



ROCK & ROLL OF THE 1950S & 1960S

FEATURES

1	Lyrics	Simple, repetitive and easily memorable – teenage concerns: love, relationships, cars, school life and holidays.
2	Tempo & Metre	Fast (Allegro) – ideal for dancing. 4/4 Time Signature.
3	Harmony & Tonality	Major tonality using mainly simple and repetitive Primary Chords – I, IV & V with slow Harmonic Rhythm often in the 12-Bar Blues Structure Close Harmonies used in the vocals.
4	Melody	Often uses ‘blue notes’ (flattened 3rd, 5th and 7th against a major chord). “Catchy” Melodies have a narrow vocal range. Vocal and guitar melodies use repeated
5	Rhythm	Backbeat (accenting 2nd and 4th beats of the bar on the snare drum). Often features a Walking Bass Line. Syncopation, Swung Rhythms and Boogie-Woogie
6	Structure	Verse-Chorus Form with a short Introduction (often instrumental but sometimes vocal), solo verses, chorus, instrumental section (improvised solos or scat singing) ending with a Coda/Outro.

B

INSTRUMENTATION & TECHNOLOGY

1	Vocal Performance	Mainly male lead singers using high-pitch vocals and falsetto giving an untrained or shouty tone/timbre with screeches, jeers and cheers. Slides and scat singing often used.
2	Instrumentation	Early Rock ‘n’ Roll – lead vocalist accompanied by a small group of acoustic instruments – piano, drum kit, saxophone, trumpet, harmonica, trombone and double bass. The Electric Guitar soon became an essential part of Rock ‘n’ Roll and Backing Singers/Vocalists were frequently used in Rock ‘n’ Roll songs.
3	Technology	Amplifiers for Electric Guitars used for the first time. Basic effects such as Reverb and Echo. Clean guitar sounds (not overdriven). Double-track lead and backing vocals for richer sounds. “Raw” sound of recordings.

C

ARTISTS & VENUES

1	Artists	Soloist – Elvis Presley Group – The Beatles
2	Venues	Dance Halls, Clubs (live), Concert Halls, Juke Boxes, Coffee Bars, Radio and to buy on Record/Vinyl.