

LESSON PLAN: Anchor Chords

Objective:

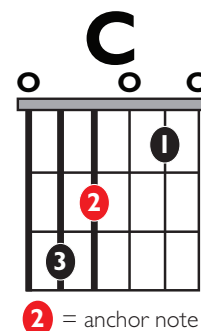
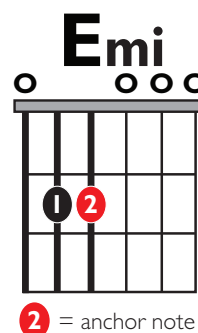
Students will be able to change chords easily using the concept of “Anchor Notes” to move to a new chord.

Resources:

Handout in teacher manual of the C chord.

Procedures:

- 1 Ask students to watch you play an E minor chord changing to a C chord over and over. “Hurricane” by Bob Dylan, “Eleanor Rigby” by The Beatles, and “Show Me The Way” by Peter Frampton are all classic songs that use this progression.
- 2 Have students see if they can identify which finger is not moving as you change chords. It will be your 2nd finger located on the 4th string in the 2nd fret. After this is obvious to the students, tell them that finger never leaves the guitar as you change chords—it’s an “anchor finger” to help you switch between chords really easily.
- 3 Ask students to play a C chord on their guitars. (This is a complicated chord to play for a beginner, so you will want to have spent enough time with this chord by itself before using it in this lesson plan). After they play the C chord, have them lift the 1 and 3 fingers off of the guitar, leaving the 2nd finger anchored on the 2nd fret of the 4th string. Then play the full C chord again, followed by lifting everything except the “anchor finger”.
- 4 Once they’ve gotten the concept of the “anchor finger”, have them switch to the E minor chord and then strum that. Go back and forth between these two chords several times, taking as much time as necessary to feel a secure and comfortable transition between chords.
- 5 Eventually you’ll be ready to have students switch chords, one right after the other with a couple of seconds between each chord. Just like with other chord switching lesson plans, make a fun exercise out of trying to switch between chords faster and faster.



Extensions:

Make a medley out of the chords E minor to C using the songs listed about and others you can find. The book “Money Chords” by Richard Scott lists dozens of classic chord progressions and the most famous songs that use them making it an outstanding resource for jam sessions like this.

Apply this same concept to the chords C to A minor. A medley of this progression could be made from “All my Loving” by The Beatles, “Shout” by the Isley Brothers, and the instrumental section to “Wish You Were Here” by Pink Floyd.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Example: Harmonizing Instruments MU:Pr5.1.H.5a (Novice) Apply teacher-provided criteria to critique individual performances of a varied repertoire of music that includes melodies, repertoire pieces, and chordal accompaniments selected for performance, and apply practice strategies to address performance challenges and refine the performances. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.3 Follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.

