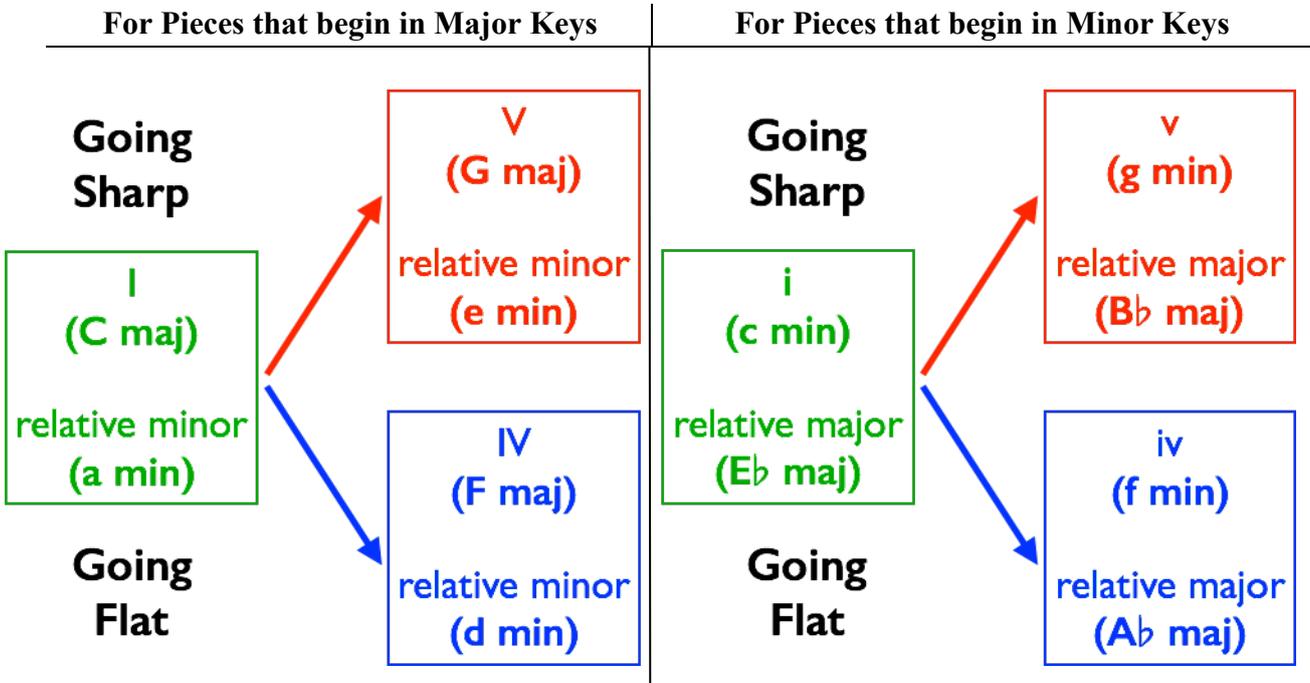# Modulation

What is modulation?

- When a piece of music changes key (tonal centre) to another key it's called a modulation.
- It makes music more interesting by providing contrast between different keys, phrases, or sections of music and can even provide structure to an entire piece (e.g. sonata form).
- It is common to modulate within a piece of music from the originally key to one of its five closely related keys:

For Pieces that begin in Major Keys	For Pieces that begin in Minor Keys

Going Sharp

I (C maj)
relative minor
(a min)

Going Flat

V
(G maj)
relative minor
(e min)

IV
(F maj)
relative minor
(d min)

Going Sharp

i (c min)
relative major
(E♭ maj)

Going Flat

v
(g min)
relative major
(B♭ maj)

iv
(f min)
relative major
(A♭ maj)

How does modulation work?

- Modulations are usually established by a **perfect (authentic) cadence** in the new key, nearly always *using a V chord or a V⁷ chord.*
- The modulating chord must contain a note that is foreign to the old key (a '**chromatic note**'). This helps to cancel the old tonality and introduce the new one.

