

2025 Unit 8: Harmonic Concepts and Notation

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Harmonic Concepts and Notation Mastery

This unit equips students and artists with an in-depth understanding of vertical harmonic structures and advanced musical notation techniques. Learners will explore triads, seventh chords, and their inversions, mastering labeling through guitar chord symbols and Roman numerals with figured bass notation. The unit covers stacking thirds to form tertian harmony, chord functions including dominant seventh resolutions, and practical chord inversions within progressions. Students will develop skills in transposition, interval measurement, and interval classification, including minor, diminished, and augmented forms. Ensemble nomenclature and the order of triads in major and harmonic minor scales are emphasized. Additionally, students will enhance music notation proficiency through transcription exercises and compose simple melodies. Practical application culminates in performing a standard 12-bar blues progression within a rhythm section and primary instrument setting, integrating theory with real-world musicianship.

Learning Objectives

- Students and artists will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the practical selection of chord inversions within progressions, as well as the ability to transpose musical samples to different keys with an understanding of the reasons behind such transpositions.
- Students and artists will develop in-depth knowledge of the vertical use of harmonic material and apply advanced techniques of musical notation manipulation.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose or compose The recognition, playing, and writing of major, minor, diminished, and augmented triads
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose or compose The stacking of thirds to create chords using standard tertian harmony.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose or compose the use of proper order of primary chords in simple keys for creating a standard 12-bar blues progression upon which students will participate in a jam session using the basic rhythm section instrumentation of keyboard, bass, guitar and drums, as well as their primary instruments.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose or compose The verbal definitions of chords built on various scale degrees as tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, submediant or leading tone.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose intervals classified as minor, diminished, or augmented based on semitone variations of major diatonic intervals, including their recognition, playing, and writing.

- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the ability to label chords by root and inversion using both standard guitar chord symbols and Roman numerals with figured bass notation.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the addition of a fourth element to triads to create dominant seventh chords (V7) and their function in resolving to the tonic (I).
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the measurement of interval size by counting both note-letter names and semitones, applying the techniques required for each method.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the nomenclature and roles involved in performing within an ensemble.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the order of triads as they appear in any major or harmonic minor scale.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose the recognition and writing of intervals and their inversions.
- Students will correctly demonstrate, perform, identify, discuss, analyze, compare, draw, recognize, spell, transcribe, transpose, and compose triads and seventh chords in all their inversion possibilities.
- Students will develop music notation skills by accurately transcribing music by hand onto manuscript paper
- Students will recognize, play, and write perfect and major diatonic intervals of the major scale, and compose simple melodies in treble or bass clef.

Essential Skills

- Analyze and apply vertical harmonic structures in music.
- Analyze and compose chord progressions using the primary chords in simple keys.
- Apply advanced notation manipulation techniques in transcription and composition.
- Choose appropriate chord inversions within progressions for smooth voice leading.
- Compose simple melodies in treble and bass clefs demonstrating intervallic understanding.
- Construct and perform dominant seventh (V7) chords and explain their function resolving to tonic (I).
- Define verbally the functional roles of chords on scale degrees (tonic, dominant, subdominant, etc.).
- Discuss and analyze ensemble roles and nomenclature effectively.
- Identify, perform, and compose triads and seventh chords in all inversion forms.
- Identify, play, and write intervals classified as major, minor, diminished, or augmented.
- Integrate harmonic and intervallic knowledge into improvisation and ensemble performance.
- Label chords accurately using standard guitar chord symbols.
- Measure interval sizes by counting letter names and semitones precisely.
- Participate in and perform a 12-bar blues progression with rhythm section and primary instruments
- Recognize and perform interval inversions correctly.
- Recognize chord qualities aurally and visually in complex harmonic contexts.
- Recognize, play, and write perfect and major diatonic intervals accurately.
- Reflect critically on harmonic understanding and its application in performance and composition.

