

Examples of Progressions
in contemporary Broadway musicals and Golden Age musicals

Problem/Solution progression

"I Cain't Say No" from *Oklahoma!*

A - Problem: "I can't say no to men who flirt with me."
A - Why is it a problem? "I should smack 'em, but I don't."
B - possible solution(s) "I could spit in his eye."
A - take an action -- "I'm going to kiss him back."

Problem: "I can't say no to men who flirt with me."
I'm just a girl who cain't say 'no'
I'm in a terrible fix!
I always say 'Come on, let's go' just when I aughta say 'Nix.'
When a person tries to kiss a girl

Why is it a problem? "I should smack 'em, but I don't."
I know she aughta give his face a smack!
But as soon as someone kisses me
I somehow sorta want to kiss him back!

I'm just a fool when lights are low
I cain't be prissy an' quaint
I ain't the type that can faint
How can I be what I ain't?
I cain't say 'no!'

Whatcha gonna do when a feller gets flirty
An' starts to talk purty
Whatcha gonna do?
S'pposin' that he says
That your lips are like cherries,
Or roses, or berries
Whatcha gonna do?
S'pposin' that he says
That yer sweeter than cream
And he's gotta have cream or die?

Possible solution(s) "I could spit in his eye."
Whatcha gonna do when he talks that way?
Spit in his eye?

I'm jist a girl who cain't say no,
Cain't seem to say it at all
I hate to disserpoint a beau
When he is payin' a call!
Fer a while I ack refined and cool,
A settin on the velveteen setee
Nen I think of thet ol' golden rule,
And do fer him what he would do fer me!

I cain't resist a Romeo
In a sombrero and chaps

Take an action -- "I'm going to kiss him back."
Soon as I sit on their laps
Somethin' inside of me snaps
I cain't say no!

Problem/solution progression

"Requiem" from *Evan Hansen*

A - Problem: "Everyone wants me to grieve."

A - Why is it a problem? "I can't play the grieving girl."

B - possible solution(s) "I could hide in my room; fall to pieces."

A - take an action -- "I'm not going to sing a requiem."

Problem: Everyone wants me to grieve

Why should I play this game of pretend?

Remembering through a secondhand sorrow?

Such a great son and wonderful friend

Oh don't the tears just pour.

Possible solution - "I could hide in my room; fall to pieces."

I can curl up and hide in my room

There in my bed still sobbing tomorrow

I could give in to all of the gloom

But tell me, tell me what for

Why should I have a heavy heart?

Why should I start to break in pieces?

Why should I go and fall apart for you?

Second A - Why is it a problem? "I can't play the grieving girl."

So don't tell me that I didn't have it right

Don't tell me that it wasn't black and white

After all you've put me through, don't say it wasn't true

That you were not the monster that I knew,

'Cuz I cannot play the grieving girl and lie

Saying that I miss you and that my world has gone dark

Solution/Action: "I'm not going to sing a requiem."

I will sing no requiem

Tonight

'Cuz when the villains fall, the kingdoms never weep

No one lights a candle to remember

No, no one mourns at all

They lay them to sleep

I will sing no requiem tonight.

Problem/solution progression
"Papi Hears the Ocean" from *The Band's Visit*

Problem: "I don't know where to start with girls."
Why is that an issue: "I freeze; my hands are heavy; I lose my wits."
Possible solution: "I should keep trying."
Action: "But I'm not going to try."

Problem: "I don't know where to start with girls."
I don't know, with the girls, I don't know what to do
I don't know where to start
I'm smarter up here than I am down here
And up here, I'm not too smart

...

Why is that an issue: "I freeze; my hands are heavy; I lose my wits."
And I smell like falafel
And my ears get hot
And I feel real awful
And all I hear is-

...

Dead, dead, dead!
Belly up, going round
Sinking down, down, down
Like a schmuck

Dead in the head
Dead in the water
Dead in a magical sea
Full of suck!

Possible solution: "I should keep trying."
Go ahead and tell me I should keep on trying
Go ahead and tell me I should break the ice

Action: "But I'm not going to try."
I'll be standing here, deaf and dying
And all I'll hear is...

[The sounds of the ocean]

Viewpoint Progression

What I Did For Love from "A Chorus Line"

A - (I think) "I have no regrets."

A - (Because) "My eyes are dry."

B - (But) "I haven't forgotten you; I'll remember our love."

C - (That's why I say) "Kiss today goodbye; I'm moving on."

Kiss today goodbye, the sweetness and the sorrow.

