

Yes, these two topics are discussed in other MacGAMUT Instructor Materials documents too, but these changes are SO important that we want to make sure they don't escape your attention!

## NEW Default Presets for Harmonic Dictation

**Change in the default presets:** Beginning with version 6.3.0 (mid July 2016), the **startMG6.mgs** files students download from [www.macgamut.com](http://www.macgamut.com) come with the *revised* Original Presets file (**Original Presets Rev MG6.mgp**) pre-installed as the default. In a nutshell, these revised presets call the revised Harmonic Dictation library which starts with 7-chord progressions *consisting only of tonic and dominant chords in root position*, omits the old beginning levels of comparatively unmusical 2-chord “progressions,” and proceeds directly to the 3-chord progressions, which provide more significant harmonic context. Most instructors tell us they prefer this less stressful introduction to Harmonic Dictation. (For a fuller discussion of the issues, see **A gentler intro to Harmonic Dictation** in the **Instructional Considerations** section of the **Instructor Guide**.)

If you prefer that your students continue using the original default beginning Harmonic Dictation levels (starting with the more difficult 2-chord levels instead of the easier 7-chord levels), simply tell them to click the “Change Presets” button as they start MacGAMUT and select the unrevised **Original Presets MG6.mgp**. Any student who has installed version 6.3.0 or higher, will already have both the **Original Presets MG6.mgp** file and the original **MG Progressions** library file in the **MacGAMUT Work Folder** installed in his/her **Documents** folder, so it will be easy to make this change. Normally, we don't make alternative presets files so readily available to students, but—since the Original Presets are more difficult than the Revised Presets—students aren't likely to install them unless you require it!

Whether or not you use the new default presets, your students may be less apprehensive about Harmonic Dictation if they understand that the 3-chord levels in both the original default library and the new MG Progressions Rev.mgh library are not just successions of random chords. Instead, they are all very basic chord sequences common in “real” music. If students learn to listen for and recognize multi-chord “chunks” as distinct units, they have a big head start on mastering any harmonic dictation challenge that comes their way. I have always given my own students a **Basic Short Chords** handout with these basic “chunks” written out. MacGAMUT's 3-chord levels are based on the progressions in this handout, and the 6-chord exercises of the following levels are largely combinations of one of the Major or Minor 3-chord chunks and one of the 3-chord Cadence chunks. If you spend a little time helping your students internalize the basic 3-chord progressions, mastering Harmonic Dictation (both in MacGAMUT's exercises and in real life) will become much easier for them. For your convenience, you'll find my **Basic Short Chords** handout in the **Text Files** folder in your **MacGAMUT Instructor Folder**, and students will find the student version of this handout in the **Text Files** folder in their **MacGAMUT Work Folder**.

## about Library Name Changes

Don't worry: we've only changed the names of the library files! The library contents remain the same as they were in 2015-16. They contain exactly the same exercises and are fully compatible with **MacGAMUT 6**. But beginning with MacGAMUT 6.3.0, the "2003" in library file names has been replaced by "6" (to make it match the version number of **MacGAMUT 6** instead of the year the *previous* version of MacGAMUT was first published). For instance, the Melodic Dictation library formerly known as **MGMelodies 2003.mgm** is now labeled **MGMelodies 6.mgm**. When a student installs MacGAMUT 6.3.0 or higher, **MGMelodies 6.mgm**, **MGRhythms 6.mgr**, **MGProgressions 6.mgh**, and **MGProgressions Rev.mgh** will all be included in the **MacGAMUT Work Folder** installed in the student's **Documents** folder.

Why did we change the file names if the library contents remain the same?

We did it primarily because students who were just starting kindergarten in 2003 may be inclined to suppose that libraries labeled "2003" must be terribly outdated (as if the basics of tonal theory have changed in the interim!). We all know that students will use any excuse to avoid doing their work, so even though you wouldn't likely be swayed by their "gee whiz, 2003 was when dinosaurs still roamed the earth" argument, this simple change will keep that complaint from wasting your time!

Does this mean you need to change the names of the libraries your older custom presets files use if the libraries have "2003" in the name?

Not at all! You don't need to edit your custom presets files because MacGAMUT 6.3.0 and higher is designed to accommodate the name changes. If your presets specify **MGMelodies 2003.mgm** and your students have only **MGMelodies 6.mgm** installed on their computers, MacGAMUT 6.3.0 "knows" **MGMelodies 6.mgm** is the right library and will use that file. Neither you nor your students have to do anything special to make your old custom presets work properly, even if they still use the "2003" library names.

What if you've customized one of the older custom presets files, like the **MGS\_Presets\_6.mgp** file that calls libraries with "2003" in their names?

Again, you don't have to change anything in your presets file, but if you are using the MGS Dictation Libraries specifically, we recommend that you provide your students with the set of library files with "6" in the file names because the MGS authors have updated the level names to complement the third edition (2016) of the *Musicians Guide Series*. For the non-MGS library files (the Prep Presets libraries, for instances), either will work, but if you want to head off the "2003 is for dinosaurs" complaint, you might want to give your students the library files with "6" in their names instead of "2003."

What if your students are using an older version of MacGAMUT?

The short answer is that they shouldn't be! It's always wise to use the latest version of MacGAMUT because that latest and greatest version is most likely to be

trouble-free for your students. Now that all new purchasers must download and install MacGAMUT from our website instead of installing from what may be an ancient CD your bookstore happened to find in a dusty storage room, there's a much better chance your students will be using the latest version. Of course, if you have students who purchased MacGAMUT before version 6.3.0 was released in mid July 2016, they will still need to download and install the latest version. Otherwise, if your presets use the default libraries with the new "6" names, any students who have not updated MacGAMUT will complain that they only have the "2003" libraries, not the "6" libraries MacGAMUT is asking them to locate. If that happens, you know they're not using the current version of MacGAMUT. To solve the problem quickly and easily, just tell your students to go to [www.macgamut.com](http://www.macgamut.com), click on the Installers link, and download and install the latest MacGAMUT version— something they should do anyway!