

Smooth Voice-Leading Game

Diatonic Modes & Voice Leading

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REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Pencil & eraser
- Staff paper
- [Student facing documentation](#)

DESCRIPTION

This is a voice-leading activity that has students realize a chord progression.

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose or write a modal chord progression that is 5–6 chords long: e.g., F – G – Em – Dm – G – F (F Lydian).
2. In groups, realize the chord progression in **three voices** homorhythmically on a grand staff that uses as few skips and leaps as possible. You will likely need to use inverted chords to efficiently avoid skips and leaps.
3. The group who uses the fewest number of skips and leaps will win.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The pedagogical utility of this activity is to deploy smooth voice-leading in the context of diatonic modes. After introducing diatonic modes, this activity provides an opportunity to engage with the new material in a creative and salient way.
- This activity can be done by individuals rather than by groups.
- This activity can be done in four voices instead of three.
- You can change chord progressions however you see fit, e.g., making progressions longer or shorter. Progressions should start and end on the same chord to reinforce the “modal” tonic.
- You may want to allow students to realize progressions in a polyphonic, rather than homorhythmic, manner.

Step 1: Write or choose a modal chord progression from below.

Step 2: In groups, realize an assigned or composed chord progression in **three voices** that uses as few skips and leaps as possible. The progression must be completely homorhythmic. You must legibly write out your progression on a grand staff.

Step 3: The group who uses the fewest number of skips and leaps will win and hear a performance of their composition in class today! You will likely need to use inverted chords to efficiently avoid skips and leaps.

Group 1

Dm – G – F – Em – Am – Dm

Group 2

Cm – B $\flat$ – F – Gm – Dm – Cm

Group 3

F – G – Em – Dm – G – F

Group 4

C – D – Am – G – D – C

Group 5

G – F – C – Am – G