Listen to Example 15.1, noting how the phrases work together. The first phrase ends on a half cadence with 2 in the soprano; this leaves the listener craving tonic and the resolution of the melody to 1, which is achieved at the PAC of the second phrase. When a weakly conclusive phrase pairs with a stronger, more conclusive phrase, we call the resulting unit a period. The pairing is possible because the harmonic and melodic tensions left hanging at the end of the opening (antecedent) phrase resolve at the end of the final (consequent) phrase. Two phrases make a period only when they relate to each other musically, and the second phrase ends with a strong authentic cadence.

Understanding the period allows us to view musical spans of eight or sixteen measures (as in Example 15.1)—or even more measures—as a single musical idea. We will explore how composers manipulate these units, increasing their size and linking them together to form complete musical works.

Aspects of Melody and Harmony in Periods
The cementing of two separate phrases is highly dependent on the interaction of melody and harmony. Listen to the two periods in Example 15.2, focusing on the following melodic and harmonic issues:

1. Do the two phrases in each period have melodies that resemble one another? If so, in what ways?
2. Locate and compare cadences.
3. What does the second-level harmonic analysis reveal about each phrase?

EXAMPLE 15.2
A. Mozart, Piano Concerto in D minor, K. 466, Andante

First Phrase (Antecedent)

Second Phrase (Consequent)
B. Beethoven, Piano Sonata in B♭ major, no. 11, op. 22, Menuetto

Both periods in Example 15.2 are in the key of B♭ major and divide into two four-measure phrases. Although the examples sound very different, they share several basic melodic features:

1. Both melodies begin with arpeggiation of the tonic triad.
2. The melody of the Mozart excerpt descends from ⁵ to ³ to ¹ in mm. 1–3; the Beethoven melody ascends from ⁵ to ¹ to ³ in mm. 1–3 and finally to the upper-octave ⁵ in mm. 4.
3. The same accompanimental neighboring figure (boxed in both excerpts) gives a chromatic twist to each example.

However, there are important melodic differences: The second phrase of the Mozart excerpt begins exactly the same as the first, with only a slight change at the end, while the Beethoven excerpt has no melodic repetition of material from phrase to phrase. When the two phrases begin with highly similar thematic material, as in the Mozart example, we call them **parallel periods** (aa or aa'). Those that are melodically dissimilar, as in the Beethoven example, are called **contrasting periods** (ab).

Although the two periods in Example 15.2 have similar cadences (HC and AC), there is one important harmonic difference. Mozart’s second phrase begins again on the tonic, restating the same melodic idea of the first phrase. It is as if the music restarts after being interrupted at the half cadence. We indicate the interrupted motion with a double slash.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase 1</th>
<th>phrase 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

// starts over →

phrase model interrupted resolves!
Only in the second phrase does the music push through the cadential dominant to attain the long-awaited tonic in m. 8. A pair of phrases with this related harmonic structure creates an **interrupted period**. (Note that Mozart's half cadence does not resolve to the tonic that begins the second phrase; the dominant at the end of the first phrase is a back-relating dominant that extends the first tonic.)

Beethoven's first phrase also has the structure T–PD–D. The second phrase, by contrast, does not begin on the tonic. Instead it begins with a V⁷ chord, and continues away from the tonic.

```
phrase 1 --------- phrase 2 ---------
T     PD     D        (D)       T
phrase model continues →
```

A pair of phrases with this single, sweeping harmonic motion forms a **continuous period**. A favorite device of composers here is to lead to a HC in the first phrase but then follow it with the structural pre-dominant to begin the second phrase. In this case, the HC is strongly heard as a back-relating dominant:

```
phrase 1 --------- phrase 2 ---------
       (BRD)     T       →     PD     D     T
phrase model continues →
```

An alternate method of creating a continuous period is to end the first phrase with an authentic cadence on a harmony other than tonic, and then continue the second phrase on the dominant, as shown here:

```
phrase 1 --------- phrase 2 ---------
T       PAC in ii     D        T
T       PD       D        T
phrase model continues →
```

Again, a single harmonic sweep occurs, as shown by the second-level analysis, which is the same for both models: T–PD–D–T.

