

Guide Chord Progressions for Theme and Variations Compositions

Compose a theme based on one of these chord progressions. Repeat and modify this theme to compose each variation.

Chord Progression 1 (based on Mozart Menuett K2)

Chord Progression 1 (based on Mozart Menuett K2) consists of 24 measures in 3/4 time. The progression follows a repeating cycle of chords: I, Ib, IV, Ic, V, I, V, I, V7, V7b, I, V, InGm:vii7, i, ii7b, V7, i, followed by a repeat of I, II, IV, I, V, I, V, I, V7, V7b, I, V, vi, I, Ib, IV, I, V, I. The chords are: FAC, BbDF, FAC, CEG, CEG/F, FAC, CEG, FAC, CEGBb, FAC, FAC/C, CEG, F#ACEb, GBbD, F#AC, F#AC, GBBd; EGBbD, FAC, EGBb, EGBb, FAC, FAC, BbDF, FAC, CEG, EGBb/D, DFA, FAC, BbDF, FAC, CEG, CEG/F, FAC. Measure numbers 13-24 are shown below the staff.

Chord Progression 2 (based on Handel Sarabande)

Chord Progression 2 (based on Handel Sarabande) consists of 24 measures in 3/4 time. The progression follows a repeating cycle of chords: i, V, V7, In.F(I), V, In.D(viib.of.iv), iv, i, (iib.of.iv), ivb76, V, In.F(I), V, ii, (V.of.ii), followed by a repeat of IV, I, In.d:iv, V, i, V, V7, In.F(I), V, In.D(viib.of.iv), iv, i, VI, iv, Ic, V, i. The chords are: DFA, AC#E, AC#EG, FAC, CEG, F#AC, GBBd, DFA, ACE, BbDA, GBBd, EGBb, AC#E, FAC, CEG, GBBd, DF#A; BbDF, FAC, GBBd, AC#E, DFA, AC#E, AC#EG, FAC, CEG, F#AC, GBBd, DFA, BbDF, GBBd, DFA, AC#E, DFA. Measure numbers 13-24 are shown below the staff.

Chord Progression 3 (based on Beethoven 32 Variations in C minor)

Chord Progression 3 (based on Beethoven 32 Variations in C minor) consists of 24 measures in 3/4 time. The progression follows a repeating cycle of chords: i, Vb, In.F(V7d), Ib, #IVaug6, Ic, iv, iv, V7, i, In.Eb(I), Vb, In.Ab(V7d), Ib, followed by a repeat of Vb, i, (V7.of.V), V, i, Vb, In.F(V7d), Ib, #IVaug6, Ic, iv, iv, V7, i. The chords are: CEbG, GBD, CEGBb, FAC, F#AbCEb, CEbG, FAbC, FAbC, GBDf, CEbG, EbGBb, BbDF, EbGBbDb, AbCEb; GBD, CEbG, DF#AC, GBD, CEbG, GBD, CEGBb, FAC, F#AbCEb, CEbG, FAbC, FAbC, GBDf, CEbG. Measure numbers 13-24 are shown below the staff.

Chord Progression 4 (based on Bach Goldberg Variations)

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
 I Vb vi V Ib IV vi V7 I In.D:V7d Ib vi V7 V7d Ib iiib V7d Ic V7 I In.G:V V7d
 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
 Ib IV ii (V7.of.vi) vi Ic IV Ib ii (V7.of.vi) vi IV Ib ii V7 I IV V7b I V7 I

Chord Progression 5 (based on Rachmaninov Variations on a Theme by Chopin)

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 CEbG FAbC GBD CEBG AbCEb DbFAb EbGBbDb AbCEb GBDF CEGbB FAbC CEG DF#AC GBD DF#AC GBD
 9 i iv 10 V i II In.Ab:I IV 12 V I 13 In.c:V7 In.f:V7 14 i V 15 In.G:V7 I 16 V7 I
 CEbG AbCEb BDFAb GBbD ACEb AbCEF# GBD GBDF CEBG FAbC GBD CEBG AbCEb DbFAb GBDF CEBG
 In.c:i VIb VII7 Vb3 +IVb V V7d i iv Vb i VI bii V7 i

Chord Progression 6 (based on Brahms Variations on a Theme by Paganini)

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 ACE EG#B ACE EG#B ACE EG#B ACE EG#B AC#E DF#A GBD CEG G#BDF ACE FACD#EG#B ACE AC#E DF#A GBD CEG G#BDF ACE FACD#EG#B ACE
 i V i V i V In.D:V I In.C:V I viic ib V i In.D:V I In.C:V I viic ib V i

Chord Progression 7 (based on Mozart 12 Variations on Ah Vous Dirai-Je Maman)

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 CEG CEG FAC CEG DFA GBDF CEG ACEDFAC GBDF CEG CEG GBDF CEG GBDF CEG G#BDF ACE DF#AC CEG GBDFCEG CEG FAC CEG DFA GBDF CEG ACEDFAC GBDF CEG
 I Ib IV Ib ii V7b I vi ii7b V7 I Ic V7 Ic V7 Ic (vii7.of.vi) vi (V7b.of.V) Ic V7 I Ib IV Ib ii V7b I vi ii7b V7 I

Chord Progression 8 (based on a theme by Debussy)

1 CEG
2 FCEG#
3 FG#BD
4 ACE
5 DFAC
6 GBDF
7 DFAC
8 GBD
9 GBD
10 F#BDF
11 FAC
12 ACE
13 CEG
14 CEbG
15 CDG
16 GBD
17 CEG
18 FG#CE
19 G#BD
20 ACE
21 DFAC
22 GBD
23 DFAC
24 CEG

Chord Progression 9 (based on a theme by Liszt)

1 GBD
2 BD#F#A
3 EG#BD
4 AC#EGB
5 CEGB
6 DF#AC
7 GBD
8 GBDF
9 CEbG
10 F#ACE
11 GBD
12 GBDF
13 CEbG
14 F#ACE
15 GBD
16 GBDF
17 CEbG
18 ACEF#
19 GBD
20 EG#BD
21 ACEG
22 BD#F#AC
23 EG#BD
24 EG#CD
25 AC#EGB
26 ACEG
27 ACEbG
28 DF#AC
29 GBD
30 BD#F#A
31 EG#BD
32 ACEG
33 BD#F#AC
34 GBD

Chord Progression 10 (based on a theme by Tchaikovsky)

1 EGB
2 EGB/G
3 F#ACE
4 FAC
5 CEG
6 EGB
7 BEF#A
8 BD#F#A
9 EGB
10 GBD
11 BDF#
12 DF#AC
13 ACE/E
14 FACD
15 BD#F#A
16 EGB
17 DF#A
18 DF#AC/E
19 DF#A/F#
20 EG#BD
21 ACE
22 ACEbG/G
23 F#ACE
24 BD#F#A
25 EGB
26 EGB/G
27 F#ACE
28 FAC
29 CEG
30 EGB
31 BD#F#A
32 EGB