

Cadences

A cadence is a musical punctuation that signals the end of a section of music. Cadences mark formal seams and confirm the tonality. At a cadence there may be a break in the rhythmic flow as well as the reaching of a harmonic goal. A cadence usually consists of 2 chords.

Cadences differ considerably in strength. The metric positioning of the chords in a cadence plays a large part in the strength of a cadence. If the cadence appears on a strong beat (the downbeat) it is much stronger than if it appears on the weak beat (offbeat).

In determining cadence types, 3 factors must be considered:

- 1) the final chord
- 2) the approach to the final chord
- 3) the scale degree in the soprano over the final chord.

(1) The Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC)

Must have the following:

- 1) I (root position)
- 2) V (root position)
- 3) Tonic scale degree in soprano of I chord

The PAC is the strongest cadence and it is frequently found at the very end of a composition. Why is it the strongest? Because not only does the progression V-I strongly create the sense of a particular tonality (Note: V serves to establish I because of its dominant relation to I and because it contains the leading tone which projects the tonic pitch), but when the soprano line ends on the tonic scale degree the effect of completion or closure is stronger than if it ended on the 3rd or 5th scale degree.

tonic scale degree

V I

(2) Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC)

Slightly weaker than the PAC. It is a V-I cadence with any of the following conditions:

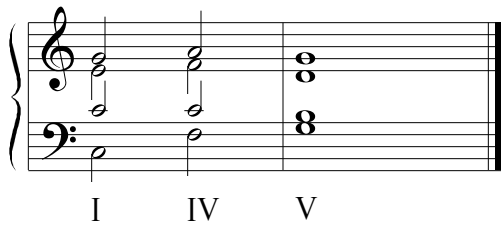
- 1) The soprano over the I chord is scale degree 3 or 5.
- 2) V is replaced by vii°6.
- 3) Either or both V and I are inverted.

As an example, V6-I is considered less conclusive than V-I

V inverted.	I inverted	Scale degree 5 in sop. over I	Scale degree 3 in sop. over I
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(3) Half Cadence (HC)

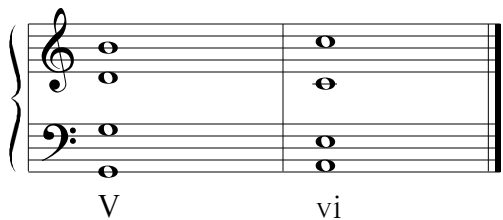
Any cadence that ends with V (V is the harmonic goal). For example, I-V; IV-V; ii-V. Very often appears at the end of the first pair of parallel phrases in a parallel period.



The musical notation shows a three-measure progression in a grand staff. The first measure contains a C major triad (I). The second measure contains an F major triad (IV). The third measure contains a G major triad (V). The notes are: Measure 1: C4, E4, G4; Measure 2: F4, A4, C5; Measure 3: G4, B4, D5.

(4) The Deceptive Cadence (DC)

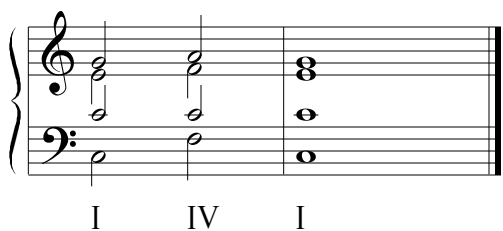
Consists of V progressing deceptively to a chord other than I (the expectation is for V to resolve to I). V-vi is by far the most common. The function is to extend the progression or redirect the harmony towards a harmony other than I or V.



The musical notation shows a two-measure progression in a grand staff. The first measure contains a G major triad (V). The second measure contains an F minor triad (vi). The notes are: Measure 1: G4, B4, D5; Measure 2: F4, A4, C5.

(5) The Plagal Cadence (PC)

Consists of a subdominant chord (most often IV but sometimes ii) followed by I. The plagal cadence most often appears after an authentic cadence as an added close to a movement, like the "amen" at the end of hymns.



The musical notation shows a three-measure progression in a grand staff. The first measure contains a C major triad (I). The second measure contains an F major triad (IV). The third measure contains a C major triad (I). The notes are: Measure 1: C4, E4, G4; Measure 2: F4, A4, C5; Measure 3: C4, E4, G4.

Factors that Create a STRONG Cadence

(the opposite of below would create a weak cadence)

Rhythm: The last note is of long duration, falls on a strong beat, and the motion stops.

Melody: Comes to rest on scale degree 1, 3, or 5.

Harmony: Root position, non-embellished I in the original key, preceded by V; the harmonic motion stops.

Register, Tempo, Dynamics, Texture, Orchestration, Mode: No change at the point of cadence.