$I^6 \quad I \quad IV$

C major (no modulation)

$I^6 \quad V^7 \quad I$

C major to **F major**

Modulation for Grade 7

- In Grade 7, you need to identify _one_ modulation in a phrase that starts in a _major key_. The phrase will _only be played once_!
- For this grade, you need to identify whether the modulation at the end of phrase is to the
  - ⇒ **Relative Minor** (gaining a sharp or losing a flat)
  - ⇒ **Subdominant** (gaining a flat or losing a sharp)
  - ⇒ **Dominant** (gaining a sharp or losing a flat)
- From the major tonic to the relative minor is quite easy to identify, because you'll notice you've modulated into a minor key. To recognise modulation to the subdominant and dominant is harder because they are both modulating from a major to another major key. Some students keep humming the tonic of the old key, and hum the tonic of new key, then compare both to work out the distance between the two. This is _not_ always the best approach.
- This table should help you better identify modulations. Listen out for whether the music feels pulled upwards or downwards, and try and identify the chromatic note involved in the modulation.

Modulation from a Major Key	Accidental in terms of Old Key	Accidental in terms of New Key	Overall Effect
To the Relative Minor	♯**5** degree of the old key	leading note, which **_rises to tonic (1ˢᵗ)_**	Pulling upwards, ends in minor key
To the Subdominant	♭**7** degree of the old key	7th of V^7 Chord, which **_falls to mediant (3ʳᵈ)_**	Pulling downwards, ends in major key
To the Dominant	♯**4** degree of the old key	leading note, which **_rises to tonic (1ˢᵗ)_**	Pulling upwards, ends in major key

Old Key: C MAJOR	Accidental needed to modulate	Where the accidental is found in new key	Overall Effect
Modulating to A minor	G♯	$V^{(7)}$ E, G♯, B, (D)	music sounds brighter, key sounds raised
Modulating to F major	B♭	V^7 C, E, G, B♭	music sounds darker, key sounds lowered
Modulating to G major	F♯	$V^{(7)}$ D, F♯, A, (C)	music sounds brighter, key sounds raised

Modulation for Grade 8

- In Grade 8, you need to identify *two* modulations: one phrase that starts in a *major key* and another phrase that starts in a *minor key*. Each phrase will *only be played once*!
- You need to identify the following types of modulations

(Like Grade 7) From a Major Key to:

⇒ **Relative Minor** (gaining a sharp/losing a flat)
⇒ **Subdominant** (gaining a flat/losing a sharp)
⇒ **Dominant** (gaining a sharp/losing a flat)

From a Minor Key to:

⇒ **Relative Major** (gaining a flat/losing a sharp)
⇒ **Subdominant Minor** (gaining a sharp **and** a flat)
⇒ **Dominant Major** (gaining a sharp or losing a flat)
⇒ **Dominant Minor** (gaining a sharp or losing a flat)

Starting in Major Keys

- To recognise modulations from a *major key* to the relative minor, subdominant and dominant, please consult information contained in Grade 7 above

Starting in Minor Keys

- In Grade 8, a modulation from a minor key to the relative major will (of course), always move to a major key. Similarly, a modulation from a minor key to the subdominant will always move to a minor key. However a modulation to the dominant can be either major or minor depending on whether the 7th degree of the old key is raised or not. *You don't have no recognise whether a minor piece has modulated to the dominant major or dominant minor!* Candidates only need to recognise that the piece began in a minor key and modulated to the dominant.

Modulation from a minor Key	Accidental in terms of Old Key	Accidental in terms of New Key	Overall Effect
To the Relative Major	♮7 degree of the old key	dominant (5th), which *falls to tonic (1st)*	Pulling downwards, ends in major key
To the Subdominant Minor	♯3 degree and ♭2 degree of the old key	leading note, which *rises to tonic (1st)* submediant (6th) which falls to **dominant** (5th)	Ambiguous, but mostly pulling upwards, ends in minor key
To the Dominant Major	♯4 degree of the old key	leading note, which *rises to tonic (1st)*	Pulling upwards, ends in major key
To the Dominant Minor	♯4 degree of the old key	leading note, which *rises to tonic (1st)*	Pulling upwards, ends in minor key

Old Key: A MINOR	Accidental needed to modulate	Where the accidental is found in new key	Overall Effect
Modulating to C major	G♮	$V^{(7)}$ G, B, D, (F)	music sounds darker, key sounds lowered
Modulating to D minor	C♯ B♭	$V^{(7)}$: A, C♯, E, (G) any pre-dominant chord with B♭	overall music sounds darker, key sounds lowered
Modulating to E major	D♯	$V^{(7)}$ B, D♯, F♯, (A)	music sounds brighter, key sounds raised
Modulating to E minor	D♯	$V^{(7)}$ B, D♯, F♯, (A)	music sounds brighter, key sounds raised