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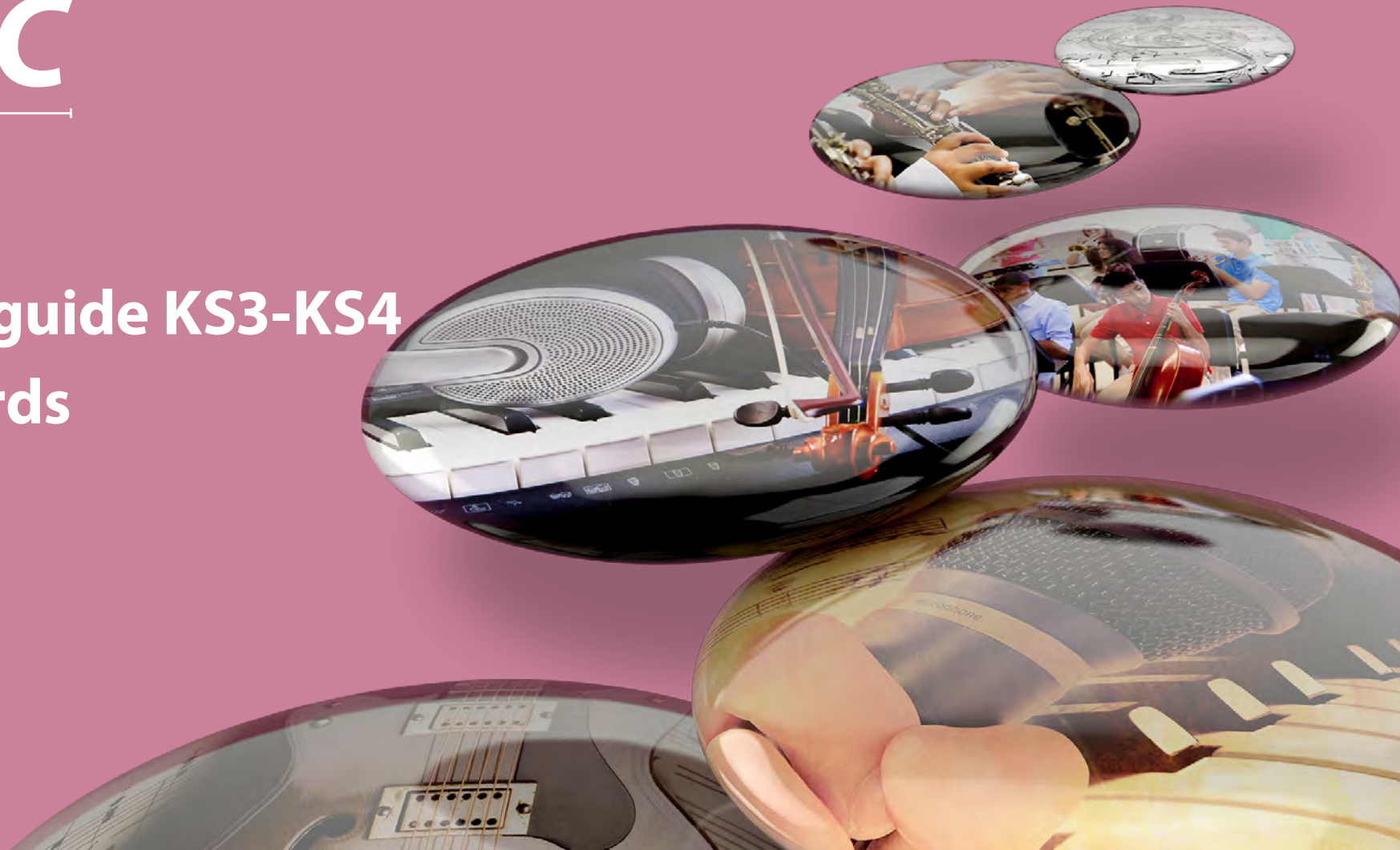
GCSE (9–1)
Transition Guide

MUSIC

J536
For first teaching in 2016

Transition guide KS3-KS4
Topic: Chords

Version 1

Introduction

GCSE (9–1)
MUSIC

Key Stage 3 to 4 Transition guides focus on how a particular topic is covered at the different key stages and provide information on:

- Differences in the demand and approach at the different levels;

- Useful ways to think about the content at Key Stage 3 which will help prepare students for progression to Key Stage 4;

- Common student misconceptions in this topic.

Transition guides also contain links to a range of teaching activities that can be used to deliver the content at Key Stage 3 and 4 and are designed to be of use to teachers of both key stages. Central to the transition guide is a Checkpoint task which is specifically designed to help teachers determine whether students have developed deep conceptual understanding of the topic at Key Stage 3 and assess their 'readiness for progression' to Key Stage 4 content on this topic. This checkpoint task can be used as a summative assessment at the end of Key Stage 4 teaching of the topic or by Key Stage 4 teachers to establish their students' conceptual starting point.

Key Stage 3 to 4 Transition Guides are written by experts with experience of teaching at both key stages.

KS3 to KS4

Topic: Chords

Key Stage 3 Content

- Use staff and other relevant notations appropriately and accurately in a range of musical styles, genres and traditions.

- Play and perform confidently in a range of solo and ensemble contexts using their voice, playing instruments musically, fluently and with accuracy and expression.

- Identify and use the inter-related dimensions of music expressively and with increasing sophistication, including use of tonalities, different types of scales and other musical devices.

