

Key signature & chord analyzing

In rock and blues you will often solo over progressions that are in either major key or minor key. In blues usually its major key and often using dominant chords. But you want to have the tools to be able to solo over both major and minor key.

Knowing the key is important, and a good place to start. But to go deeper you have to analyze the chords that make up the progression to get the complete roadmap for soloing options. Always start with what are the chords and what is the key.

Soon these techniques will become automatic. But first applying these concepts in a systematic and methodical approach will get you used to these devices.

Remember there are many lead guitar avenues to choose from, so explore them all and see what sounds best to your ears.

KEY POINT: Analyze the chords to determine what are the soloing avenues. It's the chords that give the complete roadmap, the key signature is only part of the equation.

It's important to understand why these principles and techniques work so that you can solo and improvise over any song or jam. Armed with this knowledge and practicing in a musical context will give you the lead guitar confidence to solo over any progression.

KEY POINT: Remember that as soon as you hear that very identifiable major I-IV-V blues, swing, or shuffle, it is wide open and there will be many different soloing avenues to try.

Key Points To Determine Soloing Avenues:

1. Determine the key signature - often you will be soloing in minor key or major key. Knowing the key is the first step. Even when you are just noodling around on the guitar, always know in what key you are playing.

2. Analyze the chord progression – it's the chords that will give you the complete roadmap to what you can utilize for soloing and improvisation. Analyzing the chords is a critical step to get the full lead guitar picture.

The concepts listed throughout these materials are guidelines to get you started, not rules forged in stone. Often you have to use your discretion. You want to learn the principles and techniques so you have a solid jump off point. Then you can get creative and start bending the rules as you develop your own style.

Minor Pentatonic & Blues Scales - four great applications:

1. Over all chords in minor key (except a major V chord).
2. Over any minor type chord when treating each chord as a separate event.
3. Over all the chords in major key I-IV-V blues jams, swings, and shuffles.
4. Over all the chords in rock jams or jams using power or 5th chords, (except major sounding jams and ballads).

Soloing in minor key:

When playing over all the chords in minor key, what *“relates to all”*, you can always use Natural Minor Scales, (Aeolian Mode), **UNLESS** there is a major IV chord or a minor ii chord, in those cases use the Dorian Mode.

