

Phrases and Cadences

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- A **phrase** is a series of notes that sound complete even when played apart from the main song.
- We will use this musical example to demonstrate phrases.



- Play the first two measures, notice how they sound incomplete.



- Now play the first four measures, they sound more complete.

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The top staff contains a melodic line: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). The bottom staff contains a bass line: G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), B3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F3 (half).

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- These measures could be considered a phrase.

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, identical to the previous block. A red bracket underlines the first four measures of the top staff, labeled "Phrase".

- Play the fifth through eighth measures.

The first exercise consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). A red bracket underlines the fifth through eighth measures (Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4), labeled "Phrase". The second staff is a piano accompaniment consisting of a single bass line: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half).

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- Due to their completeness, they also form a phrase.

The second exercise consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). A red bracket underlines the fifth through eighth measures (Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4), labeled "Phrase". The second staff is a piano accompaniment consisting of a single bass line: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). A red bracket underlines the fifth through eighth measures (Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4), labeled "Phrase".

- A **cadence** is a two-chord progression that occurs at the end of a phrase.
- If a phrase ends with any chord going to V, a **half cadence (HC)** occurs.

I ii V⁷ I → V HC

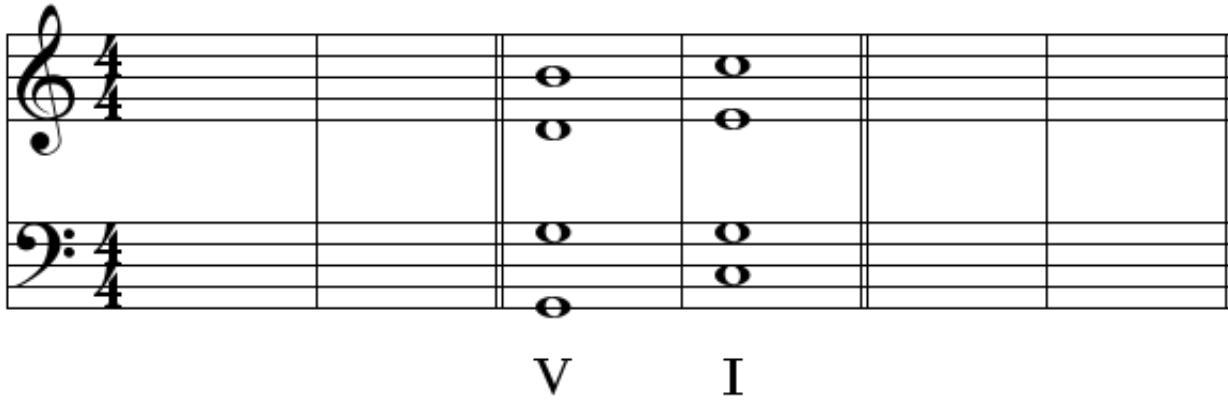
- Replay the first four measures and notice the sound of the half cadence.
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- Most people will hear a half cadence as sounding incomplete. Hence, composers usually follow them with a phrase ending in an **authentic cadence (AC)**.
 - An authentic cadence occurs whenever a phrase ends with V or vii^o going to I (or i if minor).

I ii V⁷ I → V HC

IV ii⁶ iii vi ii V → I AC

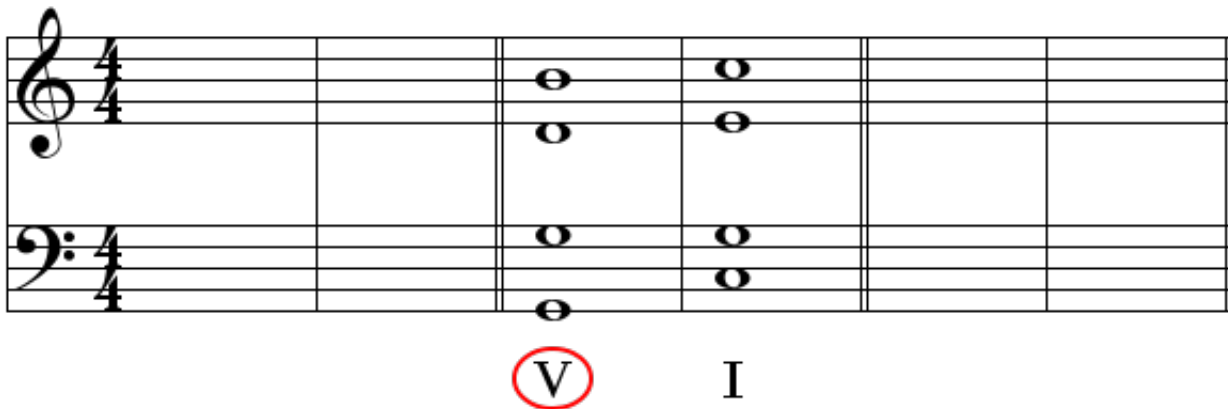
- Play this example and notice the sound of both cadences.

