

Top Summer Hits

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For many of us, a song can magically transport us back in time. Summer songs seem to be even more powerful. Looking back at sixty years of the Billboard Hot 100 lists, here's a sampling of number-one summer flashback hits in ten-year increments. All songs mentioned are registered with the Copyright Office as words and music, sound recordings, or both. (For the purpose of this article, "summer" includes all of June, July, and August.)

1958

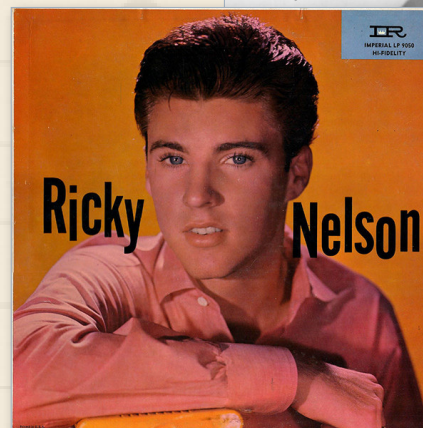
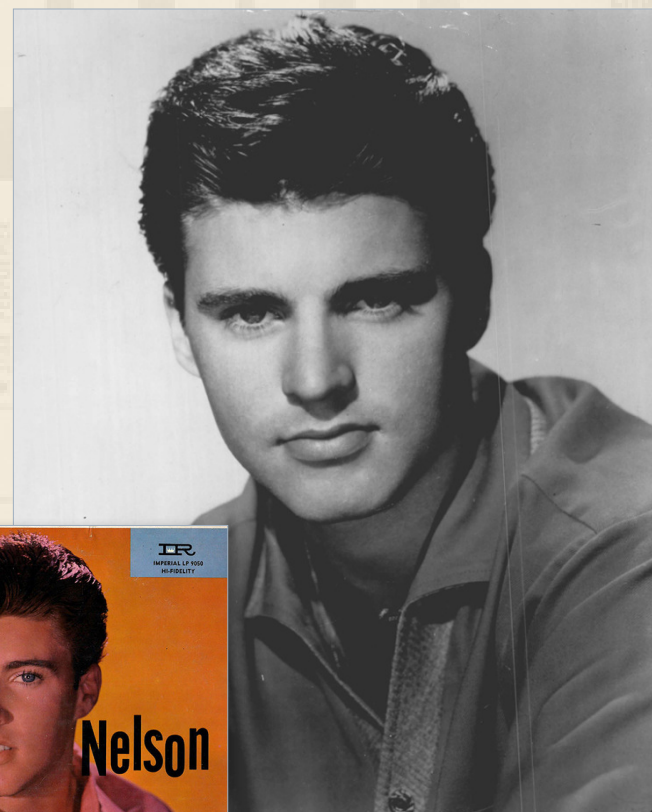
Billboard started the Hot 100 chart on August 4, 1958, so that summer's top hits only include those in the month of August. Ricky Nelson's recording of "Poor Little Fool," written by Shari Sheeley, kicked off the list at number one. "Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volaré)" followed at number one, performed by Domenico Modugno and written by Modugno with Franco Migliacci. Doo-wop vocal group The Elegants closed out the month with their number one hit "Little Star," written by group members Arthur Venosa and Vito Picone.

Burt Bacharach and Hal David followed and held the top spot for much of the summer until instrumental "Grazing In The Grass" recorded by Hugh Masekela and written by Philemon Hou took over. "Hello, I Love You" recorded by The Doors and written by front man Jim Morrison took over the top spot for a week, and then the summer finished with "People Got To Be Free" recorded by The Rascals and written by band members Felix Cavaliere and Eddie Brigati topping the charts.

1978

Six songs topped the charts in the summer of 1978, including two from the movie *Grease*. But first, "Too Much, Too Little, Too Late" written by John Vallins and Nat Kipner and recorded by Johnny Mathis and Deniece Williams hit number one. Then the first top song from *Grease*, "You're The One That I Want" performed by John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John took over. John Farrar wrote that song, while Barry Gibb wrote the other summer-

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Ricky Nelson scored the first number one hit on Billboard's Hot 100 chart with "Poor Little Fool" from his self-titled album in the summer of 1958.

