A PictureLyrics Video in a Nutshell

I welcome people to devise their own system for making videos, so long as the final product meets our quality specifications. Here is a brief overview of my process, in case you don't want to get bogged down or led astray by the details.

Tools:

1. Computer: I work with a home-built Power User Editing Build PC, though a Budget Video Editing PC could also work, and of course Mac's and laptops will work – at least 8GB of RAM is recommended for basic video editing.

2. Verifying whether music can be used: YouTube

3. Buying music: iTunes application, Amazon, CD Baby, SoundCloud, etc. (ALWAYS PAY FOR MUSIC USED IN VIDEOS)

4. Websites for finding pictures: CC Search -> Google Images ("use for commercial purposes" checked), pixabay, freepik

5. Websites for free fonts: 1001 Fonts (select free for commercial use)

6. Data tracking for picture and font attribution: Excel

7. Video and home slides production: Adobe Premiere Elements, Pixlr online photo editor, PowerPoint

8. Getting paid: PayPal, Patreon

9. Book-keeping and organization: here is a link to a PictureLyrics starter folder, including a picture dictionary with over 2,000 high quality pictures, my "picture dictionary source data" and individual song source data Excel files, an example Adobe Premiere Elements video file, and example PowerPoint files for home/school slides - all the folders and files I regularly make use of.

Making the Video:

1. Choose a song and verify whether it can be used in a YouTube video (note: most original Beatles songs CANNOT be used). Original music is welcome and encouraged. We encourage you to release your music on SoundCloud or another music site under one of the Creative Commons licenses.

2. Buy high quality version of music, if applicable.

3. Find and/or create pictures – save highest possible resolution pictures in "picture dictionary" folder; save picture link in file properties or "picture dictionary source data" Excel as you go:

- background picture for video
- title and artist picture
- lyrics marker picture
- pictures to represent lyrics in song

4. Put together video in editor: arrange pictures in the center of the video and text along the bottom, lyrics marker scrolls as each lyric is sung. At the end of the video, either use our "PictureLyrics video end template" or make your own to link to your other work and thank your viewers.

Post-production

5. Export title picture for use as YouTube thumbnail, on our website, social media etc.

6. Make a text file with your desired YouTube description, with a link to the music you used and any other information you wish to include. Using the "(song name) source data" Excel file, we can enter the picture references in the YouTube description for you.

7. Enter picture and font data, in alphabetical order by file name, into "picture dictionary source data". Copy "all_source_data" region in "picture dictionary source data", values only to "all_source_data" region in "(song name) source data" Excel file. Then enter information for the media you use in the video in the order it appears in the "(song name) sources" tab (for example, background image, title font, title, song lyrics, etc.).

8. Put all files except the "picture dictionary" folder into a single folder called "PictureLyrics (song name)" and upload to Google Drive or other file sharing platform. Share with picturelyricsdotorg(at)gmail.com

9. We will work with you to get your video up to publishing standard – once it is ready we ask that you convert the video to educational slides for use in the classroom or home. If you don't have PowerPoint, you can simply add a pure white background behind your video, remove the lyrics marker, and export a snapshot of each line. We will add these to a PowerPoint slideshow.

10. We will then release your video on our channel with your personally crafted description, and upload the slides to our website. You're finished, congratulations! Enjoy watching your view count grow as you spread music and language across the world!

Quality Specifications

1. Music: music must have lyrics. If applicable, you MUST purchase the music; all music must be high-quality, with lyrics clearly audible.

2. Picture resolution: always download the highest resolution possible, and aim for at least 1920 pixels along one edge.

3. Picture source: all pictures and video must be free for commercial use; for copyrighted pictures, you must produce permission to use the picture, or as a last resort invoke the Fair Use Clause.

4. Picture content: must be related to the lyrics, and must not contain graphic nudity or violence.

5. Picture placement: pictures should appear centrally and scroll left to right. Use borders and remove backgrounds where this would create a better-looking picture or aid in clarifying the meaning of the lyric. Optional but recommended – pictures should begin at a reduced size and expand to full size as the lyric passes.

6. Text lyric and lyric marker placement: text lyrics should be Times New Roman, size 60 font, placed at 950 pixels from the top (130 from the bottom). Each lyric should appear at the center of its corresponding picture. The lyric marker should move below the center of each lyric as it is sung.

7. Video settings: MP4 1080p HD or higher, 29.97 frames per second or higher (should match source if you use recorded video), High Profile, Bitrate 10 Mbps or higher, see YouTube recommendations for further guidance.

8. Sound quality: AAC, stereo, 48khz, 320 kbps or higher.

9. Book-keeping:

- create a folder called "PictureLyrics (song name)" to save all files related to video – keep "picture dictionary" folder separate from this folder
- save music, video editing files, title picture, and final exported video in this folder
- save all pictures used in BOTH the "picture dictionary" and "(song name) video pictures" folders
- save all picture data in the Excel file "picture dictionary source data"
- use "(song name) source data template" to record sources for pictures and fonts used; if you have entered the data in the "all source data" tab of "picture dictionary source data", copy the "all_source_data" region in that file to the "all_source_data" region in "(song name) source data", then enter the word/element and file information and the sheet will calculate the rest
- share "PictureLyrics (song name)" folder with picturelyricsdotorg(at)gmail.com when you are finished

10. Slides for home and school use: once we approve the above materials we will work with you to produce slides – a straightforward process of removing the background and lyrics marker, exporting a freeze frame each line, and adding these to a PowerPoint presentation.