

If you consider the key signature and final note of the following four-bar melody, you should conclude that it is in G major:



G	Am	Bm	C	D ⁽⁷⁾	Em
				(C)	
D	E	F#	G	A	B
B	C	D	E	F#	G
G	A	B	C	D	E
G major:	I	ii	iii	IV	V ⁽⁷⁾ vi

This means that the six triads (and the dominant 7th) shown *left* will be your main source of chords to complete the harmonisation. When working your own exercises, begin by writing out a chord chart like this to use for reference. Note that in a major key, chords I, IV and V (the primary triads) are major triads and have been shown with upper-case Roman numerals as a reminder, whereas chords ii, iii and vi (the secondary triads) are all minor triads.

Here is another four-bar melody. From the key signature alone you might think it is in C major, but the use of G# in the tune and the final note (A) should lead you to conclude that it is in A minor:



Am	Bdim	C	Dm	E ⁽⁷⁾	F
				(D)	
E	F	G	A	B	C
C	D	E	F	G#	A
A	B	C	D	E	F
A minor:	i	ii	III	iv	V ⁽⁷⁾ VI

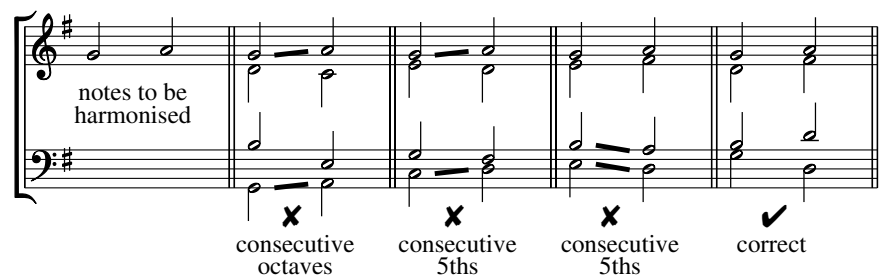
This means that the six triads (and the dominant 7th) shown *left* will be your main resource for completing the harmonisation. Note that in a minor key, chords i and iv are minor while V is usually major (and will require an accidental to sharpen the leading note); chord VI is major, as is chord III (in which the leading-note is *not* usually sharpened), but chord ii is a diminished triad.

Although you are more likely to use the primary triads in your harmonisation, the secondary triads are a useful way of making the end result sound more sophisticated.

When starting out, it is a good idea to work on the principle that a melody note on the beat should be present in the chord at that point. You can work out the possible choices by searching through your chord chart. For example, in the key of G major, the note G occurs in chords I, IV and vi and could therefore be harmonised by any of these triads. Which works best will depend on the context.

Consecutives

In this type of harmony exercise it is considered an error if two parts move in parallel unisons, 5ths or octaves between adjacent chords. If this occurs, you will need to avoid the problem by laying the chords out in a different way or by changing one of them:



Consecutives can appear between *any* pair of parts, so check all six possible combinations (SA, ST, SB, AT, AB and TB). Problems with consecutives can be minimised if you write the bass in **contrary motion** to the melody as much as possible. It also helps to keep the tenor part high (close to or above middle C).