

2025 Unit 4: Advanced Tonal Mastery: The Circle of Fifths, Key Relationships, and Harmonic Analysis

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Advanced Tonal Mastery: The Circle of Fifths, Key Relationships, and Harmonic Analysis

This unit offers an in-depth exploration of tonal harmony and key relationships through the study and application of the circle of fifths, key signatures, and chord functions. Students will develop mastery in analyzing and constructing scales, identifying and performing harmonic chord qualities across diverse key signatures, and transposing music with precision. Emphasis is placed on understanding relative major, minor, and modal keys, as well as their unique intervallic structures and tonal characteristics. Through practical application on their primary instrument or voice, students will enhance their ability to read, write, analyze, and perform music that reflects complex tonal organization and modulations. This comprehensive study prepares students for advanced theoretical comprehension and fluent musicianship in varied musical contexts.

Learning Objectives

- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify how to correctly draw key signatures in their proper positions, analyzing their role in establishing the tonal framework of a piece.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify how to write music in various keys, applying key-specific notation and theoretical principles to ensure clarity and correctness.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the correct notes of relative modal keys or scales, analyzing their unique interval patterns and tonal characteristics within musical contexts.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the harmonic qualities of chords built on various scale degree roots across different key settings, analyzing their functions and relationships within tonal harmony.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the key of a musical example by analyzing key signatures, tonal centers, and contextual cues, deepening their understanding of tonal organization.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the notes of a relative minor key or scale in relation to its corresponding relative major key, analyzing their shared tonal components and distinctive characteristics.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the process of transposing a musical example to another key, analyzing interval relationships and maintaining musical integrity throughout the transposition.
- Students will accurately demonstrate and identify the specific notes that must be raised or lowered

when performing a given key or scale, analyzing how these alterations shape the scale's tonal structure and character.

- Students will be able to accurately analyze, demonstrate, and apply harmonic chord qualities of chords built on different scale degrees across various key signatures, performing these concepts proficiently on their primary instrument or within their vocal range.
- Students will be able to apply an in-depth understanding of the circle of fifths alongside the order of flats and sharps to analyze key relationships, construct scales, and facilitate complex key modulations.

Essential Skills

- Accurately construct major and minor scales using whole and half step patterns informed by the circle of fifths.
- Analyze and discuss tonal organization using music theory vocabulary.
- Analyze harmonic functions of chords within tonal contexts
- Analyze the structure and components of relative minor keys in relation to their major counterparts.
- Apply circle of fifths knowledge to facilitate modulation and key changes in performance and composition.
- Collaborate in ensembles demonstrating understanding of key relationships and chord functions.
- Compose chord progressions demonstrating understanding of harmonic function and key relationships.
- Develop aural skills to recognize keys, chord qualities, and modulations by ear.
- Evaluate and critique harmonic structures in peer compositions and performances.
- Explain and apply the circle of fifths to identify key signatures and key relationships.
- Identify and explain modal tonal characteristics within musical excerpts.
- Identify and perform chords built on different scale degrees in various keys.
- Identify notes that require raising or lowering (accidentals) in key or scale performance.
- Identify the tonal center of a musical example through key signature and contextual analysis.
- Integrate harmonic analysis into performance interpretation and improvisation.
- Notate music accurately in various keys applying correct accidentals and theoretical principles.
- Perform harmonic chord qualities (major, minor, diminished, augmented) proficiently on instrument or voice.
- Read and write key signatures correctly in their proper staff positions.
- Recognize and perform modes related to major and minor keys, understanding their interval structures.
- Reflect on personal mastery of tonal concepts and set goals for further musicianship growth.
- Sight-read music accurately in keys with sharps and flats, including accidentals.
- Spell notes and chords correctly within theoretical and practical contexts.
- Transpose melodies and harmonic progressions accurately to related keys.
- Use interval relationships to maintain musical integrity during transposition.
- Utilize notation software or manuscript paper to compose and edit music in various keys.