- Spell intervals and chords correctly in written music.
- Stack thirds to build chords using standard tertian harmony.
- Transcribe music accurately by hand onto manuscript paper, focusing on notation clarity.
- Transpose musical passages accurately between keys with understanding of harmonic context.
- Understand and perform the order of triads within major and harmonic minor scales.
- Use Roman numerals and figured bass notation to analyze chords by root and inversion.
- Use technology or traditional methods to annotate and analyze harmonic progressions.

Standards

MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Cr1a	Describe and demonstrate how sounds and musical ideas can be used to represent events, memories, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Cr1a	Create melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for melodies over specified chord progressions or AB/ABA forms as well as two to three-chord accompaniments for given melodies.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Cr2a	Assemble and organize multiple sounds or musical ideas to create initial expressive statements of selected events, memories, images, concepts, texts, or storylines.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Cr2a	Use standard notation and audio/video recording to document melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas for drafts of melodies over specified chord progressions or AB /ABA forms as well as two-to-three-chord accompaniments for given melodies.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Cr2b	Describe and explain the development of sounds and musical ideas in drafts of music within a variety of simple or moderately complex forms (e.g., binary, rondo, ternary).
MU.9-12.1.3E.12acc.Cr3a	Develop and implement varied strategies to improve and refine the technical and expressive aspects of draft compositions and improvisations.
MU.9-12.1.3E.12acc.Cr3b	Share compositions and improvisations that demonstrate musical and technological craftsmanship as well as the use of digital and/or analog tools and resources in developing and organizing musical ideas.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Cr3b	Share final versions of melodies over specified chord progressions or AB/ABA forms as well as two-to-three-chord accompaniments for given melodies, demonstrating an understanding of how to develop and organize personal musical ideas.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Cr3b	Share music through the use of notation, solo or group performance, or technology, and demonstrate and describe how the elements of music and compositional techniques have been employed to realize expressive intent.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Pr4a	Describe and demonstrate how a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments is selected, based on personal interest, music reading skills, identified technical challenges that need to be addressed, and the performance context.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Pr4b	Identify prominent melodic, harmonic, and structural characteristics and context (e.g., social, cultural, historical) in a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments selected for performance, including some based on reading standard notation.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Pr4c	Develop interpretations of works based on an understanding of the use of elements of music, style, mood, function, and context, explaining and supporting how the interpretive choices reflect the creator's intent.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Pr5a	Apply teacher or student-provided criteria to critique individual performances of a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments selected for performance. Identify practice strategies to address performance challenges

	and refine the performances.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Pr5a	Create rehearsal plans for works, identifying the form, repetition and variation within the form, and the style and historical or cultural context of the work.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Pr5b	Using established criteria and feedback, identify the ways in which performances convey the formal design, style and historical/cultural context of the works.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Pr5c	Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of varied works.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Pr6a	Perform with expression and technical accuracy a varied collection of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces and chordal accompaniments, while demonstrating sensitivity to the audience and an understanding of the context (e.g., social, cultural, historical).
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Pr6a	Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and others') and explain how the elements of music and compositional techniques are used to convey intent.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Re7a	Explain the reasons for selecting music citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose and context.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12int.Re7a	Explain the reasons for selecting music citing characteristics found in the music and connections to interest, purpose and context.
MU.K-12.1.3D.12int.Re7b	Explain the influence of experiences and contexts (e.g., personal, social, cultural) on interest in and the evaluation of a varied repertoire of music.
MU.K-12.1.3C.12int.Re7b	Describe how understanding context and the way the elements of music are manipulated inform the response to music.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Re7a	Apply teacher-provided or personally developed criteria to select music that expresses personal experiences and interests, moods, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in simple or moderately complex forms, and describe and defend the choices as models for composition.
MU.9-12.1.3B.12acc.Re7b	Analyze aurally and by reading the scores of musical works the elements of music (including form), compositional techniques and procedures, relating them to style, mood and context. Explain how the analysis provides models for personal growth as a composer, performer and/or listener.

