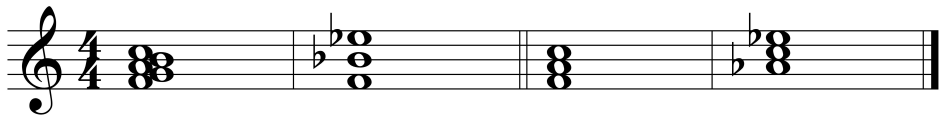
TRIADS

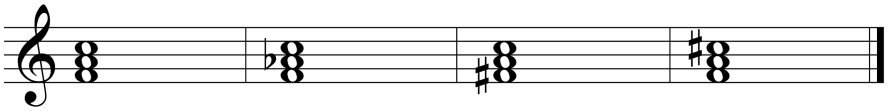
A **chord** is a simultaneous sounding of more than 2 notes.
A **triad** is a chord that contains 3 notes and is a **tertian** chord -- a chord built in thirds.

Chords Triads



QUALITIES:

Any triad is one of **4 qualities** -- major, minor, diminished, augmented.



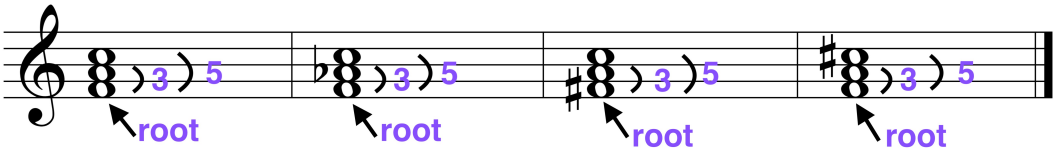
Major minor diminished augmented

Each quality triad contains a unique set of intervals.
Triads occur in root position, first and second inversion, depending on what note of the chord is in the **bass – the bottom-most voice**.

ROOT POSITION:

A triad is said to be in root position when the root of the chord is in the bass.

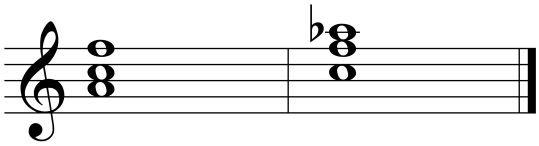
Root position is also known as $\begin{smallmatrix}5\\3\end{smallmatrix}$ position, since there is always an interval of a third and 5th above the root.



Major minor diminished augmented

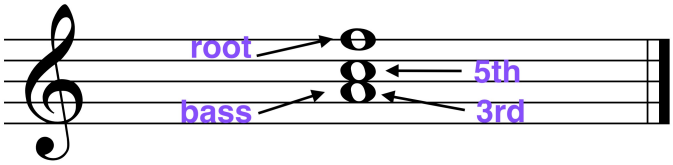
INVERSION:

A triad is said to be inverted if the bottom-most note -- the bass -- is not the root of the chord.



FIRST INVERSION:

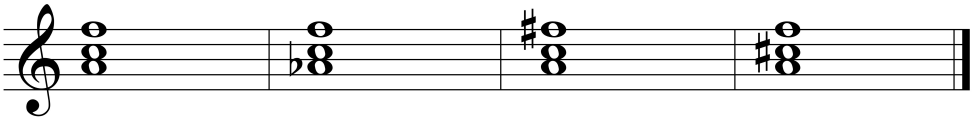
A triad is said to be in first inversion if the third of the chord is in the bass (the bottom-most voice).



Each quality triad may occur in first inversion.

In first inversion all triads will contain the interval of a 3rd and a 6th above the bass. Therefore, a first inversion chord is said to be in $^{6}_{3}$ position.

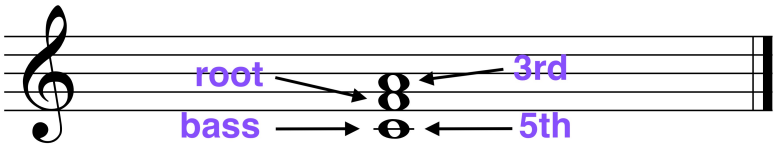
The quality of the 3rds and 6ths will be different for each quality of chord.



