

Shaw Academy
NOTES

Diploma in Guitar



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Lesson 8 Notes

Introduction:

The Goal of Lesson 8 is to begin to develop your understanding of chord progressions and song structure. A little knowledge in how music works can go a long way in helping you learn how to play the songs you love.

Song Structure:

Before we learn how to play any song, it is a good idea to identify every part of the song as well as know the order in which these parts appear. There are various ways musicians from around the world do this, but we will learn the most common and effective method, which is called the “Formal Structure Method.” This method uses Letters to identify and keep track of the different parts of a musical piece. Note that the Letters DO NOT represent the notes or chords.

There can be many different parts of a song/musical composition. The verse and the chorus are the most common parts that appear in popular music written in the last 100 years. The verse of a song lyrically tells the story of the song. Each verse usually has different lyrics and can have a slightly different melody. The chorus usually follows the verse. The lyrics, melody, and chord progression of the chorus are repeated. The Bridge, Pre-chorus, Post-Chorus, Intro, Outro, Solo, and Coda are some, but not all, of the parts that can appear in a song.

Each part of a song will almost always have a different chord progression. For example, the Verse will have a different chord progression than the Chorus, which will have a different chord progression than the Bridge, which will have a different chorus than the Outro, etc. Sometimes different parts of a song will have the same chord progression. In these cases, you can tell the parts from each other by their different melodies and lyrics.

The letter “A” is designated to the Verse, and the letter “B” is designated to the Chorus. Again, please remember that the letters are the entire section and NOT chords. Each section has its own chord progression. Any part that is not the Verse – the A section – and not the Chorus – the B section – is designated with the following letter in the alphabet in order of appearance.

We use the song “I Will Wait” by Mumford & Sons to put this theory into practice. While listening to the song, we list out the parts of the song. They are as follows:

1. Intro
2. Verse
3. Pre-Chorus
4. Chorus

5. Post-Chorus
6. Verse
7. Chorus
8. Chorus
9. Verse
10. Pre-Chorus
11. Bridge
12. Chorus
13. Chorus

Following the rules set out by this method, every Verse is called the “A section” and every chorus is called the “B Section.”

1. Intro
2. Verse A
3. Pre-Chorus
4. Chorus B
5. Post-Chorus
6. Verse A
7. Chorus B
8. Chorus B
9. Verse A
10. Pre-Chorus
11. Bridge
12. Chorus B
13. Chorus B

Once we have identified the A and B sections, we start naming the different parts in order of appearance. So, the Intro is the first part that is different than both the verse and chorus, and therefore is assigned the C section. The Pre-chorus needs to be assigned next because it has yet to be assigned a letter and appears next. The pre-chorus shares the same exact chord progression as the intro. Therefore, the Pre-Chorus is assigned the Letter C as well. As a result, every Pre-Chorus is assigned the letter C. Note, if you were unsure if the Intro and Pre-Chorus shared the same chord progression, you could call the Pre-Chorus the D section. However, after learning the chord progressions of each section, you would find that they do have the same chord progression, and then assign the letters accordingly. Another way to determine if two parts are the same is to just listen to the different parts. This is great ear training and develops your listening skills.

1. Intro C
2. Verse A
3. Pre-Chorus C
4. Chorus B
5. Post-Chorus
6. Verse A
7. Chorus B

- 8. Chorus B
- 9. Verse A
- 10. Pre-Chorus C
- 11. Bridge
- 12. Chorus B
- 13. Chorus B

The next section that appears and has yet to be assigned a letter is the Post-Chorus. The Post-Chorus does not share the same chord progression with the verse, chorus, and Pre-Chorus. As a result, since the form is different from the previous three sections, this section is the 4th section and is assigned the Letter D. Similarly, the Bridge does not share the same chord progression with none of the previous four parts. The Bridge is a new section and the 5th to appear. Consequently, the Bridge is assigned the Letter E.

- 1. Intro C
- 2. Verse A
- 3. Pre-Chorus C
- 4. Chorus B
- 5. Post-Chorus D
- 6. Verse A
- 7. Chorus B
- 8. Chorus B
- 9. Verse A
- 10. Pre-Chorus C
- 11. Bridge E
- 12. Chorus B
- 13. Chorus B

Now that we have determined each section and assigned to them their respective letters, we can break up the song into the beginning, middle, and end.

