

LESSON PLAN: Hearing Chords

Objective:

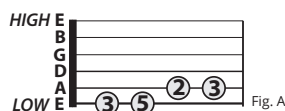
Students will be able to hear the difference between chords based on hearing them as numbers related to a “1” chord. Music is a language made out of sound, and learning how to pay attention to it with our ears should always be our top priority.

Resources:

Handout from the website showing chords related to each other in any of the keys you are with your students on. This lesson will focus on the key of G.

Procedures:

- 1 Tell students that chords are related to each other as numbers in every key, and that the “1” chord is the chord that usually begins and ends any song. Learning to hear chords this way allows us to figure out songs on our own.
- 2 Play the first 4 notes in a G Major scale while naming the notes as 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Figure A).



- 3 Next play just the first note and then strum the G chord telling everyone that since this chord is based on the 1st note it is called the “1” chord. Then play those first four notes again, and after playing the 4th note C, strum a C chord pointing out that since this chord is based on the 4th note it is called the “4” chord. Repeat all of this a second time to secure it in their ears.
- 4 Tell students you’re going to play the “1” chord or the “4” chord and you’d like them to shout out as a group which one they heard you play. After each answer confirm it by saying it after them. Most students will be able to hear what you’re playing right away, and those who don’t yet will quickly get it too. It’s alright if you introduce this to them where they can see your hands, but eventually you’ll want to do this so that they aren’t using their eyes to “see” the chords.
- 5 After students are able to name individual chords successfully by hearing them, make the game more interesting by playing several chords in a row and asking them to name the sequence of chords. For example, play the G chord, C chord, and G chord again and students will say “1, 4, 1”!

Extensions:

After students can hear the difference between these chords which will happen very quickly, add another chord. Either the “2” chord (A minor) or “6” chord (E minor) is a good idea since their minor sound makes a more obvious choice when playing one. Remember to preface any new chord by walking up to it’s root using the scale so it’s relationship to the key is obvious. Also try not to introduce new chords until you are completely confident that they are already successful at “hearing” the previously learned ones.

Use this exercise in different keys. Handouts showing which chords are related to each key are available in the Teacher Manual.

National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 7 : Perceive and analyze artistic work. Example : Composition and Theory MU :Re7.2.C.1a (HS Proficient) Analyze aurally the elements of music (including form) of musical works, relating them to style, mood, and context, and describe how the analysis provides models for personal growth as composer, performer, and/or listener. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.B.4 Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.