Two other harmonic possibilities exist in addition to interrupted and continuous periods. Listen to Example 15.3 and focus on the cadences that close each phrase.
EXAMPLE 15.3  Mozart, Piano Sonata in B♭ major, K. 281, Allegro

A period is a formal structure in which the final phrase closes something left open in the first phrase. In Example 15.3 even though both phrases close on the tonic, they form a period because the second phrase subtly completes the melodic motion by ending on 1. When two phrases have the cadences IAC and PAC—and each phrase is, in a sense, a closed harmonic section— they form a sectional period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase 1</th>
<th>phrase 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAC:</td>
<td>PAC:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>melody does not close on 1</td>
<td>melody closes on 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cadence in Example 15.4 forms a weak–strong relationship (HC–PAC), but we are struck by the sound of the second cadence, which ends in the key of v.
EXAMPLE 15.4  Beethoven, Piano Sonata in D major, op. 28, Andante

If two phrases have a weak–strong cadence relationship and there is a key change during the course of the phrases, they form a **progressive period**. It does not matter whether the cadences reflect characteristics of any other period (sectional, continuous, interrupted). The "progressive" label trumps all other labels because it indicates a change of key.

**Representing Form: The Formal Diagram**

Diagramming the relationships of phrases visually captures the sense of how they combine to form periods.

**Phrases and Periods**

Arcs represent phrases, and an overarching curve over two arcs indicates that the phrases combine into a single period.

**Melody**

Letter names represent the melodic relationship between phrases:

For phrase 1:

a = melodic material of the first phrase

For phrase 2:

a' = melodic material similar to the first phrase

b = melodic material different from the first phrase
CHAPTER 15 THE PERIOD

Compare the following diagrams with the melodic material in Examples 15.2A and 15.2B:

Mozart          Beethoven
\[ \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
a'
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
b
\end{array} \]

**Harmony**

Diagrams also capture the harmonic content of a period by listing the initial harmony and the cadence for each phrase.

*Initial harmony:* Typically, the first harmony is listed by roman numeral.

*Cadence:* Use HC, IAC, or PAC to identify the cadence.

A double slash (/\/) after a HC indicates a harmonic interruption—the second phrase restarts with tonic. Consider the diagrams for Examples 15.2A and 15.2B:

Mozart          Beethoven
\[ \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
V(HC) /\ \\
I
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
a' \\
\hline
V-I (IAC)
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
V (HC)
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
b \\
\hline
V^7
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
I (PAC)
\end{array} \]

**Period Label**

We label a period with three words:

1. The first word describes the melodic relationship between phrases. The choices are:
   a. parallel
   b. contrasting

2. The second word describes the harmonic motion of the period. The choices are:
   a. interrupted
   b. continuous
   c. sectional
   d. progressive

3. The last word identifies the structure: period.

As the completed form diagram illustrates, Example 15.2A is a parallel interrupted period and Example 15.2B is a contrasting continuous period. The following diagram represents the parallel sectional period and parallel progressive period of Examples 15.3 and 15.4, respectively.

Mozart, *Allegro*  
parallel sectional period

\[ \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
I (IAC)
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
a' \\
\hline
I (PAC)
\end{array} \]

Beethoven, "Andante"
parallel progressive period

\[ \begin{array}{c}
a \\
\hline
i \quad \text{HC} \quad \text{III} \quad \text{v (PAC)}
\end{array} \]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period label</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Formal diagram</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>parallel interrupted period</td>
<td>PIP</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrasting interrupted period</td>
<td>CIP</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel sectional period</td>
<td>PSP</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrasting sectional period</td>
<td>CSP</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel continuous period</td>
<td>PCP</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrasting continuous period</td>
<td>CCP</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallel progressive period</td>
<td>PPP</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrasting progressive period</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Analyses of Periods and Some Analytical Guidelines

Listen to Example 15.5 and consider the five questions and answers that follow.

EXAMPLE 15.5 Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)*, K. 617, act I, finale

(play the flute)

1. Can the excerpt be divided into two or more phrases?
   **Answer:** Yes, it can be divided into two four-measure phrases, each of which ends with a cadence.

2. Do these phrases create an antecedent–consequent relationship?
   **Answer:** Yes, the first phrase sounds harmonically open (ending on a HC) and melodically open (ending on the leading tone); the second phrase provides satisfying closure, with 2–1 in the melody over a PAC.

3. Is the second cadence stronger than the first?
   **Answer:** Yes, the first phrase ends with a HC and the second ends with a PAC. This forms a period.

4. Are the melodies in each phrase related?
   **Answer:** Yes, they are clearly related. The second phrase is nearly identical to the first phrase except for embellishments throughout. Thus, the melodic structure is parallel.

5. What harmonies begin and end each phrase?
   **Answer:** Phrase 1 begins with tonic and ends with a HC. Phrase 2 restarts with tonic and ends with a PAC. Thus, the harmonic structure is interrupted.

From the answers to these five questions, we are ready to label the period as a PIP and diagram it in the following manner:

```
I  a  HC//  I  a'  PAC
```

parallel interrupted period

Now let’s try applying the same question-and-answer process to Example 15.6.
EXAMPLE 15.6  Beethoven, *Klavierstück*, WoO 82

1. Can the excerpt be divided into two or more phrases?
   **Answer**: No. Although the excerpt divides into two musical units, they cannot be considered phrases because there is no cadence in m. 4, just a caesura on a dissonant ii₆ chord. Because there is only one cadence (m. 8), there can be only one phrase.
   This excerpt is simply an eight-measure phrase; it is not a period.

---

**Summary for Analyzing Periods**

The following four steps will assist you in locating and identifying periods.

Step 1  Locate phrases and mark their cadences.
Step 2  Examine the cadence of phrase 1. If it is a PAC in the tonic, it cannot be part of a period. If the first phrase closes with a cadence that is weaker than the cadence found at the end of the second phrase, however, draw arcs and identify phrase lengths.
Step 3  Analyze the melodies of the phrases for the two possible melodic structures: parallel and contrasting.
Step 4  Analyze the cadences of the phrases and write your answers to the right of each arc. Next, label the harmony that begins each phrase using one of the four possible harmonic structures: sectional, interrupted, continuous, and progressive.

---

**Composing Periods**

Writing periods involves creativity and using your ear. For the time being, confine yourself to three period types that end on the tonic. In beginning a composition, start with the large harmonic picture using the following tonal models:

Phrase One:   Phrase Two:
- I __ HC           I ___ PAC or IAC
- I ___ IAC         I ___ PAC
- I ___ HC           V(7) ___ PAC

Next, map out the harmonies within each phrase. As a general rule, harmonic changes tend to occur on strong, accented beats (such as downbeats).
The following eight-measure structure reveals two potential harmonic solutions for an interrupted period (the first tonal model shown earlier):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Phrase One</th>
<th>Phrase Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I-IV-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>iii-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>ii-V7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I-I6</td>
<td>I-iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>V7-16-I6</td>
<td>vi-IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ii6</td>
<td>ii5-V7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>V7</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that the consequent phrases in both solutions open with harmonic settings different from their antecedents. Such harmonic contrast permits—in fact, almost demands—these periods to be contrasting melodically rather than parallel.

After your harmonic plan is in place, you can then add a melody that provides a good outer-voice counterpoint and exhibits a high degree of motivic consistency and melodic interest.

EXERCISE INTERLUDE

ANALYSIS

15.1

Following the question-and-answer procedure demonstrated earlier, label each of the following examples. The examples may be a single phrase or a period; if an example is a period, provide a formal diagram and period label. Note: You may find it useful to mark up the music to help you with your analysis. Do not analyze every harmony.

A. Mozart, Piano Sonata in B♭ major, K. 333, Allegretto grazioso

![Musical notation for Mozart's Piano Sonata in B♭ major, K. 333, Allegretto grazioso]

B. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in B♭ major, K. 543, Allegretto

![Musical notation for Mozart's Symphony no. 39 in B♭ major, K. 543, Allegretto]