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Advanced Media Writing
Mr. Bennett
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5 steps to finding a great band name

You love music. So do a couple of your friends. You decide one day that playing in a band would be a lot of fun. Each person brings their instruments and you spend an afternoon jamming out a couple songs. Next thing you know your band has big dreams of topping the charts and tours. Before you get that big hit, there is something very important: naming the band.

Coming up with a great band name is critical to the band's success. Many bands have great music and lyrics but no one seems to remember them because it's difficult to even pronounce their names, much less remember them. On the other side I have heard some really awful popular music because the band name is easily recognizable and memorable.

I've put together my top three ways to help you come up with a great name.

Brainstorm a long list

Brainstorming really helps. Take the list everywhere with you and continue to add to it throughout the day. Write down names, numbers, interests, hobbies, activities, and words you see or hear.

It was with this method that my roommates and I came up with our last band name. We had four pages worth of random words, sayings, and names before we came up with the right one "Jersey City Fire." We started with band member's names and interests such as "Kyle saw a UFO,"-My roommate Kyle actually did see a UFO and he does have pictures- or "Shane's Mom." You need something catchy, but cool.

The great thing about a list is that you and your band can pick out some of your top favorites and then go and get feedback from others. There were many times when our friend Jason thought he had a great band name but no one else agreed. Having a list will help spark something and chances are you will probably come up with a list of good names to choose from.

Combine two random words

If you need help beginning your list, look around you. Try combining any two random words or numbers you see. You might be surprised.

I'm looking around my desk right now and I can see some good ones like "Kid Falls," or "Game Scene", or from the Jenga box, "Devious Tower" Numbers work too, "Fast 25," or "Static 16." The great thing about this is that people will always want to know where the name came from. They just know that there is some deep story or meaning behind these catchy titles. You could either lie and make up a story or just tell them that it came from a can of static guard and a kid's puzzle box.

Choose technical words

Try getting a dictionary or a Thesaurus and pick out a random good sounding word. Something very technical but a word that not a lot of people know. If anyone actually recognizes the word they will associate your band with the meaning of the word; so in a word of caution, try to agree or some affiliation with the meaning of the word.

Maybe an example will help illustrate a point. I've thought that the name "Dharma" is really pretty. After taking a World Religion course I found out that Dharma is actually a Hindu word meaning the path or way to enlightenment.

These are a few ways to help get the inspiration flowing. I hope it of assistance in helping you start out your band on the right foot with the right name.