Basic Musical Structures (Forms)

**Strophic**

||: A :||

1 period is repeated again and again, each time with a new stanza of text. Often, an entire larger structure (see below) is repeated again and again, each time with a new text, thus giving a strophic element to the larger structure.

*Jolly Old St. Nicholas*

**Binary**

||: A :||: B :||

a a' b b'
a b' c b'
a b c d

Verse-Refrain or Verse-Chorus structure occurs when the entire structure is repeated with the a strophic A section and the B section repeating the same text each time.

*Jingle Bells*

**Rounded Binary**

||: A :||: B :||

a a' b a'

typically,
a will end unresolved
a' will end resolved (thus resolving a)
b will end unresolved (thus “linking” b with the a’ following)
a’ will return, thus resolving b

**Ternary**

A B A

a a’ b b’ a a’

a’ b’ and a’ again will all end resolved, thus creating 3 “stand alone” closed periods

often, a repeat back to the beginning of the B section will taken (thus A B A B A, and still considered ternary)
sometimes, each section (A or B) will consist of an entire rounded binary structure.