

## Lesson 2. Harmony.



As part of A Level Music, in the composition component you are required to submit a ‘Brief Assessing Technique’. There are different options for this:

1. Bach Chorale
2. Two-Part Counterpoint
3. Arrangement
4. Remix

### Aims:

To know what a Chorale is  
To recap/learn about chords


Task: Listen to the first 54 seconds of this clip and answer the questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Khn9jLIYE4A>

1. What group is performing this chorale?
2. What key is it in?
3. The pause sign indicates a cadence point. How many are there? Can you work out what type of cadences there are?
4. Find out – what is a chorale?
5. How many did Bach harmonise?
6. The book in the picture above – what is it? (clue Albert Riemenschneider).

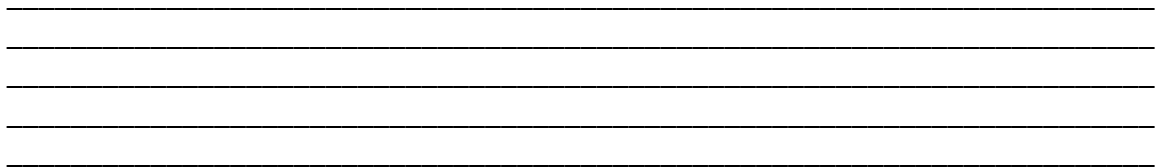
Now you know what a chorale is, lets look at harmony.

- The exam board expect you to understand what chord progressions work, to be inventive (not just to stick to chords I and V), and to show an understanding of tonality (i.e. modulate to related keys appropriate to your chosen style).
- We use Roman Numerals to label chords.

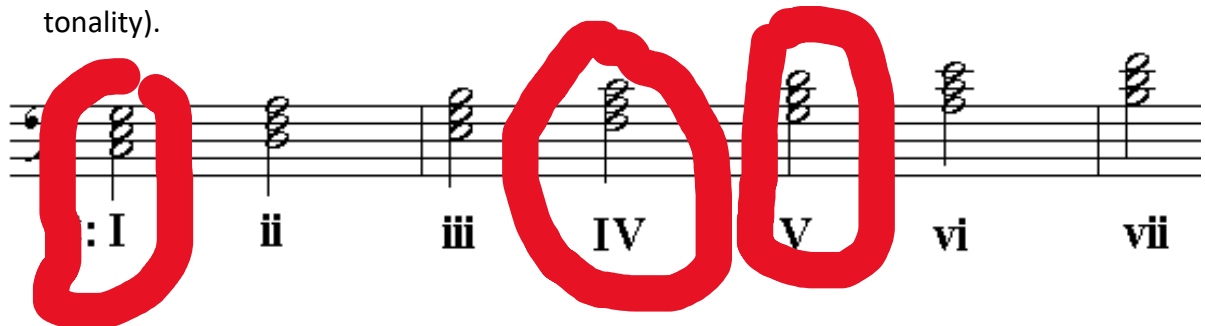


• **C: I**      **ii**      **iii**      **IV**      **V**      **vi**      **vii**

Task: Choose a key and write out the triads based on each note of the major scale and label them.



- The most commonly used chords in any key are I, IV and V, but chords ii and vi are also frequently used (in a major key these sound minor so over use can confuse tonality).



**I**      **ii**      **iii**      **IV**      **V**      **vi**      **vii**

Task: Try harmonising this melody using chords I, IV, V. Use root position.  
TIP – It's in G major so chord I will be G,B,D.



(scroll on for a possible solution!)

If you prefer, write the letter names of the chords underneath the melody.

Piano

I V I . V

G D G D

Result – not very interesting!!

How can I make it more Bach-like and interesting?

One way is to introduce INVERSION chords (changing the note at the bottom) and adding some interesting chords.

What happens if I change the first chords to Eminor? What happens if I use a D7 chord instead of just D, F# A.

Task: Have another go at harmonising this melody. This time – experiment. See what you come up with! If you want to try playing it or if you have a programme you can use – that’s great. If you don’t, then try playing it and seeing what you can do with it.

We will have a look at this in September and see what we can come up with! As well as learning the rules of Bach chorales, we will be developing our own “harmonic vocabulary” - chords that work well in our compositional style and experimenting with unusual harmonises and sounds!

To recap:

1. A chorale is a German hymn-like tune which was performance as part of church services by Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass. Bach harmonised these using various rules. His harmonisation techniques has formed the much of the basis of Western Harmony.
2. Use of tonic (chord I) and Dominant (V) chords to harmonise.
3. Thinking about how to make the harmonisation of a melody more interesting using a variety of chords, 7ths, inversions etc.

