

# LESSON PLAN: Changing Chords (Chord Grip)

## Objective:

*Students will be able to change chords easily by becoming aware of what guitar players refer to as the “chord grip”*

## Resources:

Handout in teacher manual showing E minor and A chords.

## Procedures:

- 1 Have students play an E minor chord on their guitars. Spend a moment to make sure that everyone has it, maybe even pairing students together who can help each other.
- 2 Ask students to “freeze” the fingers in the shape they made when playing the E minor chord and then slide the guitar out from the “grip” the hand made when playing this chord. Model this for them, showing that the result has both fingers in the shape of the chord you made, but also the thumb going straight up and down parallel with the playing fingers like it would be behind the neck to support playing the chord.
- 3 Have students put this “chord grip” back onto the guitar to play the E minor chord again. Repeat this process several times to help develop the muscle memory associated with playing chords this way. You can tell students that some guitarists call this a “chord grip” because of the feeling in the chord hand of “gripping” a chord.
- 4 Do the same procedure using an A chord, playing the chord successfully and then freezing that grip in the air to pay attention to how the fingers are holding it and the way the thumb supports it.
- 5 Play the E minor chord on one strum, stop, make the grip for the A chord and strum. Do the same thing going to E minor and continuing to go back and forth between these two chords.
- 6 Try switching between the chords slightly faster, spending about 2 seconds on each chord and increasing the speed until you can change in 1 second or less!



## Extension:

Use these two chords in a song or over a jam track that plays this type of progression over and over, like “Breathe” by Pink Floyd, “Oye Como Va” by Santana, or “Chameleon” by Herbie Hancock.

### National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Example: General Music MU:Cr2.1.6 b. Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or audio/video recording to document personal simple rhythmic phrases, melodic phrases, and two-chord harmonic musical ideas. 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.

