

MODAL MASTERY PART 1

THE MODAL SCALES



WHAT ARE MODES?

During this course we will be looking at the 7 modes of the major scale. This will be the start of a subject matter that can take years to truly master, but this course will get you off to a great start! The modes are quite simply the seven degrees of the major scale. Your major scale has seven notes, and each one of those notes can become a mode! It sounds crazy, but it's true! If you play your major scale starting from any of these notes within it, you will get a new mode and therefore a different sound. To truly understand modes you need to study each 'degree' or mode separately, but to kick things off we will look at an overview of all the modes and get you listening to the different sounds.

1st DEGREE: G IONIAN MODE

This is more commonly known as the major scale as it is the first mode. This is based on a major chord and is therefore a bright, happier sounding mode. The scale shape as shown in the video is as follows:

A guitar fretboard diagram showing the G Ionian mode (Major scale) in the key of G. The diagram is divided into two systems. The first system covers frets 1 to 5, with a barre at fret 1. The notes are: Treble (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#), Bass (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#). The second system covers frets 3 to 5, with a barre at fret 3. The notes are: Treble (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#), Bass (G, A, B, C, D, E, F#). The diagram uses numbers 1-7 to indicate fingerings and includes a final bar line with a square symbol.

2nd DEGREE: A DORIAN MODE

This second mode is based on a minor chord and therefore has a darker sound. Be sure to be using your own ears to decide more specifically what the sound is like. Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

A guitar fretboard diagram showing the A Dorian mode in the key of A. The diagram is divided into two systems. The first system covers frets 6 to 7, with a barre at fret 6. The notes are: Treble (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G), Bass (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G). The second system covers frets 8 to 10, with a barre at fret 8. The notes are: Treble (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G), Bass (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G). The diagram uses numbers 1-7 to indicate fingerings and includes a final bar line with a square symbol.

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3rd DEGREE: B PHRYGIAN MODE

This third mode is based on a minor chord and therefore has a darker sound. Be sure to be using your own ears to decide more specifically what the sound is like. Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

Diagram showing the 3rd degree (B Phrygian mode) on a guitar fretboard. The diagram is divided into two systems of three strings each (T, A, B). The first system covers measures 11 and 12. Measure 11 shows fret numbers 7, 8, 10 on the T string; 7, 9, 10 on the A string; and 7, 8, 10 on the B string. Measure 12 shows fret numbers 10, 7, 9, 11 on the T string; 10, 7, 9 on the A string; and 10, 7, 9 on the B string. The second system covers measures 13, 14, and 15. Measure 13 shows fret numbers 10, 12, 10, 8 on the T string; 12, 10, 8, 11 on the A string; and 10, 12, 10, 8 on the B string. Measure 14 shows fret numbers 9, 7, 10, 9, 7 on the T string; 9, 7, 10, 9, 7 on the A string; and 9, 7, 10, 9, 7 on the B string. Measure 15 shows fret numbers 10, 8, 7 on the T string; 10, 8, 7 on the A string; and 10, 8, 7 on the B string. A small black square is present on the T string in measure 15.

4th DEGREE: C LYDIAN MODE

This fourth mode is based on a major chord and therefore has a more uplifting sound. Be sure to be using your own ears to decide more specifically what the sound is like. Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

Diagram showing the 4th degree (C Lydian mode) on a guitar fretboard. The diagram is divided into two systems of three strings each (T, A, B). The first system covers measures 16 and 17. Measure 16 shows fret numbers 8, 10, 12 on the T string; 8, 10, 12 on the A string; and 8, 10, 12 on the B string. Measure 17 shows fret numbers 12, 9, 11, 12, 10, 12, 13, 10 on the T string; 12, 9, 11, 12 on the A string; and 12, 9, 11, 12 on the B string. The second system covers measures 18, 19, and 20. Measure 18 shows fret numbers 12, 14, 12, 10 on the T string; 13, 12, 10, 12 on the A string; and 12, 14, 12, 10 on the B string. Measure 19 shows fret numbers 11, 9, 12, 10, 9 on the T string; 11, 9, 12, 10, 9 on the A string; and 11, 9, 12, 10, 9 on the B string. Measure 20 shows fret numbers 12, 10, 8 on the T string; 12, 10, 8 on the A string; and 12, 10, 8 on the B string. A small black square is present on the T string in measure 20.

5th DEGREE: D MIXOLYDIAN MODE

This fifth mode is based on a major chord and therefore has a more uplifting sound. Be sure to be using your own ears to decide more specifically what the sound is like. Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

Diagram showing the 5th degree (D Mixolydian mode) on a guitar fretboard. The diagram is divided into two systems of three strings each (T, A, B). The first system covers measures 21 and 22. Measure 21 shows fret numbers 10, 12, 14 on the T string; 10, 12, 14 on the A string; and 10, 12, 14 on the B string. Measure 22 shows fret numbers 14, 11, 12, 14, 12, 13, 15, 12 on the T string; 14, 11, 12, 14 on the A string; and 14, 11, 12, 14 on the B string. The second system covers measures 23, 24, and 25. Measure 23 shows fret numbers 14, 15, 14, 12 on the T string; 15, 13, 12, 14 on the A string; and 14, 15, 14, 12 on the B string. Measure 24 shows fret numbers 12, 11, 14, 12, 10 on the T string; 12, 11, 14, 12, 10 on the A string; and 12, 11, 14, 12, 10 on the B string. Measure 25 shows fret numbers 14, 12, 10 on the T string; 14, 12, 10 on the A string; and 14, 12, 10 on the B string. A small black square is present on the T string in measure 25.

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6th DEGREE: E AEOLIAN MODE

This sixth mode is more commonly known as the 'minor scale' or relative minor. This mode will therefore sound very natural and correct to you as you are used to it! Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

A guitar fretboard diagram for the E Aeolian mode. It consists of two systems of three strings each (T, A, B). The first system starts at fret 26 and ends at fret 27. The second system starts at fret 28 and ends at fret 30. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The notes are: 26 (T: 12, A: 14, B: 15), 27 (T: 12, A: 14, B: 15), 28 (T: 15, A: 17, B: 14), 29 (T: 17, A: 15, B: 13), 30 (T: 16, A: 14, B: 12). A bar line is present at fret 27 and 29.

7th DEGREE: F# LOCRIAN MODE

The final mode is based around a diminished chord and therefore sounds very dark. This mode is not commonly used outside of jazz and metal, so may be harder to get a good idea of it. None the less, listen to the sound and make your own mind up! Here is the 3 note per string shape as shown in the video:

A guitar fretboard diagram for the F# Locrian mode. It consists of two systems of three strings each (T, A, B). The first system starts at fret 31 and ends at fret 32. The second system starts at fret 33 and ends at fret 35. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The notes are: 31 (T: 14, A: 15, B: 17), 32 (T: 14, A: 16, B: 17), 33 (T: 17, A: 19, B: 15), 34 (T: 19, A: 17, B: 15), 35 (T: 16, A: 14, B: 14). A bar line is present at fret 32 and 34.

HOMWORK!

We have supplied you with an audio file for each of the modes. These are simply a groove based around one chord per mode. We have learnt the modes in the key of G and have therefore provided a G major jam (Ionian), A minor jam (Dorian), B Minor jam (Phrygian), C Major jam (Lydian), D Major jam (Mixolydian), E minor jam (Aeolian) and F# Diminished jam (Locrian).

Your task is to one by one learn the scale shapes and play over these tracks to learn the sound of each mode. Take your time with these and form a good idea. In the next course we will be taking things one stage further.