LearnMusic Theory. net 5.1 Finding Cadences

Form describes how measures coalesce (group together) to create larger musical units.

A *phrase* is the smallest grouping of measures. Every phrase ends with one *cadence*.

Cadences are arrival points like punctuation marks in the flow of the music.

TIP: If you can find the cadences, you know where the phrases end and can understand the form.

Below are some *clues to spot cadences*. Note that these are *clues*, not guarantees.

Clue 1: Return of previous material might follow a cadence

In this example by Bach, the opening material returns right after the cadence.

Bach, Gavotte from English Suite No. 3 in G minor, BWV 808, mm. 1-5



Clue 2: Design change: Obvious changes *might follow* a cadence

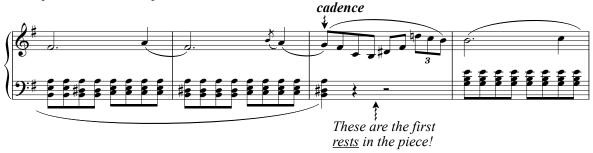
In this example by Beethoven, the accompaniment changes dramatically right after the cadence. This type of obvious change on the musical surface (tempo, rhythm, etc.) is called a *design change*.

Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13, II, mm. 7-10.



Clue 3: Rests in some or all parts *might follow* a cadence

Chopin, 24 Preludes, Op. 28, No. 4 in E minor, mm. 10-13.



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Clue 4: Agogic accent -- A longer rhythmic value might indicate a cadence

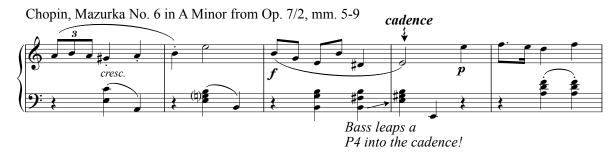
Using a longer rhythmic value to emphasize a note is called *agogic accent*.

Bach, Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach, Polonaise, mm. 1-4.

This half note at the cadence is the longest note so far!



Clue 5: A P5 or P4 in the bass line might be a cadence



Clue 6: The end of a sequence *might indicate* a nearby cadence

A *sequence* keeps repeating a musical idea starting on different notes.

Often the cadence comes a few beats *after* the *sequence pattern ends*.

Bach, Fugue 11 in F Major, BWV 856, from Book I of The Well-Tempered Clavier, mm. 31-36.



Multiple clues *might* point to a single cadence.

- 1. The *clue 1* example above also has a design change because the right hand leaps up to high G after the cadence *AND* the left hand switches from eighth notes to quarter notes.
- 2. The *clue 2* example also has a rest in the left hand.
- 3. In the piece for *clue 3*, the music after the rests is a literal restatement of measure 1 (not shown).
- 4. In the example for *clue 4*, measure 5 (not shown) is a restatement of measure 1.
- 5. The example for *clue* 5 also restates measure 1 (not shown) after the cadence.
- 6. The *clue* 6 example has an agogic accent (long rhythmic value) in the left hand at the cadence.

Identifying Cadence Types

Cadences are classified into *cadence types* by examining TWO chords:

- 1. The chord *at* the cadence, <u>AND</u>
- 2. The chord *right before* the cadence.

See the "Cadence Types" page for a list of common cadence types.