- The Beginning CACBD
- The Middle ABBA
- The End CEBB

Most popular songs written in the last 100 years can be broken into these three subsections and each usually has three or four parts in them (five in the case of “I Will Wait”).

We will be using this system extensively in the Ultimate Guitar Program.

Chord Review:

We then endeavor to review the chords you have learned during this course since playing rhythm is the most important role of a guitar player.

Chord Progressions:

We then learn that a chord progression is a Harmonic Sequence that produces a definitive sequence that establishes tonality. A Harmonic Sequence is a movement or a changing of chords. A Definitive sequence is a repetitive pattern. Therefore, another way of describing a chord progression is a changing of chords in a repetitive pattern to determine tonality. This definition describes what we have been already playing in the previous lessons and, also, sets the foundation for further study in the UGP. During this lesson, we see chord progressions notated as number, and I will explain this further in the UGP as well.

The goal of this lesson is to prove and show how important it is to know how to play and understand how chord progressions work. I introduce and focus on one special chord progression, the 1-5-m6-4 progression, as well as its close variation of m6-4-1-5. This chord progression is used in hundreds of songs. You will be able to play these songs by mastering this one chord progression. There are two “forms” to learn, the C-Form and the G-Form. The chords for the 1-5-m6-4 progression in the C-Form are C Major shape, G Major shape, A minor shape, and F Major shape. The chords for the 1-5-m6-4 progression are the G Major shape, the D Major shape, the E minor shape, and the C Major shape.

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| 1. Let it Be | – C Form – no capo |
| 2. No Woman No Cry | – C Form – no capo |
| 3. Forever Young | – C Form – no capo |
| 4. Wherever You Will Go | – C Form – capo on 2 nd fret |
| 5. Pictures of You | – C Form – capo on 2 nd fret |
| 6. With or Without You | – C Form – capo on 2 nd fret |
| 7. You’re Beautiful | – C Form – capo on 3 rd fret |
| 8. She Will Be Loved | – C Form – capo on 3 rd fret |
| 9. Don’t Stop Believing | – C Form – capo on 4 th fret |
| 10. Under the Bridge | – C Form – capo on 4 th fret |
| 11. Hey Soul Sister | – C Form – capo on 4 th fret |
| 12. Torn | – C Form – capo on 5 th fret |
| 13. When I Come Around | – C Form – capo on 6 th fret |
| 14. Can You Feel the Love Tonight | – G Form – no capo |
| 15. Someone Like You | – G Form – capo on 2 nd fret |
| 16. The Edge of Glory | – G Form – capo on 2 nd fret |
| 17. Take On Me | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |
| 18. Cryin’ | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |
| 19. Take Me Home Country Roads | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |
| 20. Wagon Wheel | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |
| 21. I’m Yours | – G Form – capo on the 4 th fret |

The variation m6-4-1-5 of the original chord progression also uses the C and G Forms respectively.

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| 22. Drive By | – C Form – capo on 4 th fret |
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| 23. Poker Face | – G Form – no capo |
| 24. Zombie | – G Form – no capo |
| 25. Hello | – G Form – capo on the 1 st fret |
| 26. Kids | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |
| 27. Cheap Thrills | – G Form – capo on the 2 nd fret |

If you do not have a capo for the songs that require a capo, you can still play these songs in the open C and G forms. However, you will not be able to play along with the recordings of the songs because they will be in a different key. In the UGP, you will learn more about key signatures and how they work. You will also learn how to play all of these songs and more without the need of a capo.

The challenge for Lesson 8 is a little different than the other challenges. Many of the songs we learned have a few more parts and chord progressions to them. Choose your favorite song, and learn the entire song.

Also, let us know what your favorite part of the Diploma in Guitar Course was.

If, at any point, you need assistance or have any questions, please feel free to email me. This concludes the summary for Lesson 8. We will see you in the Ultimate Guitar Program.



THANK YOU

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