Standards

MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cr1a	Describe and demonstrate multiple ways in which sounds and musical ideas can be used to represent extended experiences or abstract ideas.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cr2a	Assemble and organize multiple sounds or extended musical ideas to create initial expressive statements of selected extended experiences or abstract ideas.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cr2b	Analyze and demonstrate the development of sounds and extended musical ideas in drafts of music within a variety of moderately complex or complex forms.
MU.9-12.1.3D.12adv.Cr3a	Develop and apply criteria to critique, improve, and refine drafts of compositions and improvisations in a variety of styles, as well as stylistically appropriate harmonization for given melodies.
MU.9-12.1.3E.12adv.Cr3a	Develop and implement varied strategies and apply appropriate criteria to improve and refine the technical and expressive aspects of draft compositions and improvisations.
MU.9-12.1.3D.12adv.Cr3b	Perform final versions of a collection of compositions and improvisations in a variety of styles, as well as stylistically appropriate harmonization for given melodies, demonstrating technical skill in applying principles of composition, improvisation and originality.
MU.9-12.1.3E.12adv.Cr3b	Share a portfolio of musical creations representing varied styles and genres that demonstrates musical and technological craftsmanship as well as the use of digital and/or analog tools and resources in developing and organizing musical ideas.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cr3b	Share music through the use of notation, solo or group performance, or technology, and demonstrate and explain how the elements of music, compositional techniques, and processes have been employed to realize expressive intent.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Pr4c	Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music (including form), compositional techniques, style, function, and context, explaining and justifying how the interpretive choices reflect the creator's intent.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Pr5a	Create rehearsal plans for works, identifying the form, repetition and variation within the form, compositional techniques, and the style and historical or cultural context of the work.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Pr5b	Using established criteria and feedback, identify the ways in which performances use compositional techniques and convey the formal design, style and historical/cultural context of the works.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Pr5c	Identify, compare and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple contrasting works.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Pr6a	Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and others') and explain and/or demonstrate understanding of how the expressive intent of the music is conveyed.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Re7a	Use research and personally developed criteria to justify choices made when selecting music, citing knowledge of the music and individual and ensemble purpose and context.
MU.9-12.1.3D.12adv.Re7b	Develop and justify evaluations of a variety of individual and small group musical selections for listening based on personally developed and established criteria, personal decision making, and knowledge and understanding of context.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Re7b	Demonstrate and justify how the analysis of structures, contexts and performance decisions inform the response to music.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Re7a	Apply researched or personally developed criteria to select music that expresses personal experiences and interests, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in moderately complex or complex forms, and describe and justify the choice as models for composition.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cn10a	Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills related to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12adv.Cn11a	Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Instructional Tasks/Activities

- Chord Quality Workshops
- Circle of Fifths Construction
- Ensemble Rehearsals
- Harmonic Function Discussions
- Key Signature Writing
- Listening Analysis
- Modal Scale Composition
- Mode Exploration
- Notation Software Composition
- Peer Analysis
- Reflective Journaling
- Scale Building Exercises
- Sight-Reading Sessions
- Tonal Center Analysis
- Transposition Challenges

Assessment Procedure

- Chord Quality Performance Test
- classwork/homework
- Composition Project
- discussions
- Key Signature and Scale Quiz
- Listening and Analysis Test
- participation in performance
- peer observation
- Teacher observation
- tests/quizzes
- Transposition Exam

Recommended Technology Activities

- Appropriate Content Specific Online Resource
- Chromebook
- Collaborative Composition Platforms
- Digital Notation Software
- Ear Training Software

- Google Classroom
- Google Docs
- Google Forms
- Google Slides
- Interactive Circle of Fifths Apps
- Kahoot
- Listening Analysis Software
- MagicSchool AI
- Other- Specified in Lesson
- Quiziz
- Recording and Playback
- Screencastify
- Sight-Reading Platforms
- Transposition Practice Tools
- Virtual Keyboard Labs

Accommodations & Modifications & Differentiation

Accommodations and Modifications should be used to meet individual needs. Their IEP and 504 plans should be used in addition to the following suggestions.

Gifted and Talented

- Compare & Contrast
- Conferencing
- Debates
- Jigsaw
- Peer Partner Learning
- Problem Solving
- Structured Controversy
- Think, Pair, Share
- Tutorial Groups

Instruction/Materials

- alter format of materials (type/highlight, etc.)
- color code materials
- eliminate answers

- extended time
- extended time
- large print
- modified quiz
- modified test
- Modify Assignments as Needed
- Modify/Repeat/Model directions
- necessary assignments only
- Other (specify in plans)
- other- named in lesson
- provide assistance and cues for transitions
- provide daily assignment list
- read class materials orally
- reduce work load
- shorten assignments
- study guide/outline
- utilize multi-sensory modes to reinforce instruction

Environment

- alter physical room environment
- assign peer tutors/work buddies/note takers
- assign preferential seating
- individualized instruction/small group
- modify student schedule (Describe)
- other- please specify in plans
- provide desktop list/formula

Resources

- Google Classroom
- handouts
- instruments
- Music Theory texts
- MusicFirst
- Noteflight
- screen recordings
- SoundTrap
- The internet

- Tonesavvy
- virtual instruments
- whiteboard