Tissimo



# Cadences in C Major

how phrases end — four kinds of musical punctuation

LISTEN
Scan to hear every example

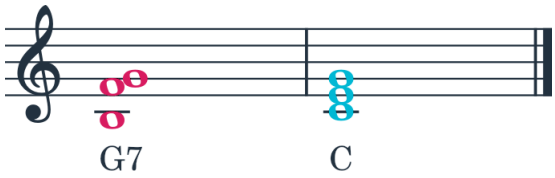
**A cadence is punctuation.** Two chords at a phrase's end tell the ear "full stop", "comma" or "plot twist". These use the same smooth chord voicings, now in closing pairs. Double barlines mark the cadences that don't fully end the story. Colors are the scale-degree system:

- 1 · I home
- 4 · IV away
- 5 · V7 tension
- 6 · vi the sad twin

## FOUR WAYS TO CLOSE A PHRASE

### Perfect cadence

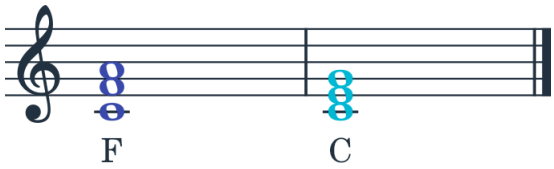
V7 → I




The full stop. Tension snaps home — most endings in music are this one.

### Plagal cadence

IV → I




The "Amen" — the soft landing sung at the end of hymns.

### Half cadence
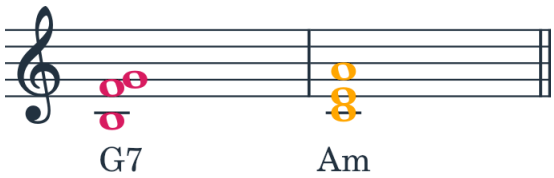
I → V7




A comma, not a period: the phrase pauses on tension and asks for more.

### Deceptive cadence

V7 → vi




The plot twist — your ear expects home but lands on the sad twin.

**Try it** Play **question and answer**: the half cadence asks the question, the perfect cadence answers it. Then swap the answer for the deceptive cadence and hear the surprise. Finally, take any chord progression loop and finish it with each cadence in turn — the ending changes the whole story.



© 2026 Tissimo. All rights reserved.