Key Stage 4 Content

GCSE Content

- **Musical Elements:** Organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically) including simple chord progressions, perfect and imperfect cadences, and basic melodic devices e.g. sequence.

- **Tonality:** including major, minor, and basic modulation.

- **Musical language:** Reading and writing of staff notation - including treble-clef and bass-clef note names, simple note values, key signatures to four sharps and four flats.

- Chord symbols including major chords and minor chords.

Comment

At KS3, the use of relevant notations can include the use of chord symbols as well as basic staff notation. In fact, most guitar players will be conversant with chord symbols and this is a good way of introducing a form of notation for all. This can then be developed into the use of chords for composing work and the understanding of how chords are used as the basis for most music, in particular, popular music styles. Students at KS3 should be conversant with simple chords such as major and minor and be able to understand how they are formed.

At KS4, students should be able to identify simple cadences and understand about the use of chord progressions. They can play chord progressions and perhaps transfer them to other keys as well as using them as a basis for a composition.

The different between major and minor chords will be understood and can develop into a greater understanding of major and minor scales and tonality in general.

The use of chords is a useful way of developing music notation skills because chord symbols are used by many when performing popular music. A lesson at KS3 can focus on the use of chords and can develop students' musical knowledge by exploring how a chord is formed. In fact, many performance pieces explored at KS3 start off with basic chords and can progress onto the melody using letter names before developing music notation skills further using some elements of staff notation.

Students' knowledge at KS4 can be developed further by exploring the use of tones and semitones and the difference between major and minor chords. They should be able to identify these aurally and understand how chords are used in a typical chord progression. This skill can also develop into identifying simple cadences and how these are used to produce structure in music.

Useful lessons at KS3 could include performance tasks using chord progressions in simple notation, which could develop into a composing task using the sample chords.

At KS4, this could develop into more detailed performance tasks and the development of their own chord progressions in the composition of a song or instrumental piece.

Mapping KS3 to KS4

Possible Teaching Activities (KS3 focus)

Checkpoint task (KS3 focus)

Possible Teaching Activities (KS4 focus)

Possible Extension Activities (KS4 focus)

Resources, links and support

Possible Teaching Activities (KS3 focus)

Activities

Blues Workshop

Musical Futures

This website starts with group blues activities and gives a full teaching scheme for using Blues and chords.

https://www.musicalfutures.org/resource/96/title/classroomworkshoppingthenextstepsblues

Triad chords

TES resources

This is a useful document which can be used as a hand out for students to remind them about the basic information about chords.

https://www.tes.co.uk/ResourceDetail.aspx?storyCode=6087166&

Fanfare composition

TES resources

A composition task focusing on fanfares. The students are required to use a chord of C as a starting point.

https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Fanfare-composition-task-3004001/

| Mapping KS3 to KS4 | Possible Teaching Activities (KS3 focus) | Checkpoint task (KS3 focus) | Possible Teaching Activities (KS4 focus) | Possible Extension Activities (KS4 focus) | Resources, links and support |

The use of chords in a piece of popular music

Using the Checkpoint Task worksheet, students are asked to play the chords for Three Little Birds and then progress to performing them with vocals.

Using chords to compose a song

Use the associated checkpoint task worksheet. This task starts with a repeated chord pattern and students start by playing the chords used in Stand By Me.

They can then go on to compose their own chord pattern which can be used as the basis for their own song.

Link to task

Mapping KS3 to KS4

Possible Teaching Activities (KS3 focus)

Checkpoint task (KS3 focus)

Possible Teaching Activities (KS4 focus)

Possible Extension Activities (KS4 focus)

Resources, links and support

Topic: Chords

Possible Teaching Activities (KS4 focus)

Activities

Song

TES resources

Students work on building up a song starting with rhythm backing, adding chords and finally a melody.

https://www.tes.co.uk/ResourceDetail.aspx?storyCode=6313729&

Chord Knowledge

Chord find

A useful website which can be used to help students build up their knowledge of chords.

http://chordfind.com

How to compose a melody and accompaniment

TES resources

Power points which take students through the steps required to compose a melody and then add accompaniment

https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/How-to-compose-a-melody-and-accompaniment-6287521/

Mapping KS3 to KS4

Possible Teaching Activities (KS3 focus)

Checkpoint task (KS3 focus)

Possible Teaching Activities (KS4 focus)

Possible Extension Activities (KS4 focus)

Resources, links and support

Possible Extension Activities (KS4 focus)

Topic: Chords

Activities

Modulating from Major to Minor Keys

TES resources

A guide on using pivot chords showing how to modulate. This guide is written on a Sibelius document and therefore makes use of staff notation.

https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Modulating-from-Major-Keys-to-Minor-Keys-6182130/

Primary and Secondary Chords

TES resources

Guides to primary and secondary chords taking students through steps to creating chords.

https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Primary-and-Secondary-Chords-6287518/

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Topic: Chords

Resources, links and support

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Contact the team: music@ocr.org.uk

Continue the discussion on the music community forum: http://social.ocr.org.uk/ and follow us on Twitter, @ocr_performarts

To find out more about GCSE and A Level reform please visit:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-and-a-level-reform

Useful external Links:

- Musical Futures – attend courses and network with other teachers to teach music musically!
  https://www.musicalfutures.org/

- Share resources and join in conversations - https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources/

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