Instructional Tasks/Activities

1. **Chord Inversion Practice:** Students play, sing, and write triads and seventh chords in all inversion forms on their instruments.
2. **Roman Numeral and Figured Bass Labeling:** Analyze chord progressions and label chords using Roman numerals and figured bass notation.
3. **Guitar Chord Symbol Matching:** Match guitar chord symbols to chord shapes and inversions on the staff.
4. **Interval Identification Drills:** Use flashcards or apps to practice identifying and spelling perfect, major, minor, diminished, and augmented intervals.
5. **Interval Inversion Exercises:** Practice recognizing and performing interval inversions vocally and instrumentally.
6. **Stacking Thirds Workshop:** Compose and analyze chords built by stacking thirds using tertian harmony.
7. **Dominant Seventh Chord Analysis:** Listen to examples highlighting V7 chords and their resolution to tonic.

8. **12-Bar Blues Jam:** Participate in ensemble jam sessions using primary chords and rhythm section instruments.
9. **Chord Progression Composition:** Create chord progressions emphasizing proper inversion choices for smooth voice leading.
10. **Score Annotation:** Mark scores with chord roots, inversions, interval names, and harmonic functions.
11. **Ensemble Terminology Role Play:** Practice naming and performing choral and instrumental ensemble parts.
12. **Transcription Exercises:** Transcribe chord progressions and intervals from audio or notation.
13. **Improvisation Labs:** Improvise over chord progressions using knowledge of chord qualities and inversions.
14. **Notation Software Projects:** Use MuseScore or Finale to compose, label, and playback harmonic progressions.
15. **Peer Teaching:** Students prepare mini-lessons on harmonic concepts and present to classmates.

- 12-Bar Blues Jam
- Chord Inversion Practice
- Chord Progression Composition
- Dominant Seventh Chord Analysis
- Ensemble Terminology Role Play
- Guitar Chord Symbol Matching
- Improvisation Labs
- Interval Identification Drills
- Interval Inversion Exercises
- Notation Software Projects
- Peer Teaching
- Roman Numeral and Figured Bass Labeling
- Score Annotation
- Stacking Thirds Workshop
- Transcription Exercises

Assessment Procedure

Interval Identification Quiz: Students identify and spell intervals (perfect, major, minor, diminished, augmented) from notation or audio.

Chord Construction Test: Assess students' ability to build triads and seventh chords in root position and inversions.

Roman Numeral and Figured Bass Labeling: Students analyze and label chord progressions using Roman

numerals and figured bass notation.

Performance Evaluation: Evaluate students performing chord progressions with correct inversions and voice leading.

12-Bar Blues Jam Participation: Assess students' ability to perform and improvise over a 12-bar blues progression.

Transcription Assignment: Students transcribe chord progressions, labeling chords and inversions accurately.

Ensemble Terminology Quiz: Test knowledge of choral and instrumental ensemble roles through written or oral quizzes.

Improvisation Assessment: Evaluate students' improvisation skills over harmonic progressions using learned chord tones.

Score Annotation Task: Students annotate provided scores with chord names, inversions, and harmonic analysis.

Reflective Journal: Students submit reflections on their understanding and application of harmonic concepts in performance.

- discussions
- 12-Bar Blues Jam Participation
- Chord Construction Test
- classwork/homework
- Ensemble Terminology Quiz
- Improvisation Assessment
- Interval Identification Quiz
- peer observation
- Performance Evaluation
- Reflective Journal
- Roman Numeral and Figured Bass Labeling
- Score Annotation Task
- Teacher observation
- tests/quizzes
- Transcription Assignment

Recommended Technology Activities

- Appropriate Content Specific Online Resource
- Chromebook
- Collaborative Composition Platforms
- Google Classroom
- Google Docs

- Google Forms
- Google Slides
- Interactive Interval Training
- Jam Track Apps
- Kahoot
- Listening Analysis Software
- MagicSchool AI
- Notation Software Composition
- Other- Specified in Lesson
- Quiziz
- Recording and Playback
- Roman Numeral Drills
- Screencastify
- Sight-Reading Platforms
- Virtual Keyboard Exploration

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

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

- Tonesavvy
- virtual instruments
- whiteboard