

Tonal centres Paul Francis 2018

The term **Tonal Center** can often refer to the "key" but the tonal centre of any given key can be altered by simply by starting ending and focusing the composition around a different note in the same key.(sometimes referred to as "Modal ") e.g the mode known as Ionian not only defines the parent key but is the 1st of 7 tonal centres or starting points in that key.

The purpose of choosing a specific Tonal centre is to create interesting melodic or harmonic ideas(usually utilising the pre existing Major or minor tonalities) but with subtle variations as every Mode or sequence is unique to that key.

See below

Ionian (same notes as major scale) Key Centre C major
starting on the 1st degree of the major scale Tonal Centre C Major

Dorian
starting on the 2nd degree of the major scale Tonal Centre D minor

Phrygian
starting on the 3rd degree of the major scale Tonal Centre E minor

Lydian
starting on the 4th degree of the major scale Tonal Centre F Major

Mixolydian
starting on the 5th degree of the major scale Tonal Centre G Dominant

Aeolian (sometimes called "natural minor")
starting on the 6th degree of the major scale Tonal Center A minor

Locrian
starting on the 7th degree of the major scale Tonal Center B minor b5