

# LESSON PLAN: 1, 4, 1, 5 (I, IV, I, V) Progression with A, D, and E

## Objective:

Students will be able to use the A, D, and E root notes to play a 1, 4, 1, 5 (I IV I V) chord progression, enabling them to play and recognize this in dozens of songs.

## Resources:

Song charts and lyrics for “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” by The Tokens, “Brown Eyed Girl” by Van Morrison, “Free Falling” by Tom Petty, and “American Pie” by Don McLean

## Procedures:

- 1 Practice Playing the A, D, A, E root notes using open strings. Practice switching between these notes to prepare for using them in songs, keeping in mind that when you start a new note the previous one has to be muted. These bass notes can also be played on guitar if your classroom doesn't have a bass. Even if you do have a bass, doubling the bass line on guitar always sounds cool and tightens up the groove!
- 2 Play the 1st A, D, A, E progression to the songs “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” and “Brown Eyed Girl”. Students who are new to doing this may want to play each note as whole notes, while more experienced students can try using the bass rhythms. Since the chord progressions are the same, what makes the songs different is the melody and use of rhythm.
- 3 Play the 2nd A, D, A, E progression to the songs “Free Falling” and “American Pie”. This time the progression is a little bit different having only 2 counts on each chord instead of 4.

## Extensions:

- 1 The bass notes are represented using open strings which can help us understand the instrument quickly. After this feels easy for students, try playing the same three bass notes beginning with the A located at the 5th fret on the lowest string to expand understanding how the instrument works (Figure C).
- 2 Discuss bass notes as numbers related to the key you are in. This chord progression is typically called a “1 4 1 5” progression by musicians because A is the 1st chord in the key, D is the 4th, and E is the 5th. Ask students to use the musical alphabet and name these three notes in different keys. “What bass notes would you use in a ‘1 4 1 5’ progression in the key of D? How about in the key of G?”

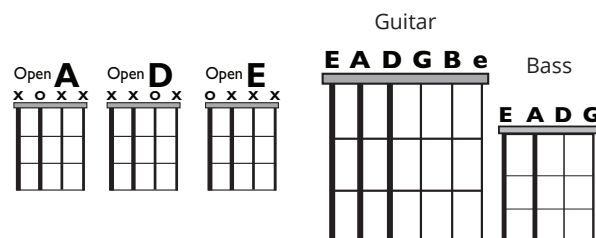
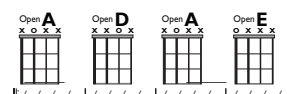
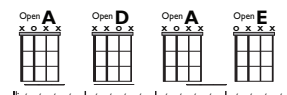


Fig. A

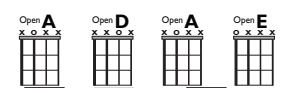


in the style of “The Lion Sleeps tonight”

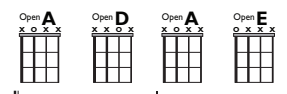


in the style of “Brown Eyed Girl”

Fig. B

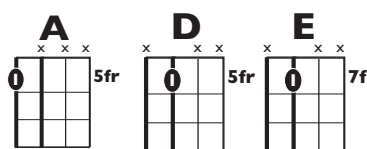


in the style of “Free Falling”



in the style of “American Pie”

Fig. C



1 E	2mi F#mi	3mi G#mi	4 A	5 B	6mi C#mi	7 D
1 D	2mi E	3mi F#mi	4 G	5 A	6mi Bmi	7 C
1 G	2mi A	3mi Bmi	4 C	5 D	6mi E	7 F

## National Core Arts Standards (Music):

National Core Arts Standards (Music) Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for performance. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4  
b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.3.NF.A.1 Understand a fraction  $\frac{1}{b}$  as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into  $b$  equal parts; understand a fraction  $\frac{a}{b}$  as the quantity formed by  $a$  parts of size  $\frac{1}{b}$ . (division of the octave into numbered scale degrees)

