

B. FINAL CADENCES

The strongest types of cadence are those that are used at the end of a piece. In these 'final' cadences, the last chord must be the tonic chord (chord I), or the piece will not sound properly finished. There are two cadences that end with chord I:

Perfect (sometimes called "authentic") **V - I**
Plagal (sometimes called "Amen") **IV - I**

The music below is in B flat major. There is one chord per bar. The chord in bar 3 is E flat major (Eb-G-Bb). This is chord IV in B flat major. (E flat is the fourth degree in the B flat major scale). The last chord is B flat major (Bb-D-F), so it is the B flat major chord (chord I). The cadence is then IV to I (plagal). The last A in bar 3 does not fit the chord: it is a **passing note**, moving by step between notes that *do* fit the chords (G in bar 3 and B flat in bar 4). All other notes fit the chord.

1 Below are the last four bars of three melodies. Underneath each write the the key and the name (i.e. perfect or plagal) of the final cadence (i.e. the cadence at the end) that you would use. In each case there is only one chord each in the last two bars. Note: two melodies are in minor keys.

(a)

Key: major / minor

Cadence:

(b)

Key: major / minor

Cadence:

(c)

Key: major / minor

Cadence:

2 Of these two cadences, perfect tends to be more definite. When it is used at the end of the piece, it makes a strong ending. Plagal cadences are not quite so strong. They are often used in sad songs or in lullabies. Tick the line above that you think would be most suitable for a piece about sick child.