

Improvisation Level 1

So What is often seen as a study of the **Dorian mode**.

If you do not know this scale, then begin by learning two two-octave scale positions to get used to it.

Two possible fingerings are shown below in the key of C.

The first musical example shows the C Dorian scale in the first position on a three-string guitar. The treble clef and 4/4 time signature are indicated. The scale is written as a sequence of eighth notes: C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb, C. Below the staff is a three-string guitar tablature with strings labeled T (top), A (middle), and B (bottom). The fret numbers for each string are: T: 8, 10, 11; A: 8, 10, 12; B: 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 10, 12.

The second musical example shows the C Dorian scale in the second position on a three-string guitar. The treble clef and 4/4 time signature are indicated. The scale is written as a sequence of eighth notes: C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb, C. Below the staff is a three-string guitar tablature with strings labeled T (top), A (middle), and B (bottom). The fret numbers for each string are: T: 3, 4, 6, 3, 5, 6; A: 3, 5, 6, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5; B: 3, 5, 6, 3, 5.

C Dorian Scale Notes: C, D, Eb, F, G, A, Bb

C Dorian Scale Intervals: 1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7

As mentioned in the harmonic analysis, the progression uses two key centres which are a semi-tone apart.

One way that you can get used to these two key centres from a technical perspective is by **ascending and descending** the two scales.

The image shows two musical examples side-by-side. The first is the D Dorian Scale, written in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The notes are D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. The second is the Eb Dorian Scale, also in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The notes are Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb, C, D, Eb. Below each scale is a guitar fretboard diagram with strings labeled T (top), A, and B (bottom). The D Dorian scale diagram shows fret numbers: 5, 7, 8 on the B string; 5, 7 on the A string; 4, 5, 7 on the T string. The Eb Dorian scale diagram shows fret numbers: 8, 6, 5 on the B string; 8, 6, 9, 8, 6 on the A string.

The Dorian scale is used in the theme of So What which is why you are learning it as an improvisation tool.

However, you can use any minor device to improvise over the progression such as the following:

- Blues and Minor Pentatonic Scales
- Melodic and Harmonic Minor Scales
- Natural Minor Scales
- R 3 5 7 or 3 5 7 9 Arpeggios

The following exercise demonstrates a combination of these.

The first two phrases use the blues scale, whereas the third phrase is arpeggio based and the last is from the Dorian Scale.

Adding the signature So What chords in-between each phrase also helps you develop solid phrases.

If you are fairly new to jazz, then you can easily create a stylistically coherent solo using these without going further.

The main element to creating interesting lines is **rhythm**.

There is a solo on the next page in the style of **Miles Davis** that demonstrates this over both of the key centres in So What.

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | | | | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | | | | 3 | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Assignment:

1. Solo over the entire form using call and response
2. Add chords after each phrases you play or leave it empty
3. Learn the solo on the next page then write your own