Unit 08: Triads and Chords

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Triads are the basic chord structures that make up our traditional tertian system of tonal harmony. Students will learn how to construct chords within a scale and key, hear the difference in the quality of a triad, and begin to work with basic harmonic progressions.

Revised: July 2026

Standards

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.3E.12prof.Cr1a	Generate melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for compositions or improvisations using digital tools.
1.3B.12prof.Cr1a	Describe how sounds and short musical ideas can be used to represent personal experiences, moods, visual images, and/or storylines.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2a	Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images or storylines.
1.3E.12prof.Cr2a	Select melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas to develop into a larger work using digital tools and resources.
1.3B.12prof.Cr2b	Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (e.g., one part, cyclical, binary).
1.3E.12prof.Cr3a	Drawing on feedback from teachers and peers, develop and implement strategies to improve and refine the technical and expressive aspects of draft compositions and improvisations.
1.3E.12prof.Cr3b	Share compositions or improvisations that demonstrate musical and technological craftsmanship as well as the use of digital tools and resources in developing and organizing musical ideas.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3a	Identify, describe and apply teacher-provided criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions.
1.3B.12prof.Cr3b	Share music through the use of notation, performance or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4a	Develop and explain the criteria used for selecting varied sound resources based on interest, music reading skills, and an understanding of the performer's musical and technological skill.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4a	Identify and select specific excerpts, passages, or sections in musical works that express a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (e.g., one-part, cyclical, binary).

1.3E.12prof.Pr4b	Describe how context, structural aspects of the music, and digital media/tools inform prepared and improvised performances.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4b	Analyze how the elements of music (including form) of selected works relate to style and mood and explain the implications for rehearsal or performance.
1.3E.12prof.Pr4c	Identify the context, expressive challenges, and use of digital tools in a varied repertoire of music influence prepared or improvised performances.
1.3B.12prof.Pr4c	Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style and mood, explaining how the interpretive choices reflect the creator's intent.
1.3E.12prof.Pr5a	Identify and implement rehearsal strategies to improve the technical and expressive aspects of prepared and improvised performances in a varied repertoire of music.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5a	Create rehearsal plans for works, identifying repetition and variation within the form.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5b	Using established criteria and feedback, identify the way(s) in which performances convey the elements of music, style and mood.
1.3B.12prof.Pr5c	Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple works.
1.3E.12prof.Pr6a	Using digital tools, demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.
1.3E.12prof.Pr6b	Demonstrate an understanding of the context of music through prepared and improvised performances.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6a	Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and others') and explain how the elements of music are used to convey intent.
1.3B.12prof.Pr6b	Identify how compositions are appropriate for an audience or context, and how this will shape future compositions.
1.3E.12prof.Re7a	Cite reasons for choosing music based on the use of the elements of music, digital and electronic aspects, and connections to interest or purpose.
1.3E.12prof.Re7b	Explain how knowledge of the structure (e.g., repetition, similarities, contrasts), technological aspects, and purpose of the music informs the response.
1.3B.12prof.Re7a	Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music that expresses a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (e.g., one-part, cyclical, binary), and describe the choices as models for composition.
1.3B.12prof.Re7b	Analyze aurally and/or by reading the elements of music (including form) of musical works, relating them to style, mood and context, and describe how the analysis provides models for personal growth as a composer, performer and/or listener.
1.3B.12prof.Re8a	Develop and explain interpretations of varied works, demonstrating an understanding of the composer's intent by citing technical and expressive aspects as well as the style/genre of each work.
1.3B.12prof.Re9a	Describe the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances, demonstrating an understanding of the fundamentals of music theory.
1.3B.12prof.Re9b	Describe the way(s) in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others can be applied in the personal creative process.

Essential Questions

- What do I hear when I listen to music?
- What is harmony?

Enduring Understandings

- A chord is the foundation of harmony, and can accompany a melody.
- Chords can be based upon each note of a scale.
- Chords have different qualities, including major, minor, diminished, and augmented.

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- Chords tones are written as the 1st, 3rd and 5th degree above the given root note.
- How to assign basic chords to a written melody.
- How to aurally distinguish between major, minor, diminished, and augmented chords.
- How to write a I, IV, V, I chordal pattern in any key.
- The difference between blocked and arpeggiated chords.
- There are different qualities to chords, including major, minor, diminished, and augmented, based on the quality of the intervals within the chords.
- What a chord or a triad is, and how to construct one over each degree of the major scale.

Learning Plan

- After discussing the concept of harmony, teacher builds a major triad and labels the three notes as the root, the third, and the fifth.
- Preview the essential questions and return to them throughout the course, in discussion and written assignments.
- Students practice writing chords above scale degrees, using a root, third and fifth. Students label the quality of the chord as either major, minor, or diminished.
- Teacher demonstrates the difference between a blocked chordal accompaniment and an arpeggiated accompaniment. Teacher uses familiar folk songs (Twinkle, Mary's Lamb, etc.) to demonstrate how chords can be assigned to each note in a melody.
- Teacher plays major, minor, diminished, and augmented chords and students practice aurally recognizing each.
- Teacher writes out a major scale and builds triads on each note of the scale. Teacher points out the quality of each of the chords and the use of the interval of a third as the basic building block of a chord.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Performing Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Processes of Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

- Given a root note, students will write a major, minor, diminished, or augmented chord above that note, using appropriate accidentals.
- Students will distinguish by ear the difference between root-position major, minor, diminished, and augmented chords.

- Students will write a chord above each note of any given scale.
- Students will write a I, IV, V, I chordal pattern in a given key.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations: Performing Arts Accommodations & Modifications