Wish me luck. The same to you

But I can't regret what I did for love.

What I did for love.

Look, my eyes are dry. The gift was ours to borrow,

It's as if we always knew,

And I won't forget what I did for love,

What I did for love.

Gone, love is never gone.

As we travel on, love's what we'll remember!

Kiss today goodbye, and point me toward tomorrow.

We did what we had to do.

Won't forget, can't regret

What I did for love.

Viewpoint Progression
"What Baking Can Do" from *Waitress*

A - (I think) "Making pies is good therapy for me."
A - (Because) "It works for ME; I hide my secrets in pies; and heal"
B - (On the other hand) "The fix doesn't work on everything."
A - (That's why I say) "Look at me bake!"

A1 - I THINK

Make it work
Make it easy
Make it clever, craft it into pieces
Make it sweet
Crimp the edges
Or make it sour and serve with lemon wedges
Even doubt
Can be delicious
And it washes off of all the dirty dishes
When it's done
I can smile
It's on someone else's plate for a while

I'll place it on display
And then I'll slice and serve my worries away

A2 - BECAUSE

I can fix this
I can twist it into sugar, butter covered pieces
Never mind what's underneath it
I have done it before
I'll bake me a door to help me get through
I learned that from you
Mama, it's amazing what baking can do

Make it up
And surprise them
Tell them all my secrets but disguise them
So they dance on the tongue
Of the very people that they're secrets from
Make it soon
Make it better
(B - content actually starts here)
Though, better never lasts forever
I'll make it small so it fits

B - ON THE OTHER HAND

Even this . . .

Even now . . .

Even as the walls come tumbling down

Even as I can't stop remembering how

Every door we ever made, we never once walked out

Something I never got the chance to ask her about

A3 - That's why I say

(And so I'll show them I'm happy; look at me bake!)

Time Progression - Past/Present/Future

"Memory" from *Cats*

A - present

A - past

B - (compare times)

A - future

Midnight, not a sound from the pavement
Has the moon lost her memory?
She is smiling alone
In the lamplight the withered leaves collect at my feet
And the wind begins to moan.

Memory all alone in the moonlight
I can smile at the old days
I was beautiful then
I remember the time I knew what happiness was
Let the memory live again.

Every street lamp seems to beat a fatalistic warning
Someone mutters and the street lamp gutters
And soon it will be morning.

Daylight, I must wait for the sunrise.
I must think of a new life
And I mustn't give in
When the dawn comes
Tonight will be a memory too
And new day will begin.

Time Progression - Past/Present/Future
"I Believe" from *The Book of Mormon*

A1 - Past

Ever since I was a child
I tried to be the best...
So what happened?
My family and friends all said I was blessed...
so what happened?

A2 - Present

And now I can feel the excitement.
This is the moment I was born to do.
I realize now why he sent me here!

B - Present v past

My problem was doubting
I can't allow myself to have any doubt.
I am a Mormon and, dang it,
A Mormon just believes.

A3 - Future

If you believe,
The Lord will reveal it.
And you'll know it's all true-
You'll just feel it.

Time Progression - Calendar/Clock

If Ever I Would Leave You from "Camelot"

A - spring
A - summer
B - autumn
A - winter

If ever I would leave you
It wouldn't be in summer;
Seeing you in summer, I never would go.
Your hair streaked with sunlight. . .
Your lips red as flame . . .
Your face with a luster
That puts gold to shame.

But if I'd ever leave you,
It couldn't be in autumn.
How I'd leave in autumn, I never would know.
I've seen how you sparkle
When fall nips the air.
I know you in autumn
And I must be there.

And could I leave you running merrily through the snow?
Or on a wintry evening when you catch the fire's glow?

If ever I would leave you,
How could it be in springtime,
Knowing how in spring I'm bewitch'd by you so?
Oh, no, not in springtime!
Summer, winter or fall!
No, never could I leave you at all.

