

The Conflict Duet - Assignment

The Big Bang Theory

Write a duet for a specific moment in the pilot episode of *The Big Bang Theory* by Bill Prady and Chuck Lorre.

One of the ongoing conflicts in the series is the constant bickering between Sheldon and Leonard, one always correcting or disagreeing with the other, often on nit-picking grounds nobody else would care about or even be interested in. After reading the entire pilot, go back and analyze the scene that begins on page 20 (scene 5), where Sheldon and Leonard are in the car, preparing to rescue Penny's TV from her former boyfriend. We can assume the ex-boyfriend is somewhat more aggressive than either Sheldon or Leonard ...and probably both of them combined. Still, they are bickering – why are we doing this, should we be doing this, can we actually do this, etc. There are also other points of conflict between the two in other areas of the script that might be employed here.

Parameters:

Write the song with these parameters: 1) The basic shape of the song will be A-A-B-A. However, there may be contrasting sections, melodic and harmonic development along the way. As always, it's best if the audience is treated to once through the “tune” of a song before including variations, but this is not a hard and fast rule. 2) Characterize the song. It is being sung by two very different people - this means the music and words must reflect these differences. Examples of this sort of characterization include *I'll Never Be Jealous Again* from *The Pajama Game* and *Like Everyone Else* from *Side Show*. In the *Pajama Game* example, the music is quite different for each character, whereas in the *Side Show* example the two characters are delineated more by words and orchestration. In order to provide contrasting music to reflect the different attitudes of Sheldon and Leonard, you may want to create contrapuntal singing. Call and response might also work in this instance, especially if the response is contrary to the call. Other ways of providing subtextual information include reharmonizing portions of the song when the singer's attitude changes, or creating different accompaniment figures to indicate underlying emotional intentions. These are tools, not requirements. The composer must decide how to characterize this conflict musically, just as the lyricist must decide how to explore the conflict with words.

Lyricists: write the lyrics, as well as a description about what each stanza is hoping to accomplish.

Composers: write the music, as well as a brief description about how you're hoping the characters' states of mind are reflected in your music.