Britney Spears’ appeal is not only aural but strongly visual as well—presented, like Britney’s role model, Madonna, in the company of impeccable choreographies and virtuosic dance montage. Britney’s early song hits were simple, repetitive, written by others, and essentially conceived as vehicles for carefully staged theater. Whether innocent or salacious, soulful or funky, Britney’s hits reflected the industry’s emphasis on marketing elements over artistic individuality. While some may question the artistic credibility of this approach, however, Britney’s powerful, sultry, and amazingly flexible voice still shines through any amount of glitz and hype.

**Musical Style Notes**

While 1960s producer Phil Spector had to fill the studio with live performing bodies to get his famous “Wall of Sound,” today’s producers (in this case, Max Martin and Rami) can get an incredibly thick instrumental and vocal texture with a few live musicians, a recording studio, and a computer. Other than the acoustic and electric guitar and bass, all the other instrumental sounds on the CD . . . Baby One More Time (drums, multiple keyboards) are created by synth programming. There is also a lot of electronic processing done on the vocals, in terms of both doubling parts and manipulating the actual vocal sound, with compression, reverb, and other effects. Armed with this technology and an artist with Spears’ strong and remarkably fluid natural voice, the sky’s the limit in creating vocal effects.

Structurally, “. . . Baby One More Time” has a verse-chorus form; the verse has two distinctly different melodic sections (indicated in the “Road Map” as the “A” and “B” sections of the verse). The chorus is memorable—one of those refrains that runs through your mind for the rest of the day—culminating with the memorable “Hit me baby one more time” hook.

An interesting variation happens at 2:05 into the piece, where new musical material is introduced into the verse. Then at 3:07, the new material is interwoven with the chorus, creating the effect of a “call and response” between groups of vocalists (some of them overdubbed).
## Musical “Road Map”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TIMINGS</th>
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| 0:00    | Introduction, prominent piano sound; steady drumbeat; guitar with “wah wah” effect also heard in background. | Oh baby baby  
Oh baby baby |
| 0:12    | Verse 1 (“A” section of verse)  
Note | Oh baby baby,  
how was I supposed to know . . . |
| 0:32    | (“B” section of verse)  
Background vocals added. | Show me . . .  
’cause I need to know now—because— |
| 0:43    | Chorus  
Multiple vocals | My loneliness is killing me . . .  
Give me a sign  
. . . hit me baby one more time |
| 1:04    | Verse 2 (“A” section of verse)  
Solo voice with background vocals added as verse progresses. | Oh baby baby . . . |
| 1:24    | (“B” section of verse) | Show me . . .  
. . . because— |
| 1:35    | Chorus  
Multiple vocals | My loneliness is killing me . . .  
Give me a sign  
. . . hit me baby one more time |
| 1:55    | Reprise of introduction material | |
| 2:05    | New Verse 1, altered and expanded with musical material from the chorus  
This verse begins like the others, but the second line is missing. At the fourth line (“I must confess”), a new melody is heard, with more background vocals, bringing an entirely new musical element into the song. The end of the variation picks up the last 4 bars of the chorus, with the last line “hit me baby one more time.” | Oh baby baby . . .  
Oh baby baby, I shouldn’t have let you go . . .  
. . . hit me baby one more time |
| 2:47    | Chorus  
Multiple vocals | My loneliness is killing me . . .  
Give me a sign  
. . . hit me baby one more time |
| 3:07    | Chorus repeats.  
Here the musical material of the chorus (overdubbed, multitracked vocals, including Britney) is interwoven with the musical material from the altered verse/chorus heard at 2:05 (Britney and multitracked background vocals).  
Last line: Instrumental track drops out; “Hit me baby one more time” is sung a cappella, and then the final chord is struck. | My loneliness is killing me . . .  
And give me a sign . . .  
(That you will be here)  
Hit me baby one more time! |