Time Progression - Calendar/clock

"Me and the Sky" from *Come From Away*

A - when I first got my pilot's license
A - all female crew; getting married
B - I'm a mother now; looking back to parents; present/past
A - someone's died; time has stopped

Suddenly I'm in the cockpit
Suddenly I've got my wings
Suddenly all of those pilots protested me
Well, they can get their own drinks
Suddenly there's no one saying, "Stay grounded"
Looking down passing them by
Suddenly there's nothing in between me and the sky

Suddenly I've got an all female crew
The news talked, it made headlines across the world
Suddenly it stopped
No one saying, "You can't" or "You won't"
Or "You know you're not anything 'cause you're a girl"

Suddenly I'm getting married
And we're putting pins on the map where we've flown
Suddenly I am a mother
And suddenly shocked at how much they've grown
Suddenly I'm wondering how my parents would feel
Seeing me teaching men to be pilots
'Cause suddenly I am a senior instructor and somehow I'm 51

Suddenly I'm flying Paris to Dallas
Across The Atlantic and feeling calm
When suddenly someone on air to air traffic says
"At 8:46 there's been a terrorist action"
And the one thing I loved more than anything was used as the bomb

Suddenly I'm in a hotel
Suddenly something has died
Suddenly there's something in between me and the sky

Pronoun Progression

"I Knew Him Once" from *The Big Beginning*

A - I/he

A - I/he (not talking to him)

B - you

A - I/you (talking to him)

I knew him once
So very long ago.
And he was happy then.
But he went away and changed.
I never saw him again.

I knew him once
He threw it all away.
We didn't speak for years.
When he finally said goodbye
Of course I had no tears.

Why you pulled away
You never would say.
You never gave me answers.
Why you turned so dark I never knew.
I turned my back on you.

I knew you once.
At least I thought I did
Until you called that night
Asking how I'd been
I knew you once.
Perhaps I will again.

Pronoun Progression

"I Am Here For You" from *The Book of Mormon*

I
I/you
us

ELDER CUNNINGHAM
Evening star shines brightly,
God makes like anew!
Tomorrow is a latter day,
And I am here for you.

ELDER PRICE:
I am here for you, too.

ELDER CUNNINGHAM and ELDER PRICE:
We are here
For us.

Pronoun Progression
"All I've Ever Known" from *Hadestown*

A - I
A - I/you
B - us/we
A - us/we

[EURYDICE]
I was alone so long
I didn't even know that I was lonely
Out in the cold so long
I didn't even know that I was cold
Turned my collar to the wind
This is how it's always been

All I've ever known is how to hold my own
All I've ever known is how to hold my own
But now I wanna hold you, too

You take me in your arms
And suddenly there's sunlight all around me
Everything bright and warm
And shining like it never did before
And for a moment I forget
Just how dark and cold it gets

All I've ever known is how to hold my own
All I've ever known is how to hold my own
But now I wanna hold you
Now I wanna hold you
Hold you close
I don't ever wanna have to let you go

Now I wanna hold you, hold you tight
I don't wanna go back to the lonely life

Say that you'll hold me forever
Say that the wind won't change on us
Say that we'll stay with each other
And it'll always be like this

[ORPHEUS]
I'm gonna hold you forever
The wind will never change on us
As long as we stay with each other
Then it will always be like this.

Geography Progression

"The Lonely Goatherd" from *The Sound of Music*

Hill, town, bridge, boat, chapel.

High on a hill was a lonely goatherd
Layee odl, layee odl layee-oo
Loud was the voice of the lonely goatherd
Layee odl, layee odl-oo
Folks in a town that was quite remote heard
Layee odl, layee odl layee-oo
Lusty and clear from the goatherd's throat heard
Layee odl, layee odl-oo
Oho layee odllee-oo
Oho layee odl ay!
Oho layee odllee-oo
Hododlleeoy!

A prince on the bridge of a castle moat heard
Layee odl, layee odl layee-oo
Men on a boat with a load to tote heard
Layee odl, layee odl-oo
Men in the mists of a chapel dote heard
Layee odl, layee odl-oo
Men drinking beer with the foam afloat heard
Layee odl, layee odl layee-oo

Geography Progression
"Any Way the Wind Blows" from *Hadestown*

hit the road; down south; in the valley; a bowl of dust; don't look back

Any Way the Wind Blows
In the fever of a world in flames
In the season of the hurricanes
Flood will get you if the fire don't
Any way the wind blows

And there ain't a thing that you can do
When the weather takes a turn on you
'Cept for hurry up and hit the road
Any way the wind blows

Sister's gone, gone the gypsy route
Brother's gone, gone for a job down south
Ain't nobody gonna stick around
When the dark clouds roll
Any way the wind blows

In the valley of the exodus
In the belly of a bowl of dust
Crows and buzzards flying low
Any way the wind blows

No use talking of the past, it's passed
Set out walking and you don't look back
Where you're goin' there ain't no one knows
Any way the wind blows

Sister's gone, gone the gypsy route
Brother's gone, gone for a job down south
Gone the same way as the shantytown
And the traveling show
Any way the wind blows