

4. Skips in the Tonic Triad; the Bass Clef

Intervals are merely distances between notes. The simplest kind of interval is a step. To this point, all melodies have moved by step, but music obviously doesn't always move this way. Most of the rest of this course will focus on learning how to accurately sing intervals larger than a step - *leaps* of various distances.

The following exercises introduce skips. Remember to carefully use solfege help you find the notes.

4.1

The notes in the second measure of 4.1 are a *third* apart. A third is an interval made up of two steps. The notes in the second measure of 4.2 are a *fourth* apart. A fourth is an interval made up of three steps. As you progress, you'll learn to recognize most intervals visually, rather than having to actually count the steps in between.

4.2

These intervals aren't random. Together they form patterns: groups of pitches combine to form *chords*. This is the element of *harmony*, which describes the sounds created by different pitches sounding together.

In the key of C major, the notes C, E, and G form a chord called the *tonic triad*. It's a triad because it contains three notes each a third apart. It's a *tonic* triad because the lowest note (the root) is *do*.

You can see the intervals in the following example. The distance from *sol* to upper *do* is a fourth. If you're in a group setting, sing the example below together, with several people stopping on *do*, *mi*, and *sol* as the others keep singing up the scale. The resulting chord will be a tonic triad:

A musical staff in treble clef showing a scale from *do* to *do*. The notes are *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, and *do*. Brackets below the staff indicate intervals: a 3rd between *do* and *mi*, a 3rd between *mi* and *sol*, and a 4th between *sol* and the final *do*. A dashed line connects the first *do* to the final *do*. The final *do* is part of a tonic triad, shown as three notes (do, mi, sol) stacked vertically.

There are lots of different *kinds* of thirds and fourths, but for now, all thirds and fourths you sing will outline the tonic triad. Some exercises will start on *mi* or *sol*.

4.3

Musical exercise 4.3: A scale starting on *mi* in B-flat major, 2/4 time. The notes are *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*.

4.4

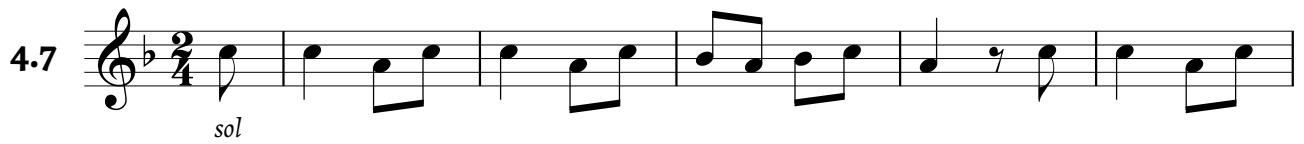
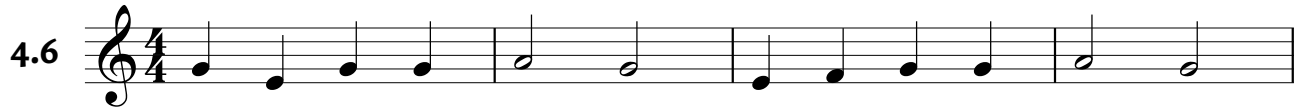
Musical exercise 4.4: A scale starting on *sol* in B-flat major, 4/4 time. The notes are *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*.

Musical exercise 4.5: A scale starting on *do* in B-flat major, 4/4 time. The notes are *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*.

4.5

Musical exercise 4.5: A scale starting on *do* in D major, 3/4 time. The notes are *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*.

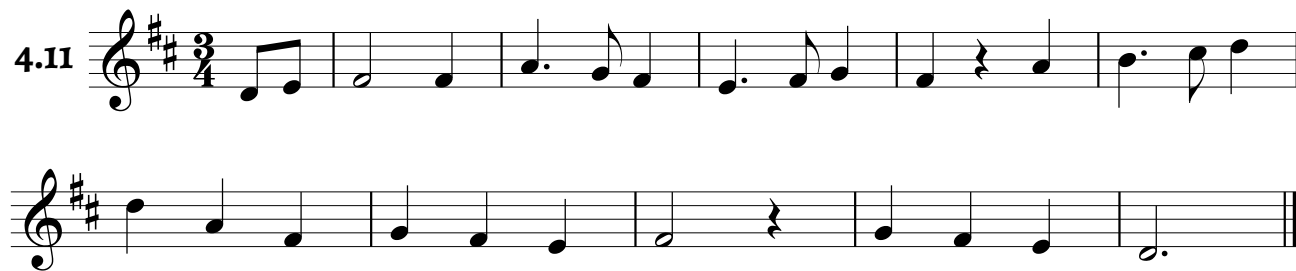
Musical exercise 4.5: A scale starting on *do* in D major, 4/4 time. The notes are *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, *ti*, *do*.



