

Johnny B. Goode (1958)

Chuck Berry

LISTEN FOR

- Clever lyrics lacking innuendo
- Driving guitar solos, including short bursts in chorus
- Elements of R&B (12-bar blues, blue notes, electric guitar)
- Elements of country (text, vocal delivery)

CREATION

Songwriters Chuck Berry (lyrics, music)

Label, Record Chess 1691

Musicians Chuck Berry (electric guitar, lead vocal), Lafayette Leake (piano), Willie Dixon (acoustic bass), Fred Below (drums)

Producer Leonard and Phil Chess

Recording Chess Studios (Chicago); January 1958; mono

Charts Pop 8, R&B 5

MUSIC

Genre Rock 'n' roll

Form Simple verse-chorus (12-bar blues)

Key B major

Meter 4/4 (drums tend to shuffle)

LISTENING GUIDE

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
0:00	Intro (12)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famous guitar intro using double stops on high strings. 4 bars stop time before band enters.
0:17	Verse 1 (12)	"Deep down in Louisiana"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocal enters. Piano fills change throughout song. Boogie-woogie pattern on low guitar strings
.0:34	Chorus (12)	"Go, Go Johnny"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocal punctuated by Berry's characteristic guitar bursts.
0:51	Verse 2 (12)	"He used to carry"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country influence in Berry's vocals.
1:08	Chorus (12)	"Go, Go Johnny"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As before. Notice the shuffle groove in the drums (high hat), esp. at 1:20.
1:26	Instr. Verse (12)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guitar solo with double stops. Rhythmic drive, technically simple.
1:43	Instr. Verse (12)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solo guitar continues. Eighths of the guitar and shuffle groove in drums again noticeable.
2:00	Verse 3 (12)	"His mother told him"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As before.
2:18	Chorus (12)	"Go, Go Johnny"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As before, driving to end.

LYRICS

Deep down in Louisiana close to New Orleans
Way back up in the woods among the evergreens
There stood a log cabin made of earth and wood
Where lived a country boy name Johnny B. Goode
Who never ever learned to read or write so well
But he could play the guitar just like ringing a bell

Go go, go Johnny go go
Go Johnny go go, go Johnny go go
Go Johnny go go, Johnny B. Goode

He used to carry his guitar in a gunny sack
And sit beneath the trees by the railroad track
Oh, the engineers would see him sitting in the
shade
Strumming with the rhythm that the drivers made
People passing by, they would stop and say
Oh my, what that little country boy could play

Go go, go Johnny go go
Go Johnny go go, go Johnny go go
Go Johnny go go, Johnny B. Goode

His mother told him someday he would be a man
And you would be the leader of a big old band
Many people coming from miles around
To hear you play your music when the sun go
down
Maybe someday your name would be in lights
Saying Johnny B. Goode tonight

Go go, go go Johnny go
Go go Johnny go, go go Johnny go
Go go Johnny go, Johnny B. Goode

SOURCES

- John Covach and Andrew Flory, *What's That Sound?* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 90.
- <http://www.metrolyrics.com/johnny-b-goode-lyrics-chuck-berry.html>