sync Writing Session, you're investing in writing the song together. That means you'll own your agreed-upon percentage of the songwriting (your writer's share).
- Because your coaching investment does not include the cost of producing a professional master recording—which may involve production, musicians, studio time, engineering, mixing, and mastering—you will not automatically own the master recording created from that song.
- In most cases, the master will remain with SongSmith Coaching or the individual or company that financed the recording.
- If owning the master is important to your long-term goals, I'm always happy to discuss options. Master ownership can often be negotiated separately or purchased depending on the project.
- Transparency is extremely important to me, and I want you to understand exactly what you own before we write a single lyric.



WHAT HAPPENS IF WE GET A SYNC PLACEMENT?

Every sync placement is different. There is no universal payment structure, and compensation depends entirely on the project, the production company, the network, the budget, and the licensing agreement.

Every placement is negotiated individually.

SOME PLACEMENTS PAY:

- ✓ A large upfront sync fee with little or no backend royalties.
- ✓ A small sync fee with significant performance royalties over time.
- ✓ No upfront sync fee at all, but substantial backend royalties if the production is broadcast repeatedly.
- ✓ Both an upfront sync fee and ongoing royalty income.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INCOME

EVERY SYNC PLACEMENT IS DIFFERENT. HERE ARE THE PRIMARY
WAYS INCOME MAY BE GENERATED FROM A SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT.

1



SYNC FEE

A sync fee is the upfront licensing payment made for permission to synchronize your music with visual media.

This fee is negotiated on a case-by-case basis and is not guaranteed.

2



PUBLISHING INCOME

Publishing income is paid based on each songwriter's ownership percentage and the agreed-upon publishing arrangement.

3



MASTER INCOME

Master income is paid to whoever owns the master recording.

If you own part of the master, you'll receive your agreed-upon share of any master income.

4



PERFORMANCE ROYALTIES

If the production is broadcast publicly—such as on television, streaming services, cable networks, or other qualifying performances—you may earn performance royalties through your Performing Rights Organization (PRO).

Examples include:



Performance royalties are often one of the primary long-term revenue streams from successful sync placements.



Every placement is unique, and every song has its own story.
MY GOAL IS TO HELP YOU WRITE SONGS THAT CREATE IMPACT
AND CAN OPEN DOORS FOR YEARS TO COME.



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THE SIMPLE VERSION



THE SONG = *Lyrics, melody, and composition.*



PUBLISHING = Ownership and administration of the song itself, including both the writer's share and the publisher's share.



THE MASTER = *The finished recording.*



SYNC = Licensing both the songwriting and the master recording for use in TV, film, advertising, trailers, video games, or other visual media.



Your SongSmith Coaching investment covers writing the song together.



It does not automatically include ownership of the master recording.



If owning the master is part of your goals, I'm always happy to discuss options before production begins.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT



By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- ☐ I have carefully read and understand this document.
- ☐ I understand the difference between the songwriting, publishing, and master recording.
- ☐ I understand that songwriting ownership and master ownership are separate rights.
- ☐ I understand that my coaching investment covers the collaborative songwriting process and does not automatically include ownership of the master recording.
- ☐ I understand that sync placements may include an upfront sync fee, backend royalties, both, or neither, depending on the specific licensing agreement.
- ☐ I understand that every sync placement is negotiated individually and that no specific placement or income is guaranteed.
- ☐ I confirm that I have disclosed any existing publishing or publishing administration agreements that could affect my eligibility for a one-stop sync writing session.
- ☐ I understand my rights, how this process works, and I am excited to begin writing with SongSmith Coaching in pursuit of television, film, and commercial sync opportunities.



PRINTED NAME: _____



SIGNATURE: _____



DATE: _____

Signature required before booking a SongSmith Coaching Sync Writing Session. 





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Thank *You*

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide.

One of the things I value most is transparency. My hope is that you now have a clear understanding of how sync licensing works, what you'll own, and what to expect if we have the opportunity to create something special together.

Over the years, I've been fortunate to have songs featured on television shows including ***Love Is Blind, The Ultimatum, The L Word, Teen Mom, Siesta Key, Ex on the Beach, Married at First Sight***, and many others.

Every placement has been a reminder that you never know where the right song might end up—or whose story it might help tell.



NOW, I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF
WRITING THE NEXT ONE WITH YOU.

While no placement can ever be guaranteed, every successful sync song begins the same way: with a great idea, a strong collaboration, and a willingness to create with intention.

Thank you for trusting SongSmith Coaching to be part of your songwriting journey. Whether this is your first sync session or the beginning of a long career in writing for film and television, I'm honored to help you navigate both the creative and business sides of the industry.

I can't wait to get in the room and start writing.

See you soon,

Rhyan Shirley

FOUNDER • SONGSMITH COACHING



EVERY GREAT
PLACEMENT
BEGINS WITH A
GREAT SONG.