To this point, you've sung exercises with thirds and fourths. There's another interval within the tonic triad: the fifth. It's the interval from *do* to *sol*.



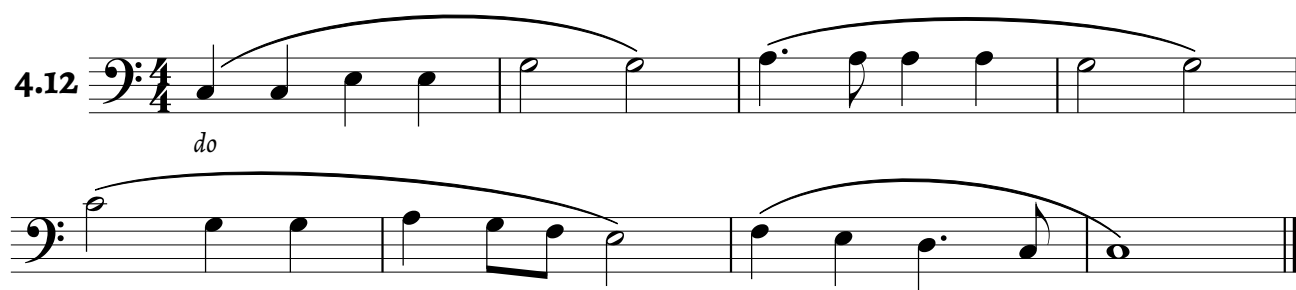
4.11



Exercise 4.11 consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff contains eight measures of music, ending with a double bar line. The second staff continues the melody with another eight measures.

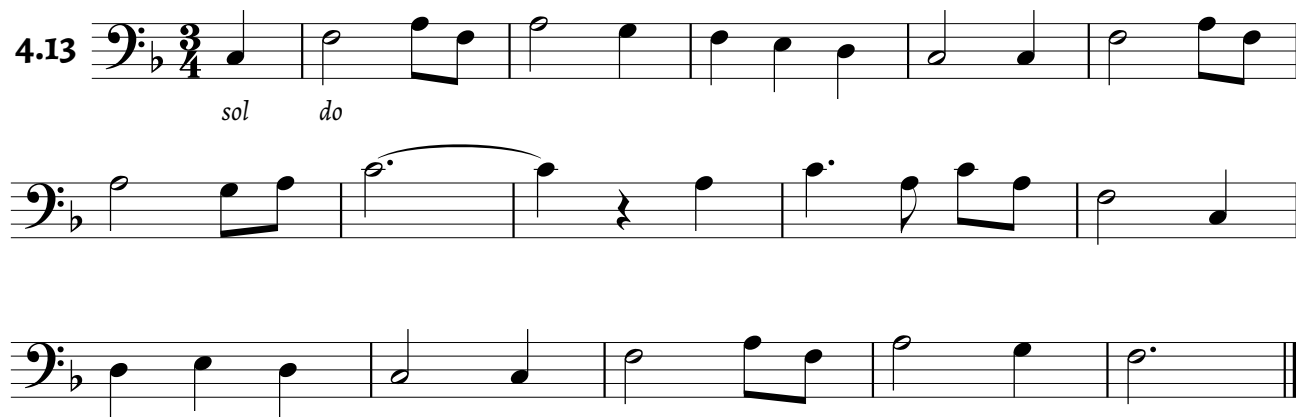
Here's are three exercises that introduce a new clef. Keep calm and carry on.

4.12



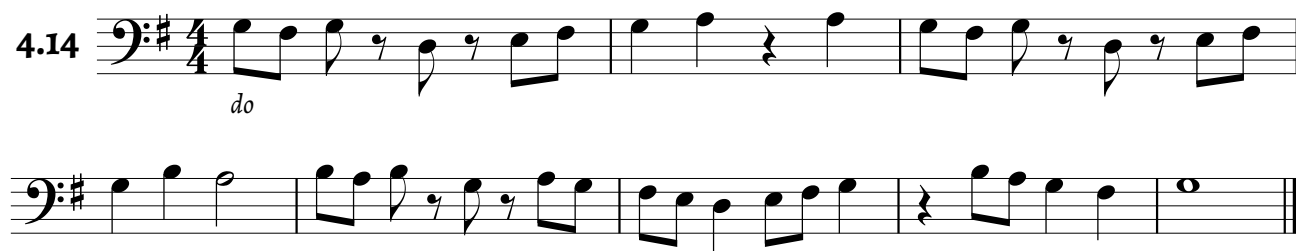
Exercise 4.12 consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The first staff starts with a note labeled 'do' and features a slur over the first four measures. The second staff continues the melody with another slur over the first four measures.

4.13



Exercise 4.13 consists of three staves of music in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff starts with notes labeled 'sol' and 'do'. The second and third staves continue the melody.

