Sing and Play Worksheet

Page 1: the six rung ladder. Use one song, a metronome or drum loop, and fill in your tempos.

1. My song

Song	Key and capo	Time signature	Target tempo (bpm)

2. The six rung ladder

Move up a rung after **three clean runs in a row** of the whole verse. If a rung falls apart, drop back one rung or slow down by 10 bpm. Write the tempo you started at and the tempo where it felt solid, and tick each day you practise the rung.

Rung	What you do	How	Start bpm	Solid bpm	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1	**Guitar alone, eyes up**	Chords and strum pattern for the whole song without looking. Test: talk, count or hum over it.					
2	**Speak the lyric, one strum per bar**	One strum on beat 1 of each bar. Speak the words in rhythm, no pitch.					
3	**Sing, one strum per bar**	Same as rung 2, but sing the melody. Let each strum ring.					
4	**Sing, a strum on every beat**	Simple down strums on each beat. Feel which words land on which strums.					
5	**Sing with the real strum pattern**	Full pattern. Loop the hardest line on its own, then rebuild the verse.					
6	**Full performance, recorded**	Target tempo, eyes up, record it. Listen for rushed changes and lost words.					

3. Quick checks before you sing

Check	Tick
I can play every chord change in the song cleanly at the target tempo	
I can play the guitar part without looking at my hands	
I know the words by heart	
The key suits my voice (use a capo to move it up if needed)	
I have marked where each chord change falls under the lyric (page 2)	

Why this order? Research on dual tasks shows that doing two things at once is hardest when both need a decision at the same moment, and that the cost shrinks as one task becomes automatic with practice (Pashler, 1994; Poldrack and colleagues, 2005). The rungs are our teaching sequence, informed by that research rather than tested as a protocol. Full sources are on the web page.

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Page 2: the song prep grid. Mark the syllable where every chord change lands.

4. Worked example: Amazing Grace (public domain), 3/4 time, key of G

Pickup before bar 1: "A" on beat 3 of the count in. Red chords are changes; they land on the bold syllable.

G			G			C			G			G			G			D		
1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
maz		ing	grace		how	**sweet**		the	**sound**		that	saved		a	wretch		like	**me**		I

G			G			C			G			G			D			G		
1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
once		was	lost		but	**now**		am	**found**		was	blind		but	**now**		I	**see**		

Every change lands on beat 1, on a stressed syllable. "A", "I" and "that" are pickups sung just before the change. Lyrics by John Newton (1779), tune New Britain (1829), both public domain. Simple arrangement by Maxim's Guitar Workshop.

5. My song grid (4 beats per bar; cross out beat 4 for songs in 3/4)

Write the chord in the shaded box, then each syllable under the beat it falls on. Circle any change that lands between words or before a line starts: those are the trouble spots.

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Chord:				Chord:				Chord:				Chord:			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Trouble spot (bar and words)	What I will do (slow it down, loop it, simplify the strum)