- Authentic cadences are often classified as either perfect or imperfect.
- To be considered a **perfect authentic cadence (PAC)**, the cadence must meet three requirements.



A musical score in 4/4 time showing a cadence. The treble clef staff has a whole note chord of G4 and B4 in the first measure, and a whole note chord of G4 and B4 in the second measure. The bass clef staff has a whole note chord of G3 and B3 in the first measure, and a whole note chord of G3 and B3 in the second measure. Below the bass clef staff, the Roman numerals 'V' and 'I' are centered under the first and second measures respectively.

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- First, V must be used rather than vii^o.



A musical score in 4/4 time showing a cadence. The treble clef staff has a whole note chord of G4 and B4 in the first measure, and a whole note chord of G4 and B4 in the second measure. The bass clef staff has a whole note chord of G3 and B3 in the first measure, and a whole note chord of G3 and B3 in the second measure. Below the bass clef staff, the Roman numerals 'V' and 'I' are centered under the first and second measures respectively. The 'V' is circled in red.

- Second, both chords must be in root position.

A musical score in 4/4 time showing a V-I cadence in root position. The treble clef staff contains two whole notes: G4 and A4. The bass clef staff contains two whole notes: G3 and A3. The notes G4 and A3 are circled in red. Below the bass staff, the Roman numerals V and I are circled in red, corresponding to the notes G and A respectively.

- Finally, the highest note of the I (or i) chord must be the tonic of the scale.

A musical score in 4/4 time showing a V-I cadence where the highest note of the I chord is the tonic. The treble clef staff contains two whole notes: G4 and A4. The bass clef staff contains two whole notes: G3 and A3. The notes G4 and A3 are circled in red. Below the bass staff, the Roman numerals V and I are circled in red, corresponding to the notes G and A respectively.

- An **imperfect authentic cadence (IAC)** fails to meet these requirements.
- These authentic cadences are all imperfect due to various reasons.

vii^{°6} I V⁶ I V I

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- In the first example, a vii[°] is used instead of a V.

vii^{°6} I V⁶ I V I

- In the second example, one of the chords is not in root position.

Musical notation for the second example, showing a sequence of chords in 4/4 time. The chords are labeled as $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}$, I, V^6 , I, V, and I. The V^6 chord is circled in red, indicating it is not in root position.

- In the third example, the highest note of the I chord is not the tonic of the scale.

Musical notation for the third example, showing a sequence of chords in 4/4 time. The chords are labeled as $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}$, I, V^6 , I, V, and I. The highest note of the final I chord is circled in red, indicating it is not the tonic of the scale.

- In addition to authentic and half cadences, two other kinds exist.
- If a phrase ends with IV (or iv) going to I (or i), a **plagal cadence (PC)** occurs.

I V₄⁶ I⁶ IV → I PC

- Play this example and notice the sound of the plagal cadence.

I V₄⁶ I⁶ IV → I PC

- If a phrase ends with V going to a chord other than I (or i), a **deceptive cadence (DC)** occurs.
- A deceptive cadence is often used in place of an authentic cadence.
- Recall the musical example used at the beginning of this lesson. Let's replace the authentic cadence at the end of the second phrase with a deceptive cadence.

The image shows two musical phrases in 4/4 time, each with two staves. The first phrase consists of four measures with chords I, ii, V⁷, and V. A red oval highlights the transition from I to V, labeled 'HC' (authentic cadence). The second phrase consists of five measures with chords IV, ii⁶, iii, vi, and ii. A red oval highlights the transition from V to vi, labeled 'DC' (deceptive cadence).

- Play the modified example. Notice how the cadence “deceives” you (since you are expecting to hear a I).

This image is identical to the one above, showing two musical phrases in 4/4 time. The first phrase ends with an authentic cadence (I to V), and the second phrase ends with a deceptive cadence (V to vi). Red ovals and arrows highlight these transitions, with labels 'HC' and 'DC' respectively.

- Use this chart to reference cadences.

Cadence	Progression
Half	ANY → V
Authentic	V → I
Plagal	IV → I
Deceptive	V → NOT I

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