



Basic Cadences

Musical punctuation marks

A cadence is a short chord pattern that ends a phrase. Just as sentences end with a full stop or a comma, musical phrases end with different types of cadence that feel more or less final.

The four most useful cadences

Cadence	Chords	In C	Feeling
Perfect (Authentic)	V I	G C	Strong, final, "the end"
Plagal	IV I	F C	Gentle, "Amen" cadence
Deceptive	V vi	G Am	Surprise, continues on
Half	? V	any G	Pauses, feels unfinished

How to hear them

- Perfect cadence (V-I) feels like a full stop.
- Plagal cadence (IV-I) feels softer, like "Amen".
- Deceptive cadence (V-vi) tricks the ear — it goes to the relative minor instead of home.
- Half cadence ends on V and feels like a question mark.

Why they matter

Recognising cadences helps you understand song structure and write progressions that feel finished or intentionally open.

These patterns appear constantly in the Common Chord Progressions sheet.