



## LISTENING GUIDE

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## Alanis Morissette, “You Oughta Know”

Words and music by Alanis Morissette and Glen Ballard, produced by Glen Ballard. From the album *Jagged Little Pill*, which rose to #1 in the United States and the UK in 1995.

**FORM:** Contrasting verse-chorus. Each 20-bar verse is made up of six times through the same 4-bar chord pattern, though the last 8 measures each time are much louder and more aggressive, and repeat the same lyrics in verses 1 and 2. The chorus is made up of two times through a contrasting 4-bar pattern, with the second 4 bars extended by 1 measure to create a 9-bar section. The song presents this verse-chorus pair three times, with an extra time through the chorus added at the end. Contrast is provided by the third verse, which features no lyrics during the first 12 bars, but only Morissette’s expressive moaning and shouting, indicative of the emotional suffering that is the basis of the lyrics. The focus of the song is on the anger and resentment felt by the protagonist after a romantic breakup, and each verse-chorus pair begins quiet and brooding and builds to a stormy chorus.

**TIME SIGNATURE:** 4/4 throughout.

**INSTRUMENTATION:** Electric guitars, bass, organ, drums, and lead vocals.

0:00–0:55

**Verse 1, 20 mm.**

Begins quietly with vocals and snare drum only, with guitar, bass and drums entering and building toward the chorus with the addition of distorted guitar. “I want you to know . . .”

0:55–1:16	<b>Chorus</b> , 9 mm.	This hard-driving section is almost shouted, and is the loudest and most aggressive section of the song. Note the wah-wah guitar. “And I’m here . . .”
1:16–2:10	<b>Verse 2</b> , 20 mm.	As before, building from quiet and distressed to angry and sarcastic, but this time with more activity in the electric guitar and bass. “You seem very well . . .”
2:10–2:31	<b>Chorus</b> , 9 mm.	As before, heavy and almost manic, with the organ mixed a bit louder in the mix. “And I’m here . . .”
2:31–3:26	<b>Verse 3</b> , 20 mm.	The first bars are instrumental, featuring spacey guitar sounds and melodic moaning in the vocals that become sobs, with singing returning in the last 8 bars but with new lyrics.
3:26–3:46	<b>Chorus</b> , 9 mm.	As before, driving and insistent. “Well I’m here . . .”
3:46–4:07	<b>Chorus</b> , 9 mm.	High guitar added to further intensify the obsessive quality of the music. Ends with vocal alone, as it began. “Well I’m here . . .”