	M^{6}_{3}	m^{6}_{3}	d^{6}_{3}	A^{6}_{3}
contains:	m6 m3	M6 M3	M6 m3	m6 M3

SECOND INVERSION:

A triad is said to be in second inversion if the fifth of the chord is in the bass (the bottom-most voice).

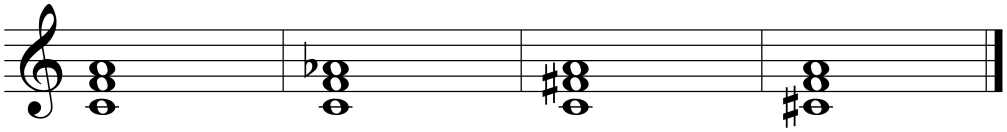


Each quality triad may occur in second inversion.

In second inversion all triads will contain the interval of a 4th and a 6th above the bass.

Therefore, a first inversion chord is said to be in $^{6}_{4}$ position.

The quality of the 4ths and 6ths will be different for each quality of chord.

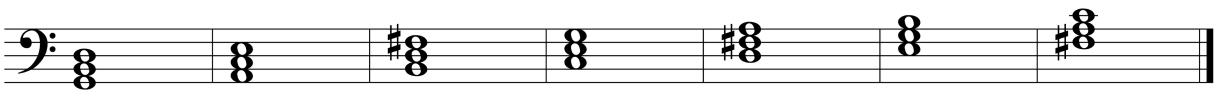


	M^{6}_{4}	m^{6}_{4}	d^{6}_{4}	A^{6}_{4}
contains:	M6 P4	m6 P4	M6 A4	m6 d4

TRIADS IN KEYS:

A triad can be built on each note of a scale. The resulting triads will have particular qualities and these qualities will differ according to the type of scale used.

Example: In G major:



I ii iii IV V vi viio

CHORD DESIGNATIONS:

Chords are designated by **Roman and Arabic numerals**.

ROMAN NUMERALS:

The Roman numeral tells the root of the chord (what scale degree it is)

You may also see different types of Roman numeral designations such as:

upper case = major (V, I)

lower case = minor (ii, vi)

upper case with + = augmented (III^{+})

lower case with o = diminished (vii^{o}, ii^{o})

ARABIC NUMERAL

The Arabic numeral tells you the position or inversion of the chord:

$\begin{smallmatrix}5\\3\end{smallmatrix}$ = root position

$\begin{smallmatrix}6\\3\end{smallmatrix}$ = first inversion

$\begin{smallmatrix}6\\4\end{smallmatrix}$ = second inversion

TRIADS IN A MAJOR KEY:

Triads built on the degrees of a major scale will have the following qualities and designations:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
M	m	m	M	M	m	d
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii^{o}

TRIADS IN MINOR KEYS

Triads built on the notes of a **natural minor scale** will have the following qualities and designations:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m	d	M	m	m	M	M
i	iio	III	iv	v	VI	VII

If you use the chords of a natural minor scale, the i-v-i progression will sound incomplete.

To make this progression sound more 'natural' [i-V-i], always use the leading tone in the scale -- use a harmonic minor scale.

The triads built from the notes of a **harmonic minor scale** will have the following qualities and designations:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m	d	A	m	M	M	d
i	ii^{o}	III^{+}	iv	V	VI	vii^{o}

We can also use the triads built from the notes of a **<u>melodic minor scale</u>**. These triads will have the following qualities and designations:

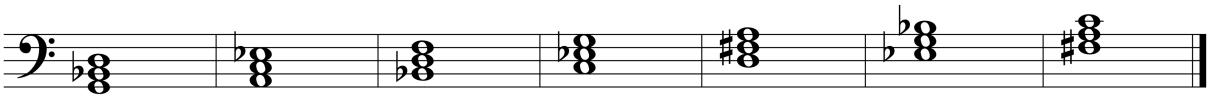
Ascending:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m	m	A	M	M	d	d
i	ii	III^{+}	IV	V	vi^{o}	vii^{o}

Descending: (same as natural minor)

m	d	M	m	m	M	M
i	iio	III	iv	v	VI	VII

In minor keys the most commonly used chords (and the ones you should memorize) are:



i	ii°	III	iv	V	VI	vii°
		III+				VII