4.14



Exercise 4.14 consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff starts with a note labeled 'do' and features eighth-note patterns with rests. The second staff continues the melody.

This new clef is called the *bass clef*. It's used for notes that sit in the adult male range. Here's an example of how the notes in the treble clef and bass clef compare:

same note (middle C)

do re mi fa sol la ti do

do re mi fa sol la ti do

While it's true that treble clef is always used for women and pre-adolescent voices and bass clef is used for male voices, it's helpful for all singers to be able to recognize both clefs and understand how to read them. From now on, make sure you check the clef for each exercise.

4.15

sol

4.16

do

4.17

4.18

mi do sol

sol mi

Notice the interval from *sol* up to *mi* in exercise 4.18. This is the interval of a *sixth*. Let's review the intervals within the tonic triad we've covered so far:

3rd 3rd 5th 4th 6th 6th 8th

do mi mi sol do sol sol do sol mi mi do do do

The final interval is an *octave*: the interval from *do* to *do* (or any pitch for that matter: *sol* to *sol*, for example). The next exercise includes two intervals of an octave.

4.19

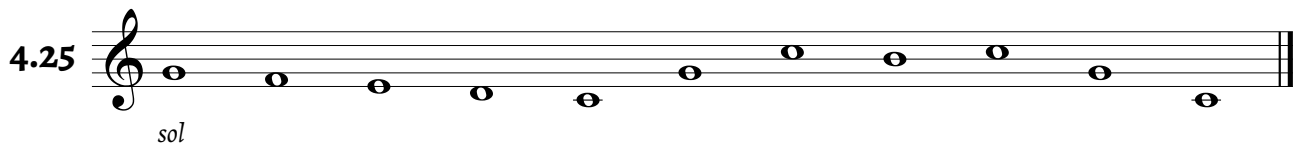
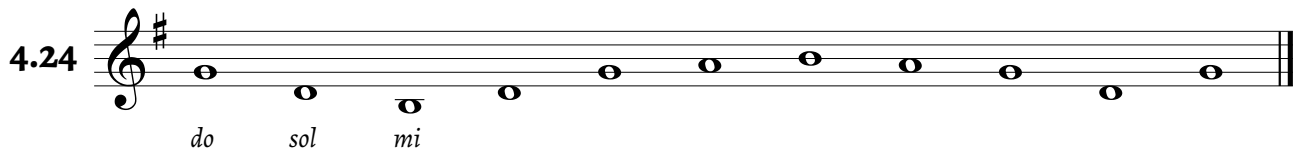
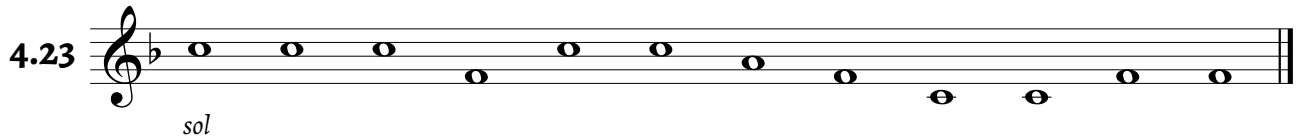
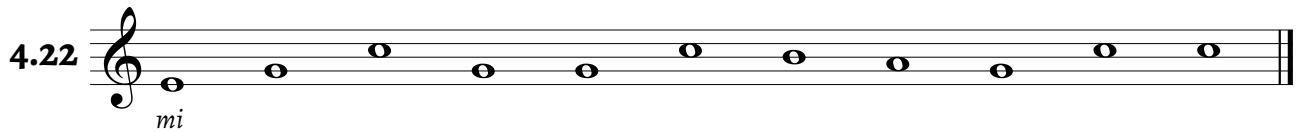
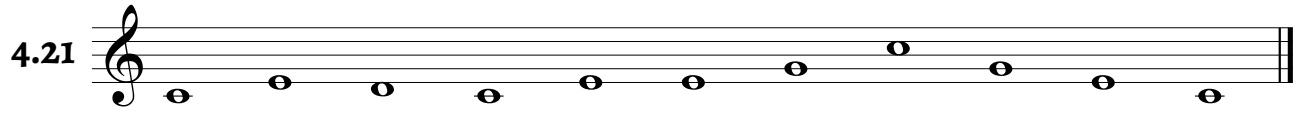
sol do

A dot above or below a note is called a *staccato*. A staccato note is sung or played short - not *legato*.

4.20

Interval exercises

The following exercises remove the element of rhythm to allow you to focus on the pitches only.



As you're learning to sight-sing, it's helpful to think about *remembering* certain pitches; that is, to sometimes figure out a note not by the interval that precedes it, but remembering that you sang the same note earlier in the exercise.

In exercise 4.25, there are two examples of where this technique of remembering pitches can be helpful.

