

Cadences

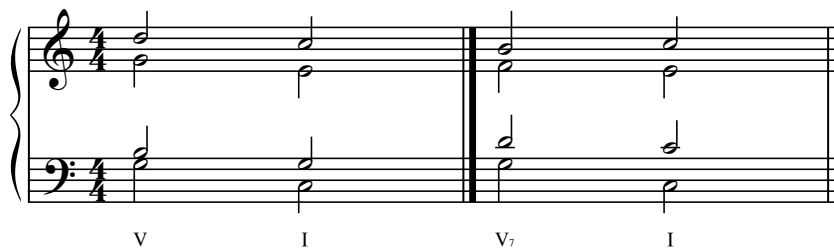
In Western tonal music, cadences combine two aspects: a sense of closure, that enough has happened and the idea has reached a conclusion; and a harmonic formula. The first set of notes on form deals more with the relation of the two aspects; these notes focus on the harmonic formulas, which are the basis for the classification of cadences.

Authentic Cadence:

Any cadence in which V (or V7) moves to I with both chords in root position. (Or in minor, V to i; in general triad qualities from the major mode will be understood to stand for those in the minor mode as well.)

Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC):

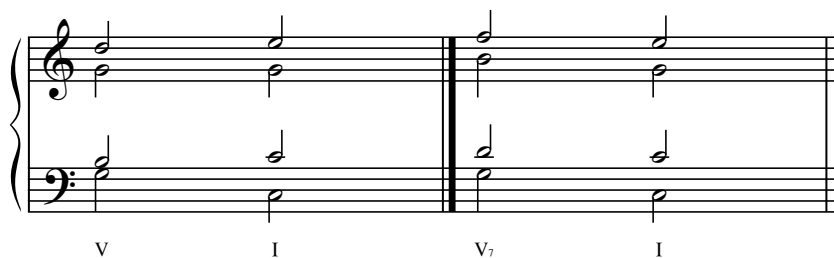
An authentic cadence in which the soprano ends up on scale-degree 1.



V I V₇ I

Imperfect Authentic Cadence (IAC):

An authentic cadence in which the soprano ends up on a scale-degree from the tonic triad other than scale-degree 1. In the vast majority cases the conclusion is on scale-degree 3; IAC's ending on scale-degree 5 are extremely rare.



V I V₇ I

Half Cadence (HC):

A cadence that concludes on a root-position V chord. This is called a half cadence because of the expectation that the music must continue on to an authentic cadence.

A few notes about the HC:

HC's use V chords without sevenths. While you may (very rarely) encounter one in the literature, you should never write an HC with a seventh in the V chord.

HC's occur on strong beats -- either on the downbeat or, in duple meters, on the accented beat in the middle of the measure. Again, rare exceptions exist in the literature, but you should not write any.

I IV I V I IV V

Plagal Cadence:

The plagal cadence is a traditional name, but it is not really a cadence in our sense as it does not end a phrase. Rather, it serves as a tag following the end of a phrase. The phrase ends with an authentic cadence (usually a PAC) and then the chords IV and I (in root position) follow the concluding tonic of the cadence.

In the later 19th-century, phrases sometimes ended with a motion from IV to I, but this remained rather unusual. In partwriting, you should follow the standard practice.

I IV V I IV I

Contrapuntal Cadence:

You may occasionally encounter cadences in which one or more of the chords is not in root position. This is extremely rare before Beethoven and remains rare after, though it does occur with increasing frequency as the 19th century progresses. We will call these "contrapuntal cadences," because smooth voice-leading overrides the usual emphasis on strong harmonic motion using root-position chords. You should know about contrapuntal cadences for analysis, but do not use them in partwriting.

You may also encounter a different terminology, in which "root-position IAC" names our IAC, and "inverted IAC" names the contrapuntal cadence (at least the contrapuntal authentic cadence), regardless of the scale degree in the soprano. We will not use these terms, but you should understand them.