Tonal Learning Sequence
Brookline High School Choral Ensembles
By Michael Driscoll

Chapter[+]	Tonality	Category	Tonal Pattern Examples*	Pedagogy
1a	Major	Tonic pentachord (*drmfs*)	*drm, mrd* *drd, rdr* *drmr, rmrd* *mrdr, rdrm* *mrdm, mdrm* *drmf, fmrd* *drmfm, mfmrd* *mrmf, fmrm* *drmfs, sfmrd* *sfmfs* *mfsfm*	Patterns are 3-5 notes in length. Patterns are all step-wise. Most patterns start on the tonic (*d*) or other members of the tonic triad (*m & s*)to firmly establish a sense of tonic. Tonic triad members are easier to audiate than *r & f*.
1b	Major	Tonic pentachord (*drmfs*), plus tonic triad skips	*drmd, dmrd* *dmfm, mfmd* *drms, smrd* *dmfs, sfmd* *sfs* *sfmfs* *sfms, smfs* *sfmrs, srmfs* *dms, smd* *dsm, msd* *mds, sdm* *msd, dsm* 4-note patterns *dmsd, dsmd* *dmds, sdmd* *dmsm, msmd* *dsdm, mdsd* *dsms, smsd* *mdms, smdm* *smds, sdms*	Skips are introduced by approaching by step (ex. *drmd*). Skips from the dominant. Patterns may start on any note of the pentachord, but most start on members of the tonic triad. Skips are made only between members of the tonic triad (*d, m & s*), since these are easier to audiate.

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3a	Natural Minor	Tonic pentachord (*ltdrm*)	*ltd,dtl* *ltl, tlt* *ltdt, tdtl* *dtlt, tltd* *dtld, dltd* *ltdr, rdtl* *ltdrd, drdtl* *dtdr, rdtd* *ltdrm, mrdtl*	Same procedure as for Chapter 1. Same flashcards can be used as in Chapter 1, but the square note now indicates the location of *la*.
3b	Natural Minor	Tonic pentachord (*ltdrm*), plus tonic triad skips	*ltdl, ldtl* *ldrd, drdl* *ltdm, mdtl* *ldrm, mrdl* *ldm, mdl* *lmd, dml* *dlm, mld* *dml, lmd* 4-note patterns *ldml, lmdl* *ldlm, mldl* *ldmd, dmdl* *lmld, dlml* *lmdm, mdml* *dldm, mdld* *mdlm, mldm*	Same procedure as for Chapter 1. Same flashcards can be used as in Chapter 1, but the square note now indicates the location of *la*. Patterns may start on any note of the pentachord, but most start on members of the tonic triad. Skips are made only between members of the tonic triad (*d, m & s*), since these are easier to audiate.
	Major	Major pentachord, plus low *ti, la, so*.	dt_1d, t_1dt_1 dt_1l_1, l_1t_1d dt_1l_1d, dl_1t_1d $dt_1l_1s_1d, ds_1l_1t_1d$ ds_1l_1d, dl_1s_1d	Low *ti, la, so* patterns ds_1d ds_1md dss_1d
	Harmonic Minor			Introduce low si_1

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9	Major	I & V$^{(7)}$	drt_1d, dt_1rd ds_1t_1d, dt_1s_1d $dsrd$, $drsd$ dss_1d ds_1t_1rd, drt_1s_1d $dsfrt_1d$, dt_1rfsd, etc.	Start with the dominant triad. Add the 7th (*fa*) to the dominant chord.
10	Minor	i & V$^{(7)}$	$l\text{-}t\text{-}si_1\text{-}l$, $l\text{-}si_1\text{-}t\text{-}l$ $l\text{-}m\text{-}si_1\text{-}l$, $l\text{-}si_1\text{-}m\text{-}l$, etc. $l\text{-}m\text{-}r\text{-}t\text{-}si_1\text{-}l$, $l\text{-}si_1\text{-}t\text{-}r\text{-}m\text{-}l$, etc.	Start with the dominant triad. Add the 7th (*re*) to the dominant chord.

[+]Chapters based on "Progressive Sight Singing", 2nd edition by Carol Krueger.
*Note that each line contains a pattern followed by the pattern in retrograde.