**MODULATION** is a process which results in a shift of tonal center. The term applies to those occasions in music when one established tonal center gives way to another.

\*Keep in mind that many modulations of short duration might more properly be called tonicizations.

## Types of Modulation

**If your music is written within a HARMONIC CONTEXT, consider the following types:**

**COMMON CHORD MODULATION** occurs when the shift from one key to another is made via a **chord common to both keys**. These “pivot” chords include diatonic chords, as well as secondary V and leading tone chords. **ACHTUNG🡪**Pivot chords can be **respelled** to facilitate movement to a foreign key!!!

Process for finding a common chord modulation:

* Listen to the passage carefully.
* Find the first chord that seems to be functioning more naturally in the second key than in the first one. (This step is often open to differing interpretations.)
* Back up one chord. If the chord is found in BOTH OLD and NEW keys, it becomes your PIVOT CHORD. This is EASIER to find if you are moving between two CLOSELY RELATED keys. It is difficult if the pivot chord is an ENHARMONIC RESPELLING of a fully diminished 7th or Ger +6/Mm7 chord.
* Analyze the modulation with a pivot chord step.

**COMMON TONE MODULATION** involves a **single pitch** that provides the hinge between one key and the next. Common tone modulations allow the composer to venture to more distantly related keys and are achieved by creative, and often dramatic, placement of the common tone. Common tone modulations are often used when a composer wants to modulate a M/m 3rd away from the previous key. Common tone modulations are often used with enharmonic spellings to facilitate movement to a foreign key.

* Analyze the common tone using the pivot chord step, but indicate PITCH CLASS instead of chords.

**DIRECT MODULATION** is a sudden shift of tonal center, without the help of a common chord or tone. For example, Bach commonly ends phrases in his chorales in one key and then begins the next phrase in an entirely new key.

* Direct modulation, or *phrase modulation*, should be considered only after the common chord/common tone varieties have been ruled out.
* It is MORE obvious when you encounter a different key signature at the beginning of a new section of music.
* It is LESS obvious when the tonic in a PAC at the end of a section is **common** to the new key in the next section of music. In cases such as this, it makes sense to analyze the new section in the new key.

**If your music is more linear (melodic), consider the following types:**

**MONOPHONIC MODULATION** is carried out by a single line of music. Recognizing the key in a melodic context is important in identifying shifts of this type.

* Look for accidentals, scales, and other patterns that point to a change of key.

**SEQUENTIAL MODULATION** is achieved by repeating a motive or phrase up or down a step or third. Each repetition is a SEGMENT in the SEQUENCE.