

LESSON PLAN: Spelling Chords and Naming Notes

Objective:

Students will be able to spell chords starting on any letter of the musical alphabet while reinforcing their knowledge of the notes of the keyboard.

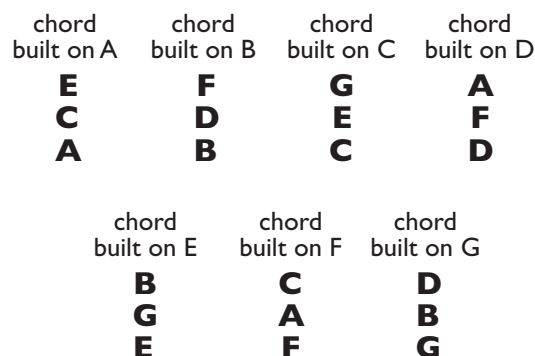
Resources:

Major Chord Jam Card, Minor Chord Jam Card

Procedures:

- 1 Review the musical alphabet with your students (see lesson plan “Chopsticks and Forks”). We want them also to get used to the idea that in the musical alphabet “A” comes after “G”. You can sing the “Musical Alphabet Song” with them (which sounds just like the regular alphabet song except you keep using the letters A B C D E F G over and over, never going to H). You can also sing the “Backward Musical Alphabet Song” with them singing “G F E D C B A, G F E D C B A,” etc. These songs easily teach the seven note musical alphabet and provide a fun opportunity to memorize that A comes after G.
- 2 Tell them that chords are built by skipping letters and then playing notes at the same time. Run through an example with them by writing A on the board, and then telling them to skip B and then writing C on the board above the A. Tell them that they next have to skip D and then write E on the board above the A and C. Label the top of this chord “A chord” (later in the lesson plan we’ll use Jam Cards to “discover” that it’s an A minor chord—for now it’s enough for them to understand that this process of skipping and combing letters results in some form of an “A chord”). Have them play these notes on their keyboards.
- 3 Repeat this same procedure starting on B, leading them through a discussion of the letters that would build a chord on that note (B, D, and E). Continue up through the notes of the musical alphabet, discussing and building chords on each one until you’ve built all seven (Figure A).
- 4 Ask students to go through the chords again with the “Major Chord” Jam Card and the “Minor Chord” Jam Card. Have kids play each one and line the jam card up to the start note. For example, they’ll play the chord starting on A and then see which Jam Card lines up to those notes and discover that it is a minor chord. The only one that won’t work is the chord starting on B because that chord is diminished and rarely used.

Fig. A



National Core Arts Standards (Music):

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.F Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.