1968

The summer of 1968 started with Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson" in the top spot. Paul Simon wrote the song, which was released three months after an unfinished version appeared in the film *The Graduate*. Herb Alpert's recording of "This Guy's In Love With You" written by



Simon and Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson" and The Commodores' "Three Times a Lady" were both number one songs in the summer of '68 and '78 respectively.

one song from the soundtrack, title song “Grease,” performed by Frankie Valli.

Barry Gibb co-wrote another number-one song from that summer, “Shadow Dancing,” performed by his brother Andy Gibb. They wrote the song with their brothers Robin and Maurice Gibb as well. The other two number one hits of the summer were “Miss You” performed by the Rolling Stones and written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards and “Three Times A Lady” performed by The Commodores and written by Lionel Richie.

1988

The summer of 1988 saw an even greater number of songs hit number one. “One More Try,” written and recorded by George Michael for his first solo album, *Faith*, started the summer at the top. Pop songs “Together Forever” recorded by Rick Astley and written by Stock Aitken Waterman and then “Foolish Beat,” written and recorded by Debbie Gibson followed. Gibson produced her song as well, making her the youngest person to write, produce, and sing a number-one single entirely on her own.

The King of Pop’s “Dirty Diana” hit number one next, which Michael Jackson wrote and recorded. Two ballads, “The Flame” performed by Cheap Trick and written by Bob Mitchell and Nick Graham and “Hold On To the Nights” written and performed by Richard Marx followed. “Roll With It” performed by Steve Winwood and written by Winwood and Will Jennings came next. Later, Motown songwriters Holland-Dozier-Holland received co-writing credits for “Roll With It” due to its

resemblance to the Junior Walker song “(I’m a) Roadrunner.” The summer ended with another number one written and recorded by George Michael, “Monkey.”

1998

In 1998, “The Boy Is Mine” recorded by Brandy and Monica dominated the Hot 100 the entire summer. The song appeared on Brandy’s album *Never Say Never* and Monica’s album *The Boy Is Mine*, both registered with the Office that year. Brandy wrote the song with Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins, Fred Jerkins III, Japhe Tejeda, and LaShawn Daniels. It originally was meant to be a solo, but the writers thought it would sound better as a duet in the style of Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson’s previous hit “The Girl Is Mine.”

2008

The summer of 2008 started off with the chart-topping hit “Lollipop” recorded by Lil Wayne featuring Static Major. Dwayne Carter (aka Lil Wayne) wrote the words and music along with Stephen Garrett, Darius Harrison, Jim Jonsin, and Rex Zamor. Coldplay’s “Viva La Vida,” written by all members of the band, followed, and then Katy Perry’s recording of “I Kissed a Girl” took over for several weeks. Perry wrote the song with Lukasz Gottwald, Max Martin, and Cathy Dennis. Rihanna finished out the summer with her recording of “Disturbia” in the top spot, written by Brian Kennedy, Chris Brown, Robert Allen, and Andre Merritt.

2018

As we close out July, Drake’s “In My Feelings” is at number one. The song is a collaboration of multiple writers: Aubrey Graham (aka Drake), Benny Workman, Darius Harrison, Caresha Brownlee, Jatavia Johnson, Stephen Garrett, James Scheffer, Rex Zamor, Dwayne Carter, Renetta Lowe-Bridgewater, Orville Hall, Phillip Price, and Noah Shebib. This song is Drake’s second number-one hit this summer—“Nice For What” kicked off the summer in the top spot.

What other future memory-triggering songs will hit number one this summer? We’ll just have to wait and see. But thanks to the creativity of all the songwriters and performers, songs will continue to bring back memories of summers past. 🎧



Drake’s song “In My Feelings” is at number one this summer.



The band Coldplay hit the top spot in the Hot 100 charts with the song “Viva La Vida